

## COURSE CURRICULA DOSSIER

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The following is a list of course descriptions for original courses I have designed to be taught at the undergraduate level. Syllabi are available upon request (for job search committees and academic employers only). Please be respectful and do not duplicate course descriptions without permission.

### TEACHING AREAS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Introduction to African American Studies  
Black Avant-Garde Film & Video  
20<sup>th</sup> Century African American Literature  
Black Intellectual History: The Black Artist as Intellectual  
Theorizing Sexuality and Gender in the African Diaspora

Contemporary African American Art  
Black Popular Culture  
Critical Approaches to Black Popular Music  
African American Literary and Cultural Criticism  
AIDS and/in the African Diaspora

### TEACHING AREAS IN AMERICAN STUDIES

American Studies: Theory and Method  
Queer Theory: 1980-Present  
Racial Formation in the U.S.: Theories & Approaches  
Queer Film and Video

History of Sexuality in the United States  
AIDS Activism & Queer Counterpublics  
Methods in American Studies: Ethnography & Fieldwork  
Topics in American Studies: Performance/Performativity

### Courses in African American Studies:

#### **Introduction to African American Studies**

This course provides students with an introduction to the scholarly study of black culture in the United States as well as an intellectual history of African American Studies' disciplinary formation/institutionalization. Writers will include: W.E.B. DuBois, John Hope Franklin, Paul Gilroy, Henry Louis Gates, Cornel West, Joy James, Patricia Hill Collins, Robin Kelly, Hazel Carby, Dwight McBride, Darlene Clark Hines, and Manning Marable, among others.

#### **Contemporary African American Art**

This course focuses on African American art after 1960. Our emphasis will be on five specific mediums: conceptual art, performance art, video, installation, and photography (though we will discuss painting and drawing to a lesser extent). Representative artists will include Adrian Piper, Lorna Simpson, William Pope L., Kara Walker, Glenn Ligon, David Hammons, and Renee Cox, among others.

#### **Black Avant-Garde Film & Video**

This seminar introduces students to the history of avant-garde black filmmaking in London, New York, and Los Angeles. Films by Haile Gerima, Issac Julien, the Sankofa Film Collective, Marlon Riggs, Steve McQueen, Melvin Van Peebles, and Julie Dash (among others) will be considered alongside scholarly perspectives by Manthia Diawara, Jacqueline Bobo, bell hooks, Kobena Mercer, Kara Walker, and other major black film theorists.

#### **Black Popular Culture**

This course is an introduction to contemporary mass-mediated African American cultural forms. Our emphasis will be on black cultural production in the post-civil rights era, beginning with the Reagan era (1980-1989) and spanning right up to our current era of the Obama-Presidency. Focusing on four mediums: television, film, print culture and popular music, we will pay close attention to the ways that black cultural workers have used mass-mediated forms to respond to various socio-political conditions effecting (and often constraining) the production of black urban cultures. Moreover, we will focus our attention on a question once made famous by Stuart Hall: what exactly constitutes the "blackness" of black popular culture? In the context of the U.S., does the phrase "black popular culture" refer to work produced by African Americans exclusively, or is it simply a reference to a specific set of cultural *forms* (i.e. hip hop, soul) that may not necessarily be created or consumed by black people directly? In the age of Amy Winehouse and Eminem, have we reached a "post-black" moment in black popular culture and media? We will survey recent and classic criticism by black cultural studies scholars such as Mark Anthony Neal, Nelson George, Daphne Brooks, Herman Gray, Trey Ellis, Imani Perry, and Stuart Hall, and examine the work of figures such as R. Kelly, Eddie Murphy, Spike Lee, Michael Jackson, Lil Kim, Bill Cosby, Amy Winehouse, John Singleton, Savion Glover and Flava Flav, among others.

## **20<sup>th</sup> Century African American Literature**

A survey of the 20<sup>th</sup> century African American literature (and its attendant scholarly criticism), with an emphasis on fiction, autobiography, and drama. We will focus on four major historical periods and “movements” in the twentieth century canon: the Harlem Renaissance, 1950s Naturalism and Realism, the Black Arts Movement, and African American literature in the “post-soul” and post-civil rights era. Novelists and writers discussed will include Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Ann Petry, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, Ntozake Shange, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and Ishmael Reed.

## **Critical Approaches to Black Popular Music**

What exactly is “black music”? In other words, how do we know “black music” when we hear it, feel it, or see it performed? This course introduces students to one of the most frequent objects of analysis within African American Studies: black popular music. Our emphasis will be on two genres: Rhythm & Blues (Soul) and Hip Hop. We will examine scholarly manuscripts and essays by Paul Gilroy, Mark Anthony Neal, Nelson George, Jason King, Daphne Brooks, Kyra Gaunt, Tricia Rose, Raquel Rivera, and Robin Kelley, among others.

