

## **Postcolonial Engagements**

Seminar in Sociology 920:570

Spring 2014

Monday 1:00-3:40

Sociology Seminar Room, Davison Hall

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### **Description**

What is the relationship between postcolonial theory, social practice and everyday forms of domination? This course engages the complexities of postcolonial theory through conversations with, and engagements around, sociological theory and method. We will begin with formative texts in postcolonial theory, such as Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and engage the debates posited by the Subaltern Studies Collective. We will also read works by social scientists who focus on post-colonial sites and practices, such as in Pierre Bourdieu's *Logic of Practice* and Timothy Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy*. Finally, we will engage with questions of decolonization and alternate visions of the future through a reading of Chela Sandoval, Deborah Thomas and Walter Mignolo. In the end, we will not perform an exhaustive survey of the vast literature on colonialism and postcolonialism, but will choose key "engagements" with colonialism and postcoloniality from which you may want to develop another bibliography that takes up social practice and sociology through alternate genealogies, threads of meaning, and understandings.

This seminar will involve a careful reading of texts that have informed postcolonial theory, along with an exploration of the racial, gendered, sexual, national and global manifestations of sociological theories, methods and practices. We will explore the kinds of conceptual work postcolonial theory can do for sociologists and activists, and the multiple, contested histories of theoretical production and reproduction, as well the local, national and transnational manifestations of the postcolonial and the work of its citational practices. In so doing, we will explore questions of who gets to claim theory, postcoloniality and the practice of sociological inquiry.

### **Learning Goals and Assessment**

- Acquire broad understanding of the theoretical and empirical approaches taken to account for the connections between colonialism, post-colonialism and decolonization;
- Learn about the current state of knowledge on post-colonialism and social theory;
- Understand the conceptual and empirical connections between colonialism and current formations of violence, exclusion, inequality and racialization;
- Critically analyze the conceptual and empirical underpinnings of research on postcoloniality;
- Identify significant new research questions related to postcolonialism and decolonization.

In order to measure achievement of these goals, the following methods will be used:

- Participating in in-depth weekly discussions of assigned readings;
- Leading the discussion for a seminar;
- Writing synthetical critical reports on assigned readings;
- Writing a final research paper.

### **Requirements**

You will be expected to attend class, read carefully and participate actively in the weekly discussion. Attendance and participation, along with a weekly one-page discussion paper, will count for 30% of your grade. Other requirements include a 200-300 word abstract of your proposed final paper (15%) and leading discussion for one class (15%). The final research paper should be 6,000-8,000 words long and will comprise 40% of your grade.

### **Diversity Statement**

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

### **Readings**

The following books are available at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore on Douglass Campus and on reserve at Douglass Library:

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, 2013: Harvard University Press). [HQ1170.A346]

Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge, 1990: Polity Press). [GN468.B6813]

Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Portsmouth, 1993: Heinemann Publishers). [PQ3989.2.D57A813]

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York, 2008: Grove Press). [GN645.F313]

Kesha Fikes, *Managing African Portugal* (Durham, 2009: Duke University Press). [DP534.C36F55]

Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York, 1988: Oxford University Press). [DS463.S426]

Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Durham, 2011: Duke University Press). [CB245.M495]

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy* (New York, 2013: Verso). [NOT IN THE LIBRARY]

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1994: Vintage). [DS12.S24]

Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis, 2000: University of Minnesota Press). [HM449.S27]

Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, 2010: Princeton University Press). [ELECTRONIC RESOURCE]

Deborah Thomas, *Exceptional Violence: Embodied Citizenship in Transnational Jamaica* (Durham, 2011: Duke University Press). [F1874.T466]

## Class Schedule

- January 27: **Introduction: Postcolonial Sociology, Decolonizing Possibility?**
- February 3: **Critical Foundations I**  
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*  
Film screening of *Black Skin, White Masks*
- February 10: **Gendered Histories**  
Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*  
Film screening of *Battle of Algiers*
- February 17: **Logics of Practice**  
Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*  
Film screening of *Sociology is a Martial Art*
- February 24: **Critical Foundations II**  
Edward Said, *Orientalism*  
Film Screening of interview with Edward Said
- March 3: **Carbon Democracy**  
Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*
- March 10: **Archival Grains**  
Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*
- March 17: **Spring Break!!!! No class meeting.**
- March 24: **Critical Foundations III**  
Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds, *Selected Subaltern Studies*
- March 31: **Violences and the Post-Colony**  
Deborah Thomas, *Exceptional Violence*
- April 7: **Salvation Narratives**  
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"  
Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*
- April 14: **Post-Colonies, Neo-Colonies?**  
Kesha Fikes, *Managing African Portugal*
- April 21: **Decolonizing Method**  
Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*
- April 28: **Decolonizing Shifts**  
Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*
- May 5: **Presentations and Conclusions: Final papers due!**