

SOC 610, Spring 2018

Race, Religion, and the Feminine: Postcolonial and Post-Soviet Formations

FSS-U34, Tuesdays, 11:30 am- 1:00 pm

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Office Hours: Tue, 1:30-3:30 pm & by appointment

Etched within the seemingly disparate coordinates of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, September 11's inaugural of "terror", the global financial crisis and austerity, the crisis of the refugee as the crisis of Europe, and increasingly fascist-permissive societies, are the crumpled timescapes of the global necropolitical postcolony. The course attempts to treat this as an occasion for a particular kind of political reading, and for enacting a desire for political, social, and cultural analysis that is honest about at least the inefficacy and, worse, the complicity of our epistemologies and methods in the conditions of our political existence. How are we to create totalities and frames that connect without colonising? Is it possible to read and harness our recent history in a way that impacts how we name, understand, and solve problems in Athens, Baltimore, Brno, Gaza, or Karachi? With the correspondence between decolonial struggles, anti-fascist, and socialist projects in mind, the course will grapple with the entwined and renewed legacies of colonialism and capitalism as they manifest in our contemporary realities. It seeks to enlarge our understand of life *after* colonialism where Europe is both metropole and colony, especially attentive to the differences that are often sacrificed to achieve grand theory, but never really end up connecting our insurgencies to each other. It will attempt a method of addressing the theoretical, temporal, and spatial intersections of postcoloniality and postsocialism that goes further than the simple intersectionality of race, class, and gender as positivist concepts, to a dynamic treatment of bodies, affect, memory, identities, cultures, institutions, power, and lifeworlds in contemporary geopolitics marked by old and new regimes of capital and colony.

The course features select texts that are seeking to advance new frames to fuel our understanding of insurgent globality from below to counter imperial neoliberalism and neofascism, and the emphasis will be on formulating our own frameworks and methods applicable to our own projects and pursuits in conversation with these attempts. Some of the possible themes in discussion will be frames of democracy, nation, ethnos, minority, and religion; the state and sovereignty as a demand or an assertion; memory & nostalgia; colonialism & settler-colonialism; gender, race, and the time of the after (of colonisation, war, and Soviet communism); provincialising Europe; the "problem" of Africa; the Muslim and the Jew as pariah; failed states; refuge, exile & fugitivity.

REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

- Class will meet every week on Tuesday, from 11:30 am-1:00 pm. Students are expected to do the readings (and review other materials) that are assigned for that day in advance, and actively participate in class discussions.
- Readings marked with an asterisk are either available in the course google folder or hyperlinked on this syllabus. I have also suggested where they might be easily accessible via e-books at the MUNI library. For every week, readings have been categorised as Required, Supplementary,

and Recommended in order of priority, with threads of inquiry to pick and follow as you wish in the latter folders.

- Reading the texts and working patiently and regularly with them in writing and speech in a timely and productive fashion is imperative.
- We want to approach this class with a focus on reading as a means to a kind of improvisational practice in methods that are responsive to the current moment. We will do our best to practice relations of answerability and accountability to the text and to each other to that effect.
- Grades will be based on:
 - regular class participation (including bringing one question to class every time) (10%)
 - Initiation of Online Forum and presentation to follow: One turn at initiating a thread of inquiry or thinking prompt on the class discussion group (~200 words). The prompt would be posted jointly with a partner no later than 4:00 pm of the assigned week. The thread will be open until Thursday at midnight. The initiators will then take up the discussion and summarise it to be presented at the beginning of the next class on the following Tuesday accomplishing three things: First, prompting a good, thoughtful conversation. Second, summarising the conversation that ensues in a way that does justice to people's contributions and makes a bridge from the previous week to the current one, and opens up the conversation. Three, bringing in a supplementary text from the current week into that conversation. The presentation will start our class and be no longer than 10-12 minutes combined. (20%)
 - Participation in Online Forum: On any week that you are not initiating a conversation on the online forum, you will respond (~100-125 words or so) to the initial prompts on the new thread for that week, anytime between 4:00 pm on Monday and midnight on Thursday. (15%)
 - Weekly entries in your notebook (your google document) that will serve as a selective annotated bibliography that helps retain an archive of what you have extracted from the readings which will help you to synthesise them in your proposal). (15%)
 - A 2-3 page mid-term project statement [addressing the what and why of your question] (15%) and 5-6 page final project proposal (25%) [addressing the how and why of the question and its evolution over the course of the semester] that synthesises the material encountered in the class and articulates/improvises your own approach to an issue.
 - Please ask for any clarification, as many times as you wish! (updated Feb 28, 2018)
- A film series will take place over the course of the semester, with screenings relevant to the course as well.
- Please check your email regularly. All changes will be conferred on where possible, but certainly communicated in advance.

