Cultural Analysis and Theory Department

Graduate Courses

in

Comparative Literature

Cultural Studies

Women’s and Gender Studies

Fall 2016
CLT 509.S01
History of Literary Criticism
Robert Harvey

What better way to explore the theoretical terrain that will underpin your own literary & cultural studies research than to read a judicious sampling of criticism’s entire history since Plato? All of the fundamental questions with which we must still reckon today are to be found in the anthology that we will explore broadly and deeply. While primarily classical, our sweeping selection illustrates the extensions, parries, meanderings, and challenges that modernity has applied to the foundations. Finally, this seminar will also give you a chance to test your own methods of analysis and interpretation against a litmus test of your choice.

Wednesdays 4:00pm-6:50pm Humanities 2128

CLT/CST 609.S01
Advanced Topics in Comparative Literature/Cultural Studies
“Traveling People, Travel Cultures”
E.K. Tan

As a result of global and transnational activities, the movement of people and cultures across the globe has propelled a non-homogenous traffic between different geopolitical locales, diversifying the very practice of translation. Translation of cultures, in this sense, is more than a simple act of exchange; it involves the circulation of meanings and the negotiation of difference through the production and reproduction of culture. This dynamic energy of cultural (re)productivity encourages the creativity of individuals and cultural products as active participants within global and transnational systems. Even though so, to a great extent, these mobile individuals and cultural products are still often produced and reproduced as cultural symbols of national or regional identity. This seminar proposes the investigation of transnational and global systems of power via various modes of cultural production in art, literature, and media. We will focus on issues of local and global migration, the (un)translatability of national traditions, cultural (re)negotiations, and the translational/transnational politics of circulation to engage in an interdisciplinary examination of the movement of people and cultures.

Mondays 4:00pm-6:50pm Humanities 2052
All doctoral students in CAT take the Teaching Practicum in their first year. The Practicum familiarizes students with the Stony Brook undergraduate curriculum and data on Stony Brook undergraduates. It covers practical pedagogical issues, as well as theoretical and policy issues concerning the aims of education and the social role of the university. Student will develop a syllabus for an undergraduate course. Students will also observe others teaching and reflect on these experiences with the class. The Practicum Director serves as an advisor to first year students, prior to their selection of advisors in the second semester.

**Mondays**
1:00pm-3:50pm
Humanities 2052

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‘What is the Contemporary?’ is the question that inspired one of Giorgio Agamben’s lectures, informed as it was by Friedrich Nietzsche’s investigation of the contemporary in his *Untimely Meditations*. An investigation that in itself is contemporary with Baudelaire’s quest for the fleeting moment in his very influential essay on modernity. Agamben’s question will help us read and discuss some of the most important texts in Cultural studies – from the 19th Century until today. Our reading will be informed by contemporary collections of poems, novels and films from the US, Europe, Africa and Asia, that in their different ways, will help us address the questions raised by theory, and look for new questions to propel further investigations. Interesting for us will be books by Joyce Carol Oates, C.K. Williams, Binyavanga Wainaina, Philip Roth, Leila Aboulela, Jonathan Franzen, Teju Cole, films by Spike Lee and many others. Students will also have the opportunity to suggest books to read and discuss. Our goal in class is to theorize the moment when one of us enters a bookshop and looks at the stand displaying the newest acquisitions, reads the ‘books’ section of a newspaper and confronts the review of the latest publications, goes to the movies with friends and family or peruses the newsfeed of the social media. What is the Contemporary? That is our question. Required acquisition is *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.

**Wednesdays**
4:00pm-6:50pm
Humanities 2052
WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES CORE

WST 601.S01
Feminist Theories
Victoria Hesford

This course will offer a critical history of feminist theory through a sustained engagement with the key concepts and debates that have shaped the contested field of feminist theory over the past forty or so years. We begin with a contemporary preoccupation in feminist theory—“the ontological turn”—and then move out and back, mapping the poststructuralist, postcolonial, Marxist, and psychoanalytic schools of thought with which and against which feminist theory established itself as a distinct body of thought in the late twentieth century. We end with the challenge of queer and trans theory—a challenge motivated by the generative capacities of gender and sexuality—and the questioning of the function—political and epistemological—of the role of theory itself. In our reading of the material we will focus on how feminism has both utilized and “spoken back” to Marxism, post-structuralism, and psychoanalysis, while also paying attention to the theoretical and political impasses and conundrums that continue to make feminist theory an animated and animating practice of thought in the present moment. Key thinkers in this critical history include Gayle Rubin, Audre Lorde, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Rey Chow, Joan Scott, Sara Ahmed, Judith Butler, Chela Sandoval, and Elizabeth Grosz.

