

WST 6935/4930 Special Topics: Gender, Popular Culture, and Performance

Course meeting times and location on One UF and Canvas

This seminar is an advanced introduction to the interdisciplinary fields of cultural studies and performance studies. We will explore the nuances of culture as a site of meaning making, debate, political economy, and imagination, and investigate how performance opens spaces of world making for individuals and communities. Course materials will center on questions of gender, race, and sexuality and reflect my expertise in Black and Latinx studies. Class discussions will focus on understanding key theories, concepts, and methods in cultural and performance studies in addition to collaborative cultural analysis.

Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

E-mail: jillianhernandez@ufl.edu

Office hour times and location on Canvas

Learning objectives:

—Understanding key theoretical and methodological approaches in cultural studies and performance studies.

—Applying theoretical frameworks and methods to an original research project.

—Gaining skills in textual, visual, and performance analysis.

—Gaining professional academic skills of oral presentation, class discussion facilitation, proposal writing, peer review, and revision of drafts.

Required Texts and Media

Book: *Ricanness: Enduring Time in Anticolonial Performance* by Sandra Ruiz (2019, NYU Press)

I will place a course reserve request for *Ricanness*.

Other required materials will be available as PDFs on Canvas, items in library course reserves, or as web links on the syllabus.

Materials and Supplies Fee

None

About me, Dr. Hernandez:



*My research explores gender and sexuality in Black and Latinx art and popular culture, with a focus on body aesthetics and style. I have a Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers University and have a long-standing practice as a curator of contemporary art. My book *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment* was published by Duke University Press in 2020.*

I believe that visual art, music, film, and popular culture are powerful learning tools, and I use them frequently to enrich our classroom experiences. My classroom is a space for experimentation. It is a site for dialogue, where students are acknowledged as theorists, artists, and producers of knowledge. While aiming to create a safe space for students to forge connections between course material, larger society, and their own lives, I also encourage them to engage with ideas that challenge them, take productive risks, and maintain space for contradiction and flux as they progress in their intellectual development. I treat my students as whole and complex beings and create an environment where we can discuss ideas with a mind toward the social, cultural, and ethical implications of knowledge.

I invite you to be yourself, to recognize that you hold knowledge worth sharing, and to acknowledge your creative potential!

Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Undergraduate Coordinator Dr. Joanna Neville: jneville@ufl.edu

Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).

Grading in this Course

As a teacher, I am interested in students engaging with varied perspectives. Students in my courses are not penalized for not agreeing with a particular argument or perspective we explore. My only expectation is that you demonstrate understanding of the ideas we engage with in class.

I calculate grades in this course using a point system. Assignments have corresponding point values that add up to a maximum of 100. Point values for assignments are listed below. I use this scale in determining your final grade.

Letter Grade	Points
A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60
S	<59

Information on UF's grading policy can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

You should expect your work to be graded within 7 days of submission. If I anticipate a delay due to unforeseen circumstances, I will inform you.

Trigger Warning and Sensitive Content Notice

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of nudity, sexual acts, and physical and emotional violence. Some materials describe or depict experiences of trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning in the fields of cultural and performance studies. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort, it may be in your interest to drop the course.

Course Assignments

Your final grade will be based on the following: (more details on assignments are provided on Canvas)

All assignments are submitted on Canvas except for oral presentations in class.

Midterm reflection paper: 10 points

The aim of this assignment is to provide you with space to reflect on the material we have engaged in the first half of the semester. It is an informal paper that is to be written in the first person. You can shape your paper in response to the following prompts:

Which ideas have been the most compelling to you?

What ethical/political/methodological questions have lingered?

Have any of the cultural works/texts we've engaged expanded or challenged your view on a subject in a productive way?

Is the course material linking with some of the other scholarship you're encountering outside of class or with current cultural or political events?

(For graduate students) Is any of the work we're engaging informing your thesis/dissertation work?

Please be sure to reference specific authors, artists, theories, and texts. The paper should be 4-5 doubled spaced pages.

Participation: 10 points

Class participation means you follow the attendance policy below, have done the assigned reading, and come to each class prepared with questions and comments for the discussion. If you are not comfortable speaking in a classroom setting, please let me know. If this is the case, you can substitute oral participation with handwritten comments submitted to me on the day of class. There are no substitutes for graded oral class presentations.

Please bring course texts to class in either hard copy form or on your laptop/tablet, as we will often read extensive excerpts of texts together.

Participation is broken up into two 5-point assignments:

—Mid-term participation self-assessment

—End of semester participation self-assessment

Research Project: 40 points total

You will conduct an original analysis of a cultural work or performance using relevant theories and methods we have covered in class. The project will culminate in a seminar paper and conference style presentation. Undergraduate students will write a paper of 7-8 pages, graduate students 12-13 double spaced pages at 12-point font.

The research project is broken up into 5 assignments and will be an opportunity to apply your learning and gain professional skills in proposal preparation, peer review, applying feedback in revision, and oral presentation of research.

Proposal: 5 points

Paper first draft: 10 points

Peer review: 5 points

Project presentation: 10 points

Paper revision: 10 points

Class Discussion Prompts and Culture Share: 10 points

Each student (or pair of students) will offer discussion prompts and the sharing of a cultural work relevant to the class theme for one seminar meeting. This is a brief presentation of questions, commentary, and media at the beginning of class of no more than 10 minutes. The aim of the assignment is to provoke conversation regarding the day's materials. The provocation should address all of the assigned materials, individually and/or thematically.

