

Comparative Ethnic Studies 491
Theories of Racism and Ethnic Conflicts
Spring 2007

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Close your eyes and think about war: what images do you see; what are the sounds and smells? Open your eyes, and write down a list of wars. Did the war on drugs, the war on poor, the war on AIDS, the war on terror, the war on crime, or the culture wars make your list? Regardless of whether these wars made your list, one must wonder what links military wars, whether the war in Iraq or the ongoing genocide in Darfur, with the historic and contemporary wars on drugs, crime, the poor, AIDS (or other disease), and cultural division. How might we connect state-initiated and carried out wars within the United States, globally? How does race and body operate within a context of war? Can war be practices without a process of racialization and dehumanization? Can war be practices without bloodshed, in the name of helping and saving folks? Such questions will guide this class as we examine war, race, and body through a global lens, focusing on the ways in which theories of racial difference and markers of racial difference facilitate war and conflicts. All this will be done while keeping in focus the historic practice and theories of white supremacy as part of an effort to link past, present and future discourses, whether those concerned with worthiness of communities, their health, cultural citizenship, or the legality particular citizens. In other words, how do definitions of citizenship play out within various types of wars and conflicts, and how does race infect and affect both definitions of citizenship and placement in various wars

Objectives

This course has six objectives.

- First, stressing war, body, and race, it seeks to reframe our understanding of war, enhancing students' understandings the ubiquity and links between the racialization of bodies and fear/violence (war).
- Second, it endeavors to clarify and problematize the meanings, histories, and practice of race and gender, particularly as associated wars over the last century.
- Third, it strives to challenge the narrow focus on race through an American black/white prism, while keeping in sight theories and histories of American white supremacy
- Fourth, fostering self-reflection and critical social perspectives, it also aims to create a learning environment in which students seriously and sensitively engage the social, political, material, and spiritual affects of racialization.

- Fifth, this course seeks to improve their critical thinking and communicative skills, which means everyone needs to come prepared to talk, engage, debate.
- Sixth, it works to challenge assumptions and common sense of war and racial theory, focusing on how racial differences are central to all practices of war.

Required Readings

- **Race War! White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire (Paperback)** by Gerald Horne, New York University Press (2005): ISBN: 0814736416
- **When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda (Paperback)** by Mahmood Mamdani. Princeton University Press (2002): ISBN: 0691102805
- **Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown (American Crossroads) (Paperback)** by Nayan Shah. University of California Press (2001); ISBN: 0520226291
- **Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America** by Mae Ngai. Princeton University Press (2005); ISBN: 0691124299

Recommended Readings

- **Policing the National Body: Race, Gender and Criminalization in the United States (Paperback)** by Jael Silliman (Editor), Anannya Bhattacharjee. South End Press (2002); ISBN: 0896086607
- **Yo' Mama's Disfunktional! Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America (Paperback)** by [Robin D.G. Kelley](#) (Author). Beacon Press (1998); ISBN: 0807009415 (PLEASE NOTE: HE WILL BE COMING IN MARCH SO IF INTERESTED IN A 1-UNIT 499 COURSE, LET ME KNOW)

Course Requirements

Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and participate in an informed and consistent manner. Anything less will not be tolerated and will result in problems in this class. After two absences (excused and unexcused) each missed class will lead to a 4% deduction (per day) from your overall grade. This may seem punitive but (1) class discussions are more an important element of class; (2) there are a number of extra credit opportunities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class (NOTE – BY WEEK 5 I WILL NO LONGER PASS ROLL, YET I WILL STILL KEEP ATTENDANCE), so lateness will potentially lead to an absence for that day. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away.

Participation

In order for this class to be productive you will need to come to class each and every day prepared to discuss the material. This requires more than simply doing the reading (WHICH IS ESSENTIAL), but arriving at class with a readiness to discuss the issues for that day. Recognizing that silence is not always a result of a lack of interest or preparation, I envision participation along many lines. Participating in class not only consists of

talking, but also includes **listening** (please do not talk while others are speaking), interacting with your peers, and contributing to our classroom energy (body language, being engaged – no newspapers or cell phones).

There are four additional ways to enhance your participation grade and contribution to class:

- You can e-mail me comments or questions prior to class
- You can hand me a note at the beginning of class that asks specific questions (or relays comments) about readings, a previous lecture or film – I will do my best to incorporate into that day's class
- You can also enhance participation grade by reading the daily newspapers in print or online (CNN.com; znet.com, *Seattle Times*, *Spokesman Review*, *Daily Evergreen*, etc.), and bringing the class's attention to relevant articles/developments
- You can participate in online discussions or share writings via myspace page or through email

Individual Portfolio

Throughout the semester, we will utilize the classroom space to engage in numerous exercises and activities. It is important that you take these seriously and put forth your best effort. In order to convey the seriousness and importance of these activities (which will be both individual and group oriented), they will account for 5% of your grade. If you miss a class in which we do an exercise, or arrive late, you will receive a zero for that assignment. If it becomes clear that we are not completing the reading, weekly reading quizzes may be included within this component of the class.