## **Courses in American Studies:**

### **American Studies: Theory and Method**

An introduction to the traditional methodological and conceptual paradigms that have shaped the field of American Studies. We will consider various methodological trends including literary criticism and theory; historical and archival approaches; material and visual culture analysis as well as ethnography and fieldwork. We will focus on certain “keywords” that have become frequent themes of concern for scholars doing American Studies. These keywords/phrases will include: nationalism, class, labor, citizenship, race, sexuality, “cultural production” and “the culture industry,” immigration, and gender. We will also pay particular attention to the various “new directions” American Studies has taken within the past 30 years.

### **Topics in American Studies: Performance/Performativity**

“Performance” and “performativity” have become loaded keywords in the field of American Studies within the past three decades. This seminar introduces students to the major conceptual, theoretical, and methodological paradigms that are useful for approaching these two loaded concepts (which are interrelated, though quite distinct from one another). Students should leave this course with a firm grounding in the “performance studies strand” of American Studies. They will also be trained to discern the theoretical differences between “performance” and “performativity.” We will review the scholarship of major theorists in critical theory and performance studies including J.L. Austin, John Searle, Shoshana Felman, Judith Butler, Richard Schechner, Diana Taylor, Joseph Roach, Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett and Victor Turner, among others.

### **Methods in American Studies: Ethnography & Fieldwork**

This course focuses on methodological and conceptual approaches to ethnographic fieldwork within an American Studies context. Specifically, how can students use ethnography as a research strategy for approaching key themes in American Studies such as citizenship, class, race, sexuality, labor, or nationalism? We will examine exemplary ethnographic case studies produced by interdisciplinary scholars as well as Anthropologists focusing on the United States. Special attention will be paid to the utility of using fieldwork methods to approach U.S. expressive cultures. What, if anything, makes an “American Studies approach” to ethnography different, than say, the disciplines of Sociology or Anthropology?

### **Queer Film and Video**

Advanced seminar focusing on queer filmmakers and video artists since 1950. Topics will include: the “screening” of sexuality and difference; queer authorship and spectatorship; the visual culture of trauma; AIDS and documentary queer film and media; the emergence of New Queer Cinema, and the relationship between sexuality and film form. Filmmakers and artists to be discussed will include Andy Warhol, Jack Smith, Todd Haynes, Derek Jarman, Greg Bordowitz, Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Richard Fung, Tom Joslin & Mark Massi, and David Wojnarowicz, among others. A background in basic film theory is encouraged, though not required.

### **Topics in the History of Sexuality: AIDS & Queer Publics**

This advanced seminar provides students with a rigorous overview of the history of AIDS activism in the United States as well as an introduction to the frontlines of contemporary activism around the continued epidemic. Through our reading material, we will pay attention to the unique and richly varied forms that queer “activism” around the AIDS epidemic has taken including examples from photography and visual art, film and video, direct action protests, theater, literature, and

cultural criticism. These historical readings will be supplemented, when available, by guest lectures from representatives from community-based organizations such as The ACT UP Oral History Project, The Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), the Visual AIDS Project, and People of Color in Crisis (P.O.C.C.), among others. Topics discussed will include the politics of pornography and "bare backing;" club culture and queer nightlife scenes; bathhouses and public sex; AIDS and the prison industrial complex, histories of AIDS activist community initiatives such as the AIDS Memorial Quilt and the SILENCE=DEATH project of ACT UP; the emergence of alternative AIDS film, video, and media collectives; people of color and the "new face" of AIDS; the criminality of HIV positive non-disclosure; and the politics behind the "end of AIDS" as a mainstream queer social justice issue in light of a more recent focus on "gay marriage."

### **Queer Theory: 1980-Present**

This course will provide students with a comprehensive introduction to queer theory and its foundational texts. Theorists may include: Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Gloria Anzaldua, Judith Butler, Michael Warner, Leo Bersani, Lee Edelman, Jose Esteban Munoz, Roderick Ferguson, Judith Halberstam, E. Patrick Johnson, Gayatri Gopinath, Robert Reid Pharr, Tim Dean, Lisa Duggan, and David Halperin.

### **History of Sexuality in the United States**

A survey of key historical and theoretical texts for approaching histories of sexuality in the United States. Texts may include: Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality (Vol. 1)*, George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, Jonathan Ned Katz's *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, Lisa Duggan's *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity*, John Howard's *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*, E. Patrick Johnson's *Sweet Tea: An Oral History of Gay Black Men of the South*, Siobhan Somerville's *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*, and David Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*.