You can choose to provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s) of the scholarship being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars, 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship we have engaged in the class.

Structured Discussion Preparations (SDP), 6 due, each worth 5 points

Structured notes in outline form on 6 texts of your choice.

SDP sheets will appear as word documents linked in modules.

Attendance policy

You have two free absences. Each additional absence thereafter will result in -5 points of your participation grade unless your absence is excused under the UF policy stated above and documentation is provided if relevant.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

This is an in-person class, meetings are not delivered via zoom or zoom recorded.

Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

Please contact me if you anticipate an absence or soon after your absence to discuss your situation.

Participation and Discussion Guidelines:

This course explores topics that affect people's lives in significant ways. Course topics also relate to contemporary social and cultural issues and as such may result in the sharing of personal perspectives and experiences. We will respect differences of perspective and each other's confidentiality. We will engage one another with consideration. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Correspondence:

I can answer questions during office hours or via e-mail. Please be aware that I receive a high volume of e-mails, if your query is time sensitive, please indicate that in the subject line.

Questions that require substantive engagement, such as commentary on an assignment, would be best addressed during office hours. I will expect for you to check your UF e-mail once a day in the event that there is a schedule change or if I need to send you important information. Class alerts will be sent via the Canvas system.

Academic Integrity:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states 'We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.' On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.' The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class

Late Submission of Assignments:

Assignments turned in late will lose 1 point per calendar day. If you foresee an issue in completing your assignment on time, please contact me as soon as possible. Assignments over three days late will not be accepted without medical or other relevant documentation.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See “Get Started With the DRC” Disability Resource Center webpage (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible.

UF Counseling and Wellness Center offers individual counseling, wellness counseling, couples counseling, problem solving help, CERC crisis services, and other assistance:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8 am-5 pm, Monday through Friday)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is unacceptable anywhere on UF’s campus. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/sexual_harassment/

Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email that they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/.

Consider Adding a Certificate in Women's Studies

If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV.

The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see: <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/graduate-certificate-in-womens-studies/> And contact graduate coordinator Dr. Kendal Broad (klbroad@ufl.edu) with any questions.

Course Schedule

August 25th—Class introduction

September 1st—Labor Day holiday, no class

What is culture?

September 8th—

Stuart Hall— “What is this Black in Black Popular Culture?”

Dick Hebdige—Selections from *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*

Jacqueline Bobo—Selections from *Black Women as Cultural Readers*

What is performance?

September 15th—

Susan Manning— “Performance” in Keywords for American Cultural Studies

Judith Butler— “Gender is Burning”

In-class screening of *Paris is Burning*

Queer of Color Critique (or, The School of Muñoz Part 1)

September 22nd--

bell hooks—"Is Paris Burning?"

José Estebán Muñoz—Introduction from *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*

Marcos González—Introduction and "Glimpsing Angie Xtravaganza: The Trans Latinx Imaginary of Paris is Burning" from *Revolting Indolence: The Politics of Slacking, Lounging, and Daydreaming in Queer and Trans Latinx Culture*

Latina Abjection and Excess (or, the School of Muñoz Part 2)

September 29th--

Jillian Hernandez— "Sexual-Aesthetic Excess: Or, How Chonga Girls Make Class Burn" from *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment*

Leticia Alvarado— "Of Betties Decorous and Abject: *Ugly Betty's* America la fea and Nao Bustamante's America la bella" from *Abject Performances: Aesthetics Strategies in Latino Cultural Production*

Iván A. Ramos—"Breaking Down, Breaking Together: Xandra Ibarra's *Nude Laughing* and the Violence of the Encounter"

The School of Muñoz Part 3

October 6th--

José Estebán Muñoz—Introduction from *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*

Kareem Khubchandani—"Sub-kulcha: The Meaning of Ishtyle" and "Snakes on the Dance Floor: Bollywood and Diva Worship" from *Ishtyle: Accenting Gay Indian Nightlife*

Mid-term reflection paper due October 10th

October 13th–

Mid-term concepts review and final project discussion

Research project proposal due October 17th

Theorizing Performance, Time, and Coloniality

October 20th–

Sandra Ruiz–Introduction and Chapters 1-3, *Ricanness: Enduring Time in Anticolonial Performance*

Fandoms & Culture Industries

October 27th–

Deborah Paradez–“Becoming Selena, Becoming Latina” from *Selenidad: Selena, Latinos, and the Performance of Memory*

Yessica Garcia Hernandez–“Intoxication as Feminist Pleasure: Drinking, Dancing, and Un-dressing with/for Jenni Rivera”

Raquel Moreira– “Favela Funk as Industry and Funkeiras’ Autonomy”

Research paper first draft due October 31st

Objecthood, Performance, and Theories of Racialized Embodiment

November 3rd–

Uri McMillan–Introduction and Chapter 4, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*

Joshua Chambers Letson– “Nina Simone and the Work of Minoritarian Performance” from *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life*

Anne Anlin Cheng– “Gleaming Things” from *Ornamentation: A Feminist Theory for the Yellow Woman*

Peer-review of research paper draft due November 7th

The Archive and the Repertoire

November 10th–

Diana Taylor– “Acts of Transfer” and “La Raza Cosmetica: Walter Mercado Performs Latino Psychic Space” from *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*

In-class screening of *Mucho Mucho Amor: The Legend of Walter Mercado*

Nov. 17th and Dec. 1st–Final project presentations

Revisions of research paper due December 8th