CLASS SCHEDULE

All readings marked with an asterisk will be accessible via a hyperlink on this syllabus or in the course google folder linked here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=IOEgnyqNZVhsp3Ou55qhJqOviRH0hS-tK>

Please begin reading from the REQUIRED list (a subfolder named A under the relevant week) and read as much as you can; I encourage picking one item from the SUPPLEMENTARY list (a subfolder named B under the relevant week) as your time allows but making a habit of it over the course of the week;

RECOMMENDED list (in subfolder C under the relevant week) are for you to dabble in as your interests compel you beyond the course requirements.

Week 1, Feb 20: Premises, Provocations, Pursuits

Introductions and Set-up

Week 2, Feb 27: The “Post-Soviet” and its Discontents

Required:

Susan Buck-Morss, “Theorising Today: The Post-Soviet Condition”

Radim Hladik, “A Theory’s Travelogue: Post-Colonial Theory in Post-Socialist Space”

David Chioni Moore, “Is the Post in Postcolonial the Same as the Post in Post-Soviet: Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique”

Supplementary:

<http://www.formerwest.org/Front>

*Dariusz Skorczewski, “Postcolonial Poland: (Im)Possible Project”

*“Postcolonial Post-Soviet Trajectories and Intersectional Coalitions”

*Karlis Racevskis, “Toward a Postcolonial Perspective on the Baltic State”

Recommended:

*Anca Bancoianu, “Is the Colonial in Post-Colonial the Soviet in Post-Soviet? The Boundaries of Postcolonial Studies”

*Mykola Riabczuk, “Colonialism in Another Way: On the Applicability of Postcolonial Methodology for the Study of Postcommunist Europe”

*“Democracy was Hijacked...,” *The Guardian*

*“The Use and Abuse of Postcolonialism,” *Minima Ucrainica*

Week 3, Mar 6: Trouble in the Postcolony

Required:

*Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Chapter 1

*Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, “Introduction” (pp. 3-16)

*Walter Mignolo, “From Central Asia to the Caucasus and Anatolia... “ (Review of Madina Tlostanova)

Supplementary:

*Madina Tlostanova, “The Imperial-Colonial Chronotope”

*Ajay Skaria, “The Project of Provincialising Europe: Reading Chakrabarty”

Recommended:

*Stuart Elden, “Why is the World Divided Territorially?” (Background textbook chapter for reference and clarification of concepts)

Week 4, Mar 13: The Premise(s) of the State

Required:

*Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (Lectures 3, 4, 11) [in that order, read as much as you can]

*Eyal Weizman, *Theory Talks* issue

Supplementary:

*Eyal Weizman <http://www.forensic-architecture.org>

*Eyal Weizman, "Violence at the Threshold of Detectability"

*Eyal Weizman, *Forensis*, "Introduction"

*Eyal Weizman, Interview

Recommended:

Michael Shapiro, "How Does the Nation-State Work?" (Background textbook chapters for reference and clarification of concepts)

Week 5, Mar 20: Sovereignty and Histories of Violence

Required:

Kathleen Biddick, *Make and Let Die*. (ch 1 and 4)

Ranjana Khanna, *Algeria Cuts*, Introduction

Supplementary:

Kathleen Biddick, *Make and Let Die*. (ch 5 and coda)

Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence"

Recommended:

Week 6, Mar 27: Europe as Metropole and Colony

Required:

Etienne Balibar, "At the Borders of Europe" OR "Europe as Borderland" (different versions)

Joan Scott, "The Culture Veil: The Real Crisis of European Multiculturalism"

Supplementary:

Etienne Balibar and Sandro Mezzadra, "Borders, Citizenship, War, Class"

Recommended:

Week 7, Apr 3: READING PERIOD

Required:

Jenny Edkins, *Missing: People in Politics*

(Read Intro, Conclusion and two other chapters of your choice. Your goal is to be able to use Edkins as a way to comprehend and translate the crisis she is articulating in terms of our present. What would be a question you could construct out of the engagement so far that could be energised by Edkins's approach". This would be the midterm statement of purpose/project written in conversation with what we have encountered so far.

Supplementary:

Recommended:

Due Date for Midterm Proposal (and Notebook) to Be Submitted: FRIDAY, 6 APRIL 2018 by 4 pm.
You may just place your proposal in the notebook.

Week 8, Apr 10: Gender, Sex, Violence

Required:

Veena Das, "Violence and the Work of Time"

Veena Das, "Violence, Gender, and Subjectivity"

Jasbir Puar, "Homonationalism as Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities"

Rosie Braidotti, "The Postsecular Turn in Feminism"

Supplementary:

Jasbir Puar, "Rethinking Homonationalism"

Jasbir Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages"

Recommended:

Veena Das, *Life and Words*

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*

Week 9, Apr 17: Religion, Race, Nation

Required:

Talal Asad, "Secularism, Nation-State, Religion"

Corey Walker, "The Empire and the Garden"

Supplementary:

Talal Asad, "The Construction of Religion as Anthropological Category"

Recommended:

Rogers Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”

Week 10, Apr 24: The Other in and Out of History

Required:

Lynn Ramey, *Black Legacies*, Intro, Ch 2, 5 (available via MUNI online e-books library)

Jo Ann Moran Cruz, Review of Jerrold Frakes, *Contextualising the Muslim Other*

Supplementary:

Cord Whitaker, Review of *Black Legacies*

Recommended:

Ghassan Hage, *White Nation*, Conclusion

Week 11, May 1: The Otherwise Beyond the Other

Required:

Denise DaSilva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Preface, Introduction, Conclusion)

Jared Hickman, “Globalisation and the Gods, or the Political Theology of Race”

Supplementary:

Recommended:

Week 12, May 8: Fugue States

Required:

Nicolas De Genova, “Spectres of Migrant (Il)Legality”

Omar Robert Hamilton, “Refugee Stasis”

Ghassan Hage, “Etat de Siege: A Dying Domesticating Colonialism?”

Supplementary:

Recommended:

Lynn Doty, “Why is People’s Movement Restricted?”

Week 13, May 15: Insurgent Globalities

Required:

Fred Moten, “Notes on Passage”

Denise Da Silva, “Fractal Thinking”

Rizvana Bradley, "Poethics of the Open Boat"
Fred Moten, "The New International of Insurgent Feeling"

And others...

Supplementary:

Recommended:

Due Date for Work to Be Submitted: TBD

ONLINE FORUM Initiators and Presenters

***The weeks are the weeks the listed people INITIATE the online forum. This means they will PRESENT in class the following week.**

Week 2: Lucie + Miranda (presented on 27.2)

Week 3: Pareesha + Patricia (initiate forum on 5.3, present on 13.3)

Week 4: Kristina + Daniela (initiate forum on 12.3, present on 20.3)

Week 5: Marcela + Katerina (initiate forum on 19.3, present on 27.3)

Week 6: Jakub + Petra (initiate forum on 26.3, present on 10.4)

Week 8: Viktoria F. + Liv (initiate forum on 9.4, present on 17.4)

Week 9: Viktoria M. + Amber (initiate forum on 16.4, present on 24.4)

Week 10: Veronika + Pawel (initiate forum on 23.4, present on 1.5)