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**ENG 660**  
**Studies in Race and Ethnicity**  
 Spring 2017 (CR 36677)  
 Tuesdays 10am-12:50pm  
 448 PLC Hall

**Goals** This course is an introduction to historical materialist methods of cultural studies, with an emphasis on Cedric Robinson’s rendering of the Black Radical Tradition. We will examine language and aesthetics as “constitutive human processes” in the modern world, with particular attention to relations of capital, race, nation-state, and social reproduction. Course work will guide you to understand and apply methods of marxian analysis and to participate in the ongoing criticism and evolution of such approaches. In this pursuit, you will become more familiar with critical vocabularies for thinking about modernity and consider how race, class, gender, and sexuality function as determinate forces. As intellectuals, you will also practice grounding yourselves as the center of your own projects and, from this standpoint, responsibly and deliberately position yourselves in the larger ideological terrain in which your work unfolds.

**Texts** Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (at UO Bookstore or preferred vendor)  
 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (at UO Bookstore or preferred vendor)  
 Terrion Williamson, *Scandalize My Name: Black Feminist Practice and the Making of Black Social Life* (at UO Bookstore or preferred vendor)  
*My Beautiful Launderette* (available for viewing at Knight Library Course Reserves)  
 Weekly readings on Canvas course website

**Schedule** (Readings should be done by the date listed)

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| <p><b>Week 1</b><br/>       (April 4)<br/> <i>Introduction: Modernity, Racial Capitalism, Nation-State</i></p> | <p>Robinson, Cedric J. 2000. <i>Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition</i>. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. (Preface and Intro)<br/>       Prashad, Vijay. 2002. <i>Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity</i>. Boston: Beacon Press. (pp. 1-19)<br/>       Mann, Michael. 1984. “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results.” <i>European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie</i> 25 (02): 185–213.<br/>       Benjamin, Walter. 1968 [1940]. “Theses on the Philosophy of History” (H. Zohn, trans.). In <i>Illuminations</i>, edited by Hannah Arendt, 253-264. NY: Schocken.</p> |
| <p><b>Week 2</b><br/>       (April 11)<br/> <i>The Emergence and Limitations of European Radicalism</i></p>    | <p>Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i>, Part I (Ch 1-3)<br/>       Fields, Barbara Jean. 1990. “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America.” <i>New Left Review</i> 181 (June): 95–118.<br/>       Williams, Raymond. 1978. <i>Marxism and Literature</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press: “Ideology,” “Base-Superstructure,” and “Productive Forces”</p>   |
| <p><b>Week 3</b><br/>       (April 18)<br/> <i>Africa’s Transmutation and the Atlantic</i></p>                 | <p>Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i>, Ch 4-5<br/>       Byrd, Jodi. 2011. “‘Been To The Nation, Lord, But I Couldn't Stay There’: American Indian Sovereignty, Cherokee Freedmen and the Incommensurability of the Internal.” <i>Interventions</i> 13 (1): 31-52.</p>  |

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| <i>Slave Trade</i>   | Lowe, Lisa. 2006. "The Intimacies of Four Continents." In <i>Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History</i> , edited by Ann Laura Stoler, 191-212. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  |
| <b>Week 4</b><br>(April 25)<br><i>Historical Archaeology</i>                 | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 6<br>Williams, <i>Marxism and Literature</i> , "Reflection to mediation" and "Determination"<br>Ross, Luana. 1998. Ch 1, "Worlds Collide" from <i>Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality</i> . Austin: University of Texas Press.<br>Kim, Claire Jean. 1999. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." <i>Politics &amp; Society</i> 27 (1): 105–38.<br>Lye, Colleen. 2008. "The Afro-Asian Analogy." <i>PMLA</i> 123 (5): 1732–36. |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>(May 2)<br><i>The Nature of the Black Radical Tradition</i> | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 7<br>Moten, Fred. 2008. "Black Op." <i>PMLA</i> 123 (5): 1743–47.<br>Moten, Fred. 1994. "Music against the Law of Reading the Future and 'Rodney King.'" <i>The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association</i> 27 (1): 51–64.<br>Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2002. "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography." <i>The Professional Geographer</i> 54 (1): 15–24.   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>(May 9)<br><i>Black Life</i>                                | Williamson, Terrion. 2016. <i>Scandalize My Name: Black Feminist Practice and the Making of Black Social Life</i> . New York: Fordham University Press.  |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>(May 16)<br><i>Historiography</i>                           | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 8-9<br>Chandler, Nahum. 2014. "On Paragraph Four of 'The Conservation of Races.'" <i>CR: The New Centennial Review</i> 14(3): 255-288.   |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>(May 23)<br><i>C. L. R. James</i>                           | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 10<br>Hall, Stuart. 1991. "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities." In <i>Culture, Globalization and the World System</i> , edited by Anthony D. King, 41-68. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.<br><i>My Beautiful Launderette</i> . 1985. Directed by Stephen Frears. United States: Orion Classics. DVD. (on Course Reserves)   |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>(May 30)<br><i>Richard Wright</i>                           | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 11<br>Wright, Richard. 1937. "Blueprint for Negro Writing." <i>New Challenge: A Literary Quarterly</i> 2(1): 53-65.<br>Baldwin, James. 1949. "Everybody's Protest Novel." In <i>Notes of a Native Son</i> . New York: Beacon.<br>Mathis, Ayana and Mishra, Pankaj. 2015. <i>New York Times</i> Sunday Book Review Forum.<br>Anastas, Benjamin. 2015. "Teaching the Controversy: James Baldwin and Richard Wright in the Ferguson Era." <i>The New Republic</i> (online).       |
| <b>Week 10</b><br>(June 6)<br><i>An Ending</i>                               | Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> , Ch 12<br>Williams, <i>Marxism and Literature</i> , "Dominant, Residual, Emergent" and "Structure of Feeling"<br><b>Reading Party (in-class)</b><br><b>Papers due 12pm, Tues, June 13 in PLC 473</b>   |

