The Cultural Politics of Transnational Adoption

CES/Engl. 492.1
Instructor: Rory Ong
Advanced Topics
Office #: Wilson 119
Spring Semester 2008
Phone #: 335-7089
Time: TTH; 2:50-4:05
Office Hrs: W: 1-3
Place: Wilson 6
or by appointment

Required Texts:

Adoption in a Color-Blind Society. Pamela Anne Quiroz
Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship. Sara K. Dorow
In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories. Rita J. Simon/Rhonda M. Roorda
Children Left Behind: The Dark Legacy of Indian Mission Boarding Schools. Tim Giago.
Supplementary Readings. (available at Cougar Copies).

Objectives:

This course will examine transnational adoption as a cultural politics. We will discuss the historical and social contexts of displacement and dislocation that produce such global movements of children across national borders. We will also discuss the entanglements of the state in transnational adoptions and the ways in which transnational adoptions challenge our notions of culture, race, gender, sexuality and nation.

Course Requirements:

Short Papers
I will be providing you with periodic (take-home) writing prompts over the assigned readings. Your responses need to be at least 3-4 pages in length, and must be typewritten and double-spaced. These responses will help you begin exploring, formulating, and articulating your thoughts and ideas about the readings. Late papers will be graded accordingly. These will count toward 15% of the total grade.

Chapter Review/Presentation
You are required to review two (2) selections of readings from the course syllabus. This is an oral presentation, not a written one. The review must thoughtfully engage the assigned readings, and focus on a themes that travel through the materials. The review should be about 15-20 minutes in length. Some summary is useful, although I also want your critical engagement with the material. The chapter reviews will each count as 25% of the total grade.

Final Collaborative Group Project
In lieu of a final paper, we will engage in a collaborative group project that will analyze the final sets of readings from 4/8/08 to 4/22/08. These readings cover the voices, or points of view, of transnational or transracial adoptees themselves. We will take an account of these individual points of view and discuss the ways in which they can be located within the context of the cultural politics of the United States. You will have both individual and group responsibilities in the project. The final collaborative group project will count toward 35% of the total grade.
Policies:

Percentages

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<tr>
<td>Short Papers</td>
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<td>Chapter Review #1</td>
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<td>Chapter Review #2</td>
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<td>Collaborative Group Project</td>
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Grading Scale

100-98=A+  Suggests that a student’s work is outstanding to excellent; it reflects the content and focus of the course and shows thoughtful and critical insight into the complexities of the material. Always well written and articulated.

97-93=A  Suggests the student’s work is very good to good; it reflects a very strong and solid understanding of the material. Occasionally doesn’t go the extra step in critical analysis. Always well written and articulated.

92-90=A-  Suggests the student’s work is adequate; it reflects a fair grasp of the material but doesn’t go very far in analysis or reflects a lack of comprehension of the issues represented in the material.

79-77=C+  Suggests the students work shows some, but little effort, and does not comprehend the material, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, or attendance.

76-73=C  Suggests that a student’s work shows little effort, and does not comprehend the material, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, or attendance.

72-70=C-  Suggests that a student’s work shows some, but little effort, and does not comprehend the material, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, or attendance.

69-63=D  Suggests that a student’s work shows little effort, and does not comprehend the material, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, or attendance.

Attendance

In accordance with the Student Handbook, attendance in this class is mandatory. Attendance does not merely mean warming the chair, but a daily presence in the class engaged with the course materials. 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. After four (4) unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one point for every absence thereafter.

Extra Credit

There may be many opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. I will announce those opportunities as they come up. Extra Credit assignments must relate to the course content. Extra Credit should be in the form of a short 1-2 page review of the event, lecture, or film attended--typed and double-spaced. To receive the possible full credit, students not only review but must also discuss how the event, film, or lecture compliments the content of this course. Students are allowed to turn in 2 Extra Credit assignments. Each Extra Credit will count 2.5 pts toward the student’s overall final grade (for a total of 5 extra credit points)
Disability Accommodations

The Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies 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 who have 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 (Admin Annex Bldg, Room 205). 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. Unless you have a documented disability, no earphones are allowed in class. Any use, even a perceived use, of these items during class will automatically result in a loss of 2 points from the student’s final grade.