Note Cards (15%)

Ten times during the semester you are to turn in a note card (they will be passed out on Thursday of week #1), which should include (1) a short comment about the reading; (2) one quote from that day's reading; (3) at least one discussion based questions taken from that reading. They are due at the beginning of class and should address that day's reading (NO EXCEPTIONS) – (1% x 15)

Pamphlet (10%)*

A point of emphasis for this class is our ability to locate ourselves within a broader nexus of the intersections of race, body, and war, requiring the group to move beyond the classroom walls. In order to take our education to the streets, we are asking you to create one pamphlet – one regarding addressing the issues of war.. Examples to follow; please begin to think about how the histories, theories, and themes of race, body and war presented within the reading/class might empower those outside the class and how a pamphlet could serve as an educational intervention.

Facilitation/Presentation (15%)*

Each person in the class will be responsible for leading or facilitating a class discussion in groups of three (3). Your effort should focus on facilitating a discussion and otherwise engaging in the material (reading for that day) in creative ways. Don't just come to class and say "the chapter was about X; so what do you think." Be creative and think about ways to engage/provoke thought and discussion. Presentations/facilitations should cover the first 30-40 minutes of class so plan accordingly in terms of questions, an exercise, group work, etc.

Letter to Author (10%)*

You are to write a letter to one of the authors read in class. Is an opportunity to ask questions, offer points of contention, discuss what you have learned from the book, and maybe most importantly reflect on how you relate the discussed themes/histories to other (local, national, and global) issues. Use this letter (1-2 pages) to personalize your connection to the book's argument, thinking about how the theories and issues raised within the text play out within your own lives. You may be creative in this regard, writing a spoken word piece or

painting a picture that you might send to the author as well, including a brief description or explanation about the inspiration.

***AN IMPORTANT NOTE: THE PAMPHLET, THE PRESENTATION/FACILITATION, AND THE LETTER TO AUTHOR ALL HAVE TO BE BASED ON DIFFERENT BOOKS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WILL DIRECTLY ENGAGE THREE DIFFERENT BOOKS, EACH ONE TAKING A DIFFERENT FORM. ADDITIONALLY, THE LETTER AND THE PAMPHLET ARE DUE ON THE SECOND CLASS MEETING AFTER WE CONCLUDE READING THAT BOOK**

Film (40%)

This assignment represents the backbone of the class and is imagined as a semester long endeavor. While I will provide more details, the emphasis of this project resides with your ability to apply the theories, issues, readings and course materials to the production of a film. Specifically, we are looking for you to create a project that looks at race, war, and body – race, gender, sexuality, and nationality (intersections) of war in a historic or more contemporary context. MORE DETAILS FORTHCOMING!

Extra Credit (UP TO 10%)

While there will likely be events that will come during the semester, which will provide extra credit opportunities, there are two clear possibilities for extra credit: (1) You may select a book from the recommended reading list and write a 3-4 page book review, offering analysis, critical engagement, etc. This is worth up to 10%. (2) You may turn in extra note cards during the course of the semester. Specifically, you are able to turn an extra five cards, for a total potential of 5% (1% per card); (3) Other possibilities to follow.

Your grade will be derived from the following assignments and requirements:

Assignment Schedule*

Due Date**	Assignment	Grade Value
TBA	Presentation	15%
TBA	Pamphlet	10%
TBA	Letter to Author	10%
May 3rd (to be screened during the last two days of class)	Film	40%
15 x (once per week)	Note Cards	15%
Everyday	Participation/In-Class Assignments	10%

*Please note, you are entitled to one late assignment (within reason – a week) because life/school happens. After using one “get out of on-time delivery assignment card,” late assignments will be penalized accordingly (10% per week)

**We hold right to change due dates in your favor according to your needs and desires – Communicate

Course Outline

1/09	Introduction		
1/11	Shah, 1-44	3/08	Horne, 187-219
1/16	Shah, 45-76		Spring Break
1/18	Shah, 77-104	3/20	Horne, 220-251
1/23	Shah, 105-157	3/22	Horne, 252-278
1/25	Shah, 158-203	3/27	Horne, 279-328
1/30	Shah, 204-258	3/29	Mamdani, 3-40
2/1	Ngai, 1-20	4/03	Mamdani, 41-75
2/06	Ngai, 56-90		PAMPHLET OR LETTER DUE
	PAMPHLET OR LETTER DUE	4/05	Mamdani, 76-102 Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>
2/08	Ngai, 127-166		
2/13	Ngai, 167-201	4/10	Mamdani, 103-158 Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>
2/15	Ngai, 225-270	4/12	Mamdani, 159-184
2/20	Horne, 1-42	4/17	Mamdani, 185-233
2/22	Horne, 43-79	4/19	Mamdani, 234-282
	PAMPHLET OR LETTER DUE	4/24	Film Screening
2/27	Horne, 80-127	4/26	Film Screening
3/01	Horne, 128-158		PAMPHLET OR LETTER DUE
3/06	Horne, 159-186		

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and shifts in class needs. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made in your absence.

