Methods in American Studies

Spring 2019

Mondays, 4-6

420 Hamilton

Columbia University

Dr. Matt Sandler

Office Hours: Mondays, 2-4 and by appt.

**Description:**

This course takes an instrumental approach to the field of American Studies, seeking through its concerns a set of procedures with which to work. We will read a range of recent scholarship in the field and seek to understand how each project was built, how it was shaped through research, thinking, and writing. Above the level of basic practice, we will also consider American Studies as an interdisciplinary engagement with disciplinary work. The functions of emergent minoritized perspectives and identity knowledges will be an organizing focus, as will the functions of critique, both in academic discourse and beyond.

We will have a number of visitors from different disciplinary backgrounds to comment on various aspects of the field. Students will also be expected to attend two of four talks at the American Studies University Seminar and readings those weeks will be keyed to the subjects of the talks. The main project for the course will be a “literature review” in which students map the terrain of methods in the area of their own research interests in American Studies.

**Grades and Assignments:**

2 brief responses to American Studies University Seminar talks (10% of grade)

2-3pg response papers X 3 (40% of grade)

12-14pg literature review project (50% of grade)

**Required Texts:**

Roderick Ferguson, *We Demand: The University and Student Protests* (2018)

(available at Book Culture)

Jan. 28: **Introduction**

Gene Wise, “Paradigm Dramas in American Studies”; Mary Helen Washington, “Disturbing the Peace”

Feb. 4: **Publication Workshop**

Visitor: Betsy Duquette, Associate Professor of English, Gettysburg College; Reading: John Levi Barnard, “The Cod and the Whale: Melville in the Time of Extinction”;

Stuart Burrows, “Rethinking Regionalism: Sarah Orne Jewett’s Mental Landscapes”;

Erica R. Edwards, “The New Black Novel and the Long War on Terror”

\*\*\*\*Feb. 5: Betsy Duquette talk at Faculty House, 7pm

Feb. 11: **Campus Activism and Campus Diversity**

Visitor: Celina Chatman Nelson, Associate Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, GSAS; Reading: Roderick Ferguson, *We Demand: The University and Student Protests*

Feb. 18: **Intersectionality and Racialization**

Kimberle Crenshaw, “Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color”; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “We Are All Americans!: the Latin-Americanization of Racial Stratification in the USA”; Claire Kim, “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans”

Feb. 25: **Andy Warhol’s Whiteness**

Jose Esteban Muñoz, “Famous and Dandy Like B. ‘N’ Andy: Race, Pop, and Basquiat”; Jonathan Flatley, “Skin Problems”

Mar. 4: **Transnational Adoption**

Rachel Nolan, TBD; Laura Briggs. “Mother, Child, Race, Nation: The Visual Iconography of Rescue and the Politics of Transnational and Transracial Adoption”

\*\*\*\*\*Mar. 5: Rachel Nolan talk at Faculty House, 7pm

Mar. 11: **Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Studies, and Anthropology**

Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” and Audra Simpson, “On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, ‘Voice,’ and Colonial Citizenship”

Mar. 18: **Spring Break**

Mar. 25: **Music and Latinx Studies**

Deborah Vargas, “Un Desmadre Positivo: Notes on How Jenni Rivera *Played* Music”; Frances Negron-Muntaner, “Ricky’s Hips”

Apr. 1: **Asian Americanist Critique and the Philippines**

Kandice Chuh, “Against Uniform Subjectivity: Remembering ‘Filipino America,’” and Denise Cruz, “Jose Garcia Villa’s Collection of ‘Others’: Irreconcilabilities of a Queer Transpacific Modernism

\*\*\*\*Apr. 2: Denise Cruz talk at Faculty House, 7pm

Apr. 8: **The New Black Studies: Philosophy and Fabulation**

Fred Moten, “The Case of Blackness”; Saidiya Hartman “Venus in Two Acts”

Apr. 15: **Trans Studies Against Liberalism**

Dean Spade, selections from *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*; C. Riley Snorton, selections from *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*

Apr. 22: **Medical Humanities and Inequalities**

Visitor: Prof. Rishi Goyal, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society; Readings: selections from Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Gut Feminism*

Apr. 29: Group Presentation of Literature Review Project

May 6: **Last Day, Wrap Up**

\*\*\*\*\*May 7: Cristobal Silva Talk at Faculty House, 7pm