

Theories in Transnationalism and Diaspora

Am St 590
Instructor: Rory Ong
Spring 2015
CUE 407
Thursday: 1:25-4:40 pm

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Office Hrs: T: 12:30-2:30
or by appointment

Course Objectives:

This course will consider various theoretical frameworks and stances scholars maintain concerning the mobility of people across oceans, continents, and other socio-political and economic spaces. Some key elements of this study will involve the discussions and debates surrounding a) the production and categorization of space/spatialized knowledge, b) the production and use of fixed spatial and social arrangements of power that are c) exposed, challenged, interrupted, altered, and/or sometimes reified by migrating flows of people across multiple borders.

By examining the theoretical and ideological matrices that subtend transnationalism and diaspora, this course will seek critical insights into the configuration of national space(s), the formation of citizen-subjects, and their daily lived practices, as a way to expose the sometimes quiet (sometimes not so quiet) ideological assumptions regarding national identity, sovereignty, and the practice of citizenship. We will particularly examine transnationalism and diaspora in relation to the production of space and some of the machinations behind their referents. We will also endeavor to address—tensions transnationalism and diaspora introduce to issues of sovereignty, of the sovereign nation-state; immigration and security; neoliberal capital/labor flows and uneven development; the global north/south; indigenous/settler recriminations; patriarchy and heteronormativity in transnational and/or diaspora communities. Finally we will explore possibilities of a transnational and/or diaspora critical praxis.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will gain knowledge and understanding of some key theories that subtend the focus on transnationalism and diaspora.
- Students will engage with the modern construction of nation, the nation-state, national identity, as well as modern and contemporary conditions that problematize this construction.
- Students will become proficient in the research, theories, and critical practices that scholars deploy in their analysis of transnationalism and diaspora.
- Students will also become familiar with the current trends in utilizing the notion of “trans” as both theory/practice (praxis) that attempts to address the limitations and contradictions that are left behind or erased in other forms of critical analyses.
- Students will articulate themselves in both oral and written academic discourse that will require them to become familiar with, and employ, various theoretical analyses through class discussion and facilitation, formal presentations, and academic written discourse through graduate seminar papers.

Required Readings:

Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, Methods. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, editors.

Theorizing Diaspora. Jana Evans Braziel and Nita Mannur, editors.

Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition. Tystan Cotten, editor.

Diasporas. Stéphane Dufoix

Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms. Inderpal Grewal.

The Production of Space. Henri Lefebvre.

Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico. José David Saldívar.

Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space. Neil Smith.

Supplementary Readings. [Abbrev: (SR)]. Available on Blackboard.

Requirements:

Active Participation: This is a graduate class. Students are required to participate in all discussions in a collegial fashion, and must come to class fully prepared to contribute to the conversations that develop around the course materials and any ancillary topics. (10%)

Weekly Reading Reviews: Students will be responsible for weekly responses to the readings. Responses are to focus on some of the key themes, terms, research criteria, arguments, or critical analyses that explore, expound, or examine the development and construction of key frameworks of American Cultural Studies. These will be 3-5 pages typed and double-spaced. Students should anticipate sharing their insights with the class. These will be due every class period. (15%)

Seminar Facilitation: Each of you will serve as a facilitator of the discussion for three sessions over the course of the semester. This entails reading the pieces assigned on those days with special care, doing some background research as needed, and serving as the resident expert that day for texts in question. Preparation will also involve writing up and emailing all class members discussion questions on the reading at least 2 days before the discussion. (20%)

Short paper: In this short paper students will review additional theoretical work associated with the field of American Cultural Studies. This assignment is intended to extend your readings beyond the course materials in American Cultural Studies and give you that extra time to explore theories that interest you. The short paper should be 8-10 pages long, typed-double spaced, and you will share/ summarize your paper for the benefit of the class. (25%)

Seminar paper: The seminar paper should be a product linked to the your interests, or perhaps as part of your research for the preliminary exam, thesis, or dissertation (i.e. chapter, or part of a chapter). It should examine a particular theme or element of transnationalism or diaspora that interests you; a general application of some of the theories or critical analyses of transnationalism/diaspora to a particular topic; or a particular critical approach or analysis driven by specific transnational/diaspora theories that may apply to a thesis or focus you are currently working on. As part of the seminar paper, you are also required to submit a seminar paper proposal. This will be done in consultation with the instructor preferably earlier than later in the semester. Students will present their seminar paper proposals to the class. The proposal should be about 3-5 pages in length, typed and double-spaced and include a partial bibliography. The seminar paper itself should be 20-30 pages in length (footnotes or endnotes as needed), with a full bibliography or works cited. I am familiar with most styles (APA, Chicago, MLA) so I'm open to which you are comfortable with. (30%)

Policies:**Grading**

Grades will be averaged in the following proportions:

Active Participation_____	10%
Weekly Reading Responses_____	15%
Seminar Facilitation_____	20%
Short Paper_____	25%
Seminar Paper_____	30%

Grading Scale

By Grade Point:

A = 4.0
 A- = 3.8
 B+ = 3.5
 B = 3.0
 B- = 2.8
 C+ = 2.5
 C = 2.0
 C- = 1.8
 D+ = 1.5
 D = 1.0

By 100 Point Grading Scale:

94-100 = A
 90-93 = A-
 87-89 = B+
 83-86 = B
 80-82 = B-
 77-79 = C+
 73-76 = C
 70-72 = C-
 67-69 = D+
 60-66 = D

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you know in advance that you will have to miss class for a legitimate reason, contact me to see whether arrangements can be made to make up any work that will be missed. If you have not finished an assignment for a given class period, attend class anyway to avoid missing further assignments and in-class work/discussions. **Only institutional excuses will be accepted.**

Disability Accommodations

The American Studies program supports members of our community who request disability accommodations. Please notify me during the first two (2) weeks of class for any requirements needed for the course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and fraud, is prohibited. The proper use of primary or secondary research sources and without proper citation or acknowledgment, or copying and claiming someone else's work as your own, is illegal and is not acceptable in this or any other class at WSU. Whether intentional or unintentional, academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question, or a grade of "F" for the entire course. Should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty, we will discuss the situation with you before penalties are enforced.

Classroom Etiquette

Out of respect for your classmates and the instructor, **all cell phones must be turned off. iPods and any other devices for listening to music, podcasts, radio, or text messaging are also prohibited in class.**

Campus Safety Plan Emergency Information

In the interest of campus safety and emergency procedures, please become familiar with the information available on the WSU-provided websites:

- <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> Campus Safety Plan
- <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> Emergency management web site
- <http://alert.wsu.edu> WSU Alert site

Syllabus:

Thursday, January 15: Introductions. Syllabus. Course Overview.

I. Some Theoretical Introductions

- Thursday, January 22: Discuss Homi Bhabha: "Commitment to Theory" (SR); Michel Foucault *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Parts 1-2 (SR); Deleuze and Guattari: "Introduction: Rhizomes" (SR); Edward Soja: "Spatializations: Marxist Geography and Critical Social Theory" (SR); David Harvey: "Space as a Key Word" (SR).
- Thursday, January 29: Discuss Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* Chpts 1-3.
- Thursday, February 5: Discuss Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* Chpts 4-7 and "Afterword."
- Thursday, February 12: Discuss Neil Smith's *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, "Introduction and Chpts. 1-3.
- Thursday, February 19: Discuss Smith *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, Chpts. 4-6, and the Afterwords (1990, 2007).

II. What Is a Nation? What is a Nation-State? What's Troubling the Nation-State

Thursday, February 26: Discuss Ernst Gellner's "Definitions" and "What Is A Nation" (SR); Partha Chatterjee's "Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Ideas" (SR); Franz Fanon's "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (SR); Immanuel Wallerstein's "The Rise of the States-System" (SR); Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (SR); Shane Phelan: "Structures of Strangeness: Citizenship and Kinship" (SR); Eithne Luibheid: "Entry Denied: A History of U.S. Immigration Control" (SR).

Thursday, March 5: Discuss Saskia Sassen: "Global Cities and Global Survival Circuits" (SR); Grace Chang: "Global Exchange: The World Bank, Welfare Reform, and the Trade in Migrant Women" (SR); Hunanai Kay Trask: "Settlers of Color and Immigrant Hegemony" (SR); Nira Yuval-Davis: "Citizenship, Autochthony and the Question of Forced Migration" (SR); Arjun Appadurai's "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (SR); Arif Dirlik: "Place-Based Imaginations: Globalism and the Politics of Place" (SR); Aiwa Ong: "Zones of New Sovereignty"; David Harvey: "The Neoliberal State" (SR); *Diasporas* (S. Dufoix).

III. Transnationalism and Diaspora: Issues and Debates

Thursday, March 12: Discuss Rainer Bauböck's and Thomas Faist's *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*.

Mon-Fri, March 16-20: Spring Break. No Classes.

Thursday, March 26: Discuss Jana Braziel's and Anita Mannur's *Theorizing Diaspora*.

IV. In Transit: Trans-Spaces, Trans-Agents, Trans-Communities

Thursday, April 2: Discuss José David Saldívar's *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico*.

Thursday, April 9: Discuss Inderpal Grewal's *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*.

Thursday, April 16: Discuss Trystan Cotten's *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition*.

Thursday, April 23: Discuss Lisa Lowe: "Intimacies of Four Continents" (SR); Ien Ang: "On Not Speaking Chinese" (SR); Étienne Balibar: "Toward a Diasporic Citizen: from internationalism to cosmopolitics" (SR); Michaeline Crichlow: "Locating the Global In Creolization: Ships Sailing Through Modern Space" (SR); Gayatri Gopinath: "Impossible Desires" (SR); Jodi Byrd: "Indigenous Critical Theory and the Diminishing Returns of Civilization" (SR); Jasbir Puar: "Homonationalism and Biopolitics" (SR); Scott Laura Morgensen: "Introduction" (SR).

Thursday, April 30: Writing/Research Day.

Mon-Fri, May 4-8: Seminar Papers Due.