Course Policies

As I hope to redefine the classroom as a space of discussion, debate and intellectual transformation, I hope to unsettle your ideas of a student-teacher relationship. Specifically, I embrace democracy in the classroom and critical pedagogy. In terms of a democratic classroom, I attempt, with your assistance and desire, to create a space that is yours to define and shape. I will facilitate and guide, but not demand and order. This change may be potentially disconcerting, given the nature of classroom organization and pedagogy, compared to others at this university. I encourage you to take ownership in the classroom and in your learning, and to demand agency (control) within your learning experience. This requires communication, effort and **not taking advantage of the freedom available in this space (or worrying about other's inability to utilize this opportunity)**. As such, rather than me instituting a set of course rules and regulations, we as a class will cultivate those guidelines, which enable our mutual learning over the next 4 months. Class Suggestions (rules based on previous class to be enforced by our class community – we will add to list as needed):

- READ, READ, READ
- **Turn cell phones off upon arrival to class – Please note that if I see your cell phone (not if it rings) whether because you've decided to text message, check scores, show friend a picture or listen to messages, you will be asked to place that phone in a box before every class for the rest of the semester**
- Leave newspapers and other business (other class work) in your bag
- Arrive to class on time
- Sleeping or otherwise “tuning out” is not acceptable; class requires engagement and participation from all members of the community. If you come to class with the intent of using its oxygen as you sleep, YOU WILL RECEIVE NO CREDIT FOR THAT DAY – SLEEPING = ABSENCE
- Be respectful of others, in terms of engaging and listening to other's analysis, commentaries, points of discussion
- Reflect on social location
- Respect and understand rage
- Don't be rude (e.g., offer a comment and then while someone is responding walk out of the room to get something to eat; do other work or engage in rock-paper-scissors while in class; disrespect the privacy of the class by gossiping about issues or discussions of class)

Cheating Policy

Cheating will not be tolerated in the classroom. All forms of cheating and plagiarism can be defined as “the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work.” Penalties for cheating and plagiarism can range from a 0 or F on a particular assignment, to an F for the course, to expulsion from the university. For additional information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Schedule of Courses (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) or the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations)

Students with Disabilities

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please go to the Disability Resource Center (DRC) during the first two weeks of every semester to seek information or to qualify for accommodations. All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC, located in the Administration Annex Bldg, Room 205. To make an appointment with a disability counselor, please call 335-3417.

Creating a classroom based on and working toward democracy, just and transformative pedagogies

Goals

To contribute

toward understanding of responsibility, power and role in securing justice and peace at a local, national and global level

To strengthen

the capacities of social justice activists on and off campus to work for justice and challenge inequality in all its forms.

To enable

all members of the classroom community to become more effective proponents of democracy and agents of justice, through a collective learning process.

CES 491 Guidelines

- Speak from your heart and your experience. Use "I" statements.
- We're not here to judge each other, put each other down, or compete.
- Listen to the wisdom everyone brings to the group.
- Give each person the time and space to speak
- Practice "active listening".
- Respect the person.
- Challenge the behavior
- Create anti-racist, anti-Sexist, anti-homophobic language and group dynamics.
- Please come on time!
- Please come prepared
- Communicate
- READ
- READ
- THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Creating Anti-Racist (Sexist, Xenophobic, Homophobic) Language

- "When you said or did... or when... happened"
- "I felt/I thought"
- "Because I think/feel I have experienced..."
- "And I'd suggest that... What do you think about it?"

Creating Anti-Racist Group Dynamics

- Raise your hand to speak
- Reflect on Privileges and Power Inequities
- Prioritize voices of people of color in the group
- Prioritize voices of quiet white folks in the group
- Practice active listening and challenge respectfully

Primary Learning Outcomes

- Ability to define and explain relationship between white supremacy, theories of race, war, and body
- Ability to understand the relationship between various state apparatuses and white supremacist theories of race, definitions of criminality and current material conditions
- To develop skills necessary to engage the state violence as war at a critical level
- Willingness to critically engage the historical context that continues to give rise to the unequal enforcement of justice through prisons, racial profiling and military occupation of particular communities
- Understanding of the historic and theoretical differences between racializing bodies and dehumanization
- Comprehend the links between fear and racialization
- Understand the ways in which race, gender and class affect the application of (in)justice
- Ability to compare and contrast the dominant narrative constructions of the war/the state and those derived from a counter hegemonic position
- Recognizing the function of the state, military, schools, and the nation-state in its relationship to capitalism, globalization and political formations
- Understanding the power of media, image, cultural frames and representation in perpetuating the acceptance of war and injustice
- Ability to answer the following questions: are social justice and war incompatible; can wars in all its forms exist in absence of hegemonic visions of race (whiteness; the other)?
- Develop an understanding of the possibility to disrupt business as usual within a state of constant war-mongering system through dreaming, education, organizing and action