Mondays 4:00pm-6:50pm Humanities 2018

WST 680.S01
Interdisciplinary Research Design
Kadji Amin

This hands-on and workshop oriented course has three principle aims. The first is to teach Women’s Studies graduate students from diverse disciplines proficiency in minor but important scholarly genres – research and fellowship proposals, conference paper abstracts, teaching statements, job letters, and book reviews. Whereas graduate training is often focused on big ideas and long papers, success in academia means being able to communicate one’s ideas effectively within a series of defined genres – the rules of which are often not directly conveyed. Hence, the first purpose of this course is to demystify the hidden rules of distinct scholarly genres and to teach students how to go about decoding the rules of new genres on their own.

The second aim is to have students reflect on and improve their research and writing process. As part of this emphasis on process, we will read about and discuss different strategies and platforms for note-taking, keeping track of ideas, using time effectively, organizing, drafting, and revising.

Finally, this class will function as a writing workshop. Approximately one hour of each class will be devoted to workshopping one student’s writing. The goal of workshopping is to put into action the notion of writing as a process, one of finding the kernels, within one’s writing, that are most promising and figuring out the most effective way to develop them.

Tuesdays 1:00pm-3:50pm Humanities 2018
WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES ELECTIVES

WST 610.S01/SOC 509.S01
Advanced Topics in Women’s Studies
“Theory, Method, and Politics of Ethnography”
Melissa Forbis

What is good social science research? And what is social science research good for? These will be central questions of our inquiry in this seminar. We will examine ethnography as a qualitative research methodology within the social sciences, drawing from feminist and gender studies, anthropology, and sociology in particular. Participants in the course will take part in ongoing theoretical debates around the questions of interdisciplinarity, the ethics of field research, the politics of ethnographic representation, and the practice of community engaged research. We will read and discuss a wide range of recent ethnographies, as well as critical contemporary assessments of scholarship and methods. The course will also briefly consider the relationship of other genres of writing to ethnography, asking "what counts as evidence"? In addition to learning and practicing traditional and alternative research methods, seminar participants will be expected to design their own ethnographic pilot project.

Wednesdays 4:00pm-6:50pm Humanities 2018

WST 610.S02/SPN 612.01
Advanced Topics in Women’s Studies
“Global Women’s Film Traditions”
A. Kaplan/K. Vernon

From its earliest manifestations, cinema was born with global ambitions, but throughout time, films have also served as privileged outlets of expression for specific experiences of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality and/or locality. In this course we will explore the role of women in global cinema as this role has changed over time, and as it takes varied forms in select nations and regions. We will establish a critical, theoretical and historical framework for understanding the limits on women’s access to film directing and to exhibition and distribution of their work. At the same time we will interrogate the notion of women’s cinema, extending its reach beyond an exclusive focus on female directors to consider other claims to authorship and agency by producers, screenwriters, performers and even spectator/critics whose readings assert their role in the production and reception of meaning. We will then raise a number of questions to do with themes women’s cinema addresses and how these have shifted: the political issues (individual and collective) their films raise, the choice and uses of film genres, and the increasing transnationalism women’s films entail. In doing so we will consider the function of global women’s cinema as a means of speaking across borders, East/West and North/South.

Tuesdays 4:00pm-7:00pm Melville Lbr N3060
Also of Interest

Courses in Philosophy, Hispanic Languages and Literature, Music, and English often qualify as M.A. and Ph.D electives. Check with the Director of Graduate Studies once you have a description of a particular course. Please also refer to our Cultural Studies Elective brochure.

### Independent Study Courses

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