Syllabus:

Tuesday, January 8: Introduction to the Course. Handout Syllabus.

Thursday, January 10: Read/Discuss Part One: Where are you really from? in Outsiders Within (OW). Video: First Person Plural.

Making the Link: Transnational And Transracial Adoption and the National Imagination

Tuesday, January 15: Read/Discuss “Introduction” (OW), and “Intimidations of Empire” by Laura Ann Stoler in Supplementary Readings (SR).

Thursday, January 17: Read/Discuss In Part Two “Adoption Myths and Racial Realities in the United States,” “Parents in Prison, Children in Crisis,” and “Orphaning the Children of Welfare (OW).

Tuesday, January 22: Read/Discuss “The Legal Perspective on Transracial and Intercountry Adoptions” and “The History and Frequency of Transracial and Intercountry Adoption” (SR).

Thursday, January 24: Read/Discuss “Legal Status History and Review of Empirical Work” from In Their Own Voices (ITOV).

Tuesday, January 29: Read/Discuss Chapters 1 and 2 in Adoption in A Color-Blind Society (ACBS).
Thursday, January 31: Read/Discuss Chapters 3 and 4 in (ACBS).

Tuesday, February 5: Read/Discuss Chapters 5 and 6 in (ACBS).

**Transnational Adoption and Colonial Ideology**


Thursday, February 14: Read/Discuss Part I, pp. 80-131 in (CLB).


**Transnational Adoption as a Political Economy**

Tuesday, February 26: Read/Discuss “From Orphan Trains to Babylifts” pp. 139-149 and “Shopping for Children in the International Market Place” pp. 89-104 (OW).

Thursday, February 28: Read/Discuss “Beyond the Vietnam War Adoptions” (OW); and “From Orphaned China Dolls to long-distance daughters” (SR).

Tuesday, March 4: Read/Discuss “Disappeared Children and the Adoptee as Immigrant” (OW); and “Making American Families: Transnational Adoption and U.S. Latin American Policy” (SR).

Thursday, March 6: Video: TBA

Mon-Fri, March 10-14: ***Spring Break***.

Tuesday, March 18: Read/Discuss Introduction: “Adoption Moves” and Chapter One “Why China” in *Transnational Adoption* (TA).

Thursday, March 20: Read/Discuss Chapter Two: “Matches Made on Earth” and Chapter Three: “Picturing Kinship” in (TA).

Tuesday, March 25: Read/Discuss Chapter Four: “Client, Ambassador, and Gift” and Chapter Five: “Shamian Island” in (TA).

Thursday, March 27: Read/Discuss Chapter Six: “Storied Origins” in (TA).

Tuesday, April 1: Read/Discuss Chapter Seven: “American Ghosts” and Conclusion “Akin to Difference” in (TA).
Thursday, April 3: Video: *Belonging.*

**Transnational and Transracial Adoptees in Their Own Words**

Tuesday, April 8: Read/Discuss Part Four: Growing Through the Pains pp. 165-213 (OW).

Thursday, April 10: Read/Discuss Interviews with Donna Frances, Jessica Pelton Andrea, Kimberly Stapert, Shecara, and Laurie Goff from *In Their Own Voices* (ITOV).

Tuesday, April 15: Read/Discuss Interviews with Chantel Tremitiere, Nicolle Tremitiere Yates, Rachel, Iris, Aaliyah, Rhonda Roorda (ITOV).

Thursday, April 17: Read/Discuss Interviews with Rev. Keith Bigelow, Daniel Mennega, Tage Larsen, David T. Adams, Dan O’Brien, Seth D. Himrod, and Lester Smith, Sr. (ITOV).

Tuesday, April 22: Read/Discuss Interviews with Ned, Pete, Britton Perry, Taalib, and Chip; also read the Summary and Concluding Remarks (ITOV).

Thursday, April 24: Course Evaluations. Video: TBA

Mon-Fri, April 28-May 2: **No Final Exam.**