Key Terms¹

Binary Thinking: A system of thought that divides concepts into two oppositional categories, whereupon meaning for one is derived from meaning of the other; for example, white/black, man/woman, West/East, civilized/uncivilized, saint/sinner, reason/emotion, and normal/deviant

Capitalism: an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism is typically characterized by extreme distributions of wealth and large divisions between the rich and the poor.

Colorblindness: a racial ideology that gained prominence during the post-civil rights era that argues that using racial language perpetuates racism

Commodification: in capitalist political economies, land, products, services, and ideas are assigned economic values and are bought and sold in marketplaces as commodities

Controlling Images: The terms representations and stereotypes describe this socio-cultural phenomenon: representations need not be stereotypical and stereotypes need not function as controlling images, yet as hegemony works to form consent dominant representations govern and direct common sense ideas and dominant discourses. Controlling images are closely tied to power relations of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality.

Discourse: A set of ideas and practices that, when taken together, organize both a way society defines certain truths about itself and the way it puts together social power

Globalization: The increasing concentration of capital in the hands of relatively small number of transnational corporations. Two effects of globalization are greater influence on the world economy than that of nation states, and a global distribution of wealth and poverty that privileges Western European, North American, and other advanced industrial nations

Hegemony: A form of social organization that uses ideology to create taken-for-granted ideas that are used to justify oppression. Hegemonic conditions absorb and depoliticize oppressed groups' dissent and encourage individuals and groups to police one another and suppress each other's dissent.

Ideology: a body of ideas reflecting the interests of a particular social group. Racism, sexism, xenophobia, and heterosexism all have ideologies that support social inequality. Ideologies are never static and always have internal contradictions.

Intersectionality: analysis claiming that systems of race, economic class, gender, sexuality, nation, ethnicity, and age from mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape African American experiences and, in turn, are shaped by African Americans.

Islamophobia: Secretary-General Kofi Annan told a December 7, 2004 UN conference on the emergence of Islamophobia that "[when] the world is compelled to coin a new term to take account of increasingly widespread bigotry — that it is a sad and troubling development. Such is the case with 'Islamophobia'". American journalist Stephen Schwartz believes that Islamophobia consists of the following: (1) attacking the entire religion of Islam as a problem for the world; (2) condemning all of Islam and its history as extremist; (3) denying the active existence, in the contemporary world, of a moderate Muslim majority; (4) insisting that

¹ The following terms are taken from the works of Patricia Hill Collins, Michael Omi, Cornel West, Howard Winant, Peggy McIntosh, Robert Blauner

Muslims accede to the demands of non-Muslims for theological changes in their religion; (5) treating all conflicts involving Muslims as the fault of Muslims themselves; and (6) inciting war against Islam as a whole

Oppression: An unjust situation in which, systematically and over a long period of time, one group denies another group access to the resources of society. Race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, age, and ethnicity constitute major forms of oppression.

Orientalism: Orientalism is a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus a very large mass of writers, among who are poet, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. . . . the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient . . . despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient. (1-3,5)

Paradigm: an interpretive framework used to explain social phenomena.

Political economy: the way of organizing power relations and the economic system. Capitalism has a distinctive political economy characterized by larger differences in wealth between social classes and major difference in power where wealthy people have more power than poor people.

Racism: a fundamental characteristic of social projects which create or reproduce structures of domination based on essentialist categories based on essentialist categories); a system of unequal power and privilege in which humans are divided into groups or 'race' with social rewards unevenly distributed to groups based on their racial classification. In the United States, racial segregation constitutes a fundamental principle of how racism is organized.

Racial Formation: a Sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed. A process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized

Racial Project: a racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular lines

Social Oppression: dynamic process by which one segment of society achieves power and privilege through the control and exploitation of other groups, which are literally oppressed, that is, burdened and pushed down into the lower levels of the social order

White Privilege: an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visa, clothes, tools and blank checks.

White Supremacy: the attitudes, ideologies, and policies associated with the rise of blatant forms of white European dominance over 'nonwhite' populations ... making invidious distinctions of a socially crucial kind that are based primarily if not exclusively characteristic and ancestry. White supremacy refers to "color bars," racial segregation, and restriction of meaningful citizenship.