The Politics of Home

The premise of this seminar is that the “home” is not prepolitical or apolitical, in opposition to the public domain, but inextricably linked to the political. Indeed meanings of home saturate—sometimes explicitly, sometimes obliquely—our public discourse and debates. Gender, race, class, and sexuality are publically policed and reproduced with reference to normative familial relations and (private) property. Yet on the other hand, domestic spaces and intimate lives can often serve as spaces of relief, refuge, and even political opposition. The home, depending on where one finds oneself situated, can mean wildly different things: prison or refuge, the banal or the aspirational. In this course we will read critiques and adulations of the domestic in multiple genres (theoretical, literary, popular) alongside contemporary activist projects and artworks that willfully put the domestic on public display through the use of traditional women’s work (knitting, quilting, embroidery). Our main inquiry is how different domestic spaces and intimate relations are imagined in opposition (or conjunction) with dominant models.

Course Objectives/Learning Goals:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Develop close readings of texts
- Gain an understanding of the relationship/conflicts between the personal and the political

Required Texts:

https://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/history/webid-meynihan.htm

**Required Assignments:**

Students will be required to write a midterm essay (5-7 pages), and a final paper (12-15 pages). In addition students are expected to come to each class with two or three questions or observations of the text (written down but not collected). Also, as a seminar based largely on class discussion, active participation and attendance are imperative. More than two unexcused absences will adversely affect the final grade.

**ePortfolio:**

“You are among the first to participate in Gallatin's new ePortfolio program. You will be asked to add content to your ePortfolio at least three times this semester, and we encourage you to maintain your ePortfolio through the rest of your time at Gallatin. For example, you might want to show your adviser your ePortfolio during advisement sessions to demonstrate your progress. You should have already received instructions via email on how to access and use your ePortfolio. Please note that students are expected to adhere to NYU’s Code of Conduct ([https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/compliance/code-of-ethical-conduct.html](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/compliance/code-of-ethical-conduct.html)) and must comply with NYU Web Publishing’s Terms of Use ([https://wp.nyu.edu/terms-of-use/](https://wp.nyu.edu/terms-of-use/)). Any questions about the ePortfolio program can be directed to gallatin.edtech@nyu.edu.”

You will be required to add three specific entries to your ePortfolio

**1st Day of Class:** Please change your “About Me” page by uploading a picture and writing a bio. You should also give your adviser and your instructor, viewing privileges to your ePortfolio. Go to [https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments](https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments) for instructions. This is a great opportunity for you to get to know your fellow students!

**Week 3:** Please add the course title and course description to your ePortfolio. In addition, write a short reflection on what you expect to learn in the course. You may use the course objectives as a guide. Further instructions may be found here: [https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments](https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments).

**Last Day of Class:** Please write an “End-of-Semester Reflection,” where you reflect on what you have learned and what ideas you will take forward. Further instructions can be found here: [https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments](https://wp.nyu.edu/gallatin-eportfolios/how-to/complete-course-assignments).

**Grading:**

Midterm Essay: 30%
Final Essay: 40%
Participation/Attendance/ePortfolio: 30%
Academic Integrity:

“As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)”

Electronic Devices:

Laptops and Tablets are allowed for note taking only. Cell phones should be turned off.

Seminar Schedule:

September 7:
*Introduction

September 12:
*Toni Morrison, Home (first half)

September 14:
*Toni Morrison, Home (second half)

September 19:
*Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”

September 21:
*Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, chaps. 1-4

September 26:
*Betty Fridan, The Feminine Mystique, chaps. 8 & 14

September 28:
*Patrick Moynihan, “The Negro Family”
* Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe”

October 3:
*bell hooks. Belonging, chaps. 1-7

October 5:
*bell hooks. Belonging, chaps 8-14

October 10:
No Class
October 12:  
*bell hooks. *Belonging*, chaps 15-21

October 17:  
(Rough Drafts of Midterm essay due)

October 19:  

October 24:  
*Sara Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*, pp. 1-87

October 26:  
*Sara Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*, pp. 88-159

November 2nd:  
**Midterm Essays Due**

November 7:  

November 9:  

November 14:  

November 16:  

November 21:  
(Rewrites of Midterm due)

November 23:  
*Matthew Desmond. *Evicted*, pp. 95-197

November 30:  

December 5:  
*Ann Cvetkovich. *Depression*, pp. 1-84

December 7:  
December 12:
*Extra/Ordinary Craft*, pp. 1-23 & 43-59 & 99-115 (or another essay from this section)

December 14
*Extra/Ordinary Craft*, pp. 175-222 & 243-259

Seminar Papers Due