

Graduate Program for Cultural Studies at Pitt: SPRING 2009 OFFERINGS

COMMON SEMINAR (CLST 2050): *Race in the Americas: The Biopolitical Turn* Joshua Lund

Michel Foucault begins speaking about “biopolitics” (and “biopower”) in the mid-1970s. While Foucault introduces the term in order to develop his thinking about a shift in the idea of sovereignty associated with Western modernity, he simultaneously links biopolitics to the complicated power dynamics involved in what we could broadly call the emergence of “state racism”. This is the aspect of biopolitics that has caught the attention of contemporary thinkers in a number of fields, with its many implications advanced most prominently for Cultural Studies in works by Agamben, Esposito and Hardt & Negri. While biopolitics is Eurocentric in its genesis and application, this course attempts to bring it to a different geopolitical scene. The central theme of this course will be how the biopolitical turn in the human sciences helps us to rethink an old relationship between two ideas basic to Western thought: race and America. Not a course on racism (or racist practices) in the Americas, this course will instead take “race” and “America” (in the wide sense) as metaphysical categories that inform and, indeed, depend upon each other. Asking how they do this will be our overarching question. Our source material will be two kinds of texts—philosophical and literary—whose implications will be relevant for many fields. Short philosophical selections will be drawn from writers such as Kant, Hegel, Renan, Boas, Dubois, Freyre, Arendt, Fanon, Sartre, Ellison, Wright, Marcos, a number of contemporary pronouncements on “critical race theory”, and the basic canon on “biopolitics”. We will also read literary selections, whose immediate function in the class will be twofold: to press against the limits of what we might call “biopolitical reading”; and in doing so, to force us to rethink the relations between race and America. These texts will probably include Castellanos, Faulkner, and García Márquez. Students will be expected to complete written assignments and to lead a class discussion. Given that relating our course work to individual projects will be given high priority, comparative work is encouraged.

Category A:	Category B:	Category C:	Category D:
<i>Text and Theory</i>	<i>Disciplines & Intellectual Movements</i>	<i>Cultural Antagonisms & Cultural Crises</i>	<i>Designated Courses</i>
COMMRC 2220 Readings in Critical Theory Lynn Clarke	COMMRC 3326 Seminar in Media Studies: Print, Film, Radio, and TV Audiences Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray	ENGFLM 2472 Cinema and the Posthuman Adam Lowenstein	ENGLIT 2130 Gender and the Body on the Early Modern Stage Jennifer Waldron
ENGFLM 2486 Gilles Deleuze and Cinema Marcia Landy	MUSIC 2621 Ethnomusicology Seminar: Music, Technology, and Culture Adriana Helbig	SOC 2303 Political Sociology John Markoff	ENGFLM 2489 Clint Eastwood Colin MacCabe
GER 2880/3880 German Visual Culture Studies Randall Halle	SOC 2342 Cultural Sociology Mohammed Bamyeh	SPAN 2226 Violence and Affectivity: Ethical Narratives from the Global South Hermann Herlinghaus	FR 2300 Absolutism and its Pathologies Chloe Hogg
MUSIC 2621 Ethnomusicology Seminar: Music and Cultural Theory Andrew Weintraub	THEA 2216 Advanced Theory & Methodology: "After post colonialism: Frameworks for Global Theatre Studies in the New Millennium" Evan Winet		RUSS 2640 From Lumiere to Lenin Vladimir Padunov
	WMST 2240 Queer Studies Past and Present Todd Reeser		SPAN 2706 Análisis de textos literarios: Enlightenment, Abolitionism, Literature in the Americas Jerome Branche

Requirements for PhD certificate in Cultural Studies:

- Common Seminar
- One course from each of categories A, B, C
- One D course in the student’s home department
- One D course *outside* the student’s home department
- Foreign-language proficiency (as required by the home department or in consultation with the Program)

Requirements for MA Certificate in Cultural Studies:

- Common Seminar
- One course from category A or B
- One D course in the student’s home department
- One D course *outside* the student’s home department or from category C
- Foreign-language proficiency (as required by the home department or in consultation with the Program)

For detailed information on the Cultural Studies MA and PhD certificates, please see www.pitt.edu/~cultural or write to: Giuseppina Mecchia, Director, Graduate Program for Cultural Studies (mecchia@pitt.edu)