## Activities

- **Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Your progress requires consistency and commitment, so please attend all meetings and mind all deadlines. Laptops, while not preferable, are allowed in class for reading and notes; turn off all whistles, chimes, and cell phones. If you request learning accommodations, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible and/or request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter explaining what you need. If bad weather or an emergency requires cancelling a meeting, I will notify you by email, voicemail, and/or a note on the door.

- **Response Papers (20%)**

To facilitate your participation, every other week (or alternatively, four weeks of the quarter at your choosing) you will write 250-300 words on the week's readings to submit in hard copy at the beginning of class. The paper must include a succinct summation of the readings' key arguments and a well-honed question provoked by your consideration of them. I encourage you to form study groups to try out ideas before each class.

- **Seminar Discussion (10%)**

Students will take turns facilitating the first part of every seminar discussion (~60-75 mins). We will organize the schedule during Week 1. See page 4 for suggestions on how to prepare.

- **“Keyword” Essay (30%)**

**Due Tues, 6/13, 12pm in PLC 473** (10-12 pages, ~ 2500-3000 words including footnotes)

Everyone is responsible to write a “keywords” essay on a word, concept, or paradigm central to your research and/or scholarly interest. A 250-500 word précis of your paper is due in class on 4/18 (Week 3), a working bibliography on 4/25 (Week 4), five pages from the paper on 5/23 (Week 8), and the final paper due on 6/13 (Week 11). See page 5 for guidelines.

- **Writer’s Studio Experiment (30%)**

**Due Week 10 (in-class)**

Your “writer’s studio experiment” requires a minimum of *three* original creative pieces and a 750-1000 word (3-4 page) Artist’s Statement. For each of your pieces, start from a written text that has inspired you intellectually or creatively as you have moved along your path as a thinker—in other words, work whose style, rhetoric, voice, aesthetic, or other special feature has resonated with you and informed your own process of self-discovery as a scholar. Appropriately or creatively reinterpret the facet(s) of their writing that compelled your selection. In your Artist’s Statement, please contextualize each piece by identifying the text that inspired your work and what you admire most about it, followed by a brief explanation for each of your pieces that speaks to your choices, intentions, and process. What was your method of translating someone else’s work into your own? What was fun, frustrating, fulfilling, and/or challenging about the practice of moving from critical reading to creative writing for that particular piece? Conclude your Artist’s Statement by articulating what you have observed about your “own rules, however unspoken” that guide your creative process and/or delimit your creative dilemma (Baldwin, 1964).

## Facilitating Class Discussion in ENG 660

These points are intended as helpful suggestions to prepare you to lead discussion among your graduate peers. Do not hesitate to use your own ideas or to contact me before your turn if you have any questions or concerns.

### In Preparation

1. Read the week's readings as early as possible in order to have plenty of time to contact the professor and/or your peers with questions and ideas.
2. Be sure to take notes during your readings of the main points of each of the assigned texts.
3. Form questions during your reading of points that you think are unclear and of crucial issues that you want to be sure and discuss.

### Framing a Discussion

1. Know where you want to start, but also where you want to end up. Be willing to be flexible in your guidance, but be sure to cover those points you think are crucial.
2. Decide whether **you** want to give a brief overview of the main points of the readings, or whether you want the class as a whole to do this through your guided prompts. In your overview, please do not summarize each of the texts. Instead, consider:
  - What are the overarching themes that connect the readings together? What questions are they all concerned with?
  - What are the major arguments/perspectives about these questions?
  - Are there significant points of divergence, and if so, what are they?
3. Have a ready list of **questions** for your peers to answer, in an order that makes sense intellectually. If you have a set of points or issues (as opposed to questions), you may end up talking more than your peers.
4. Remember that if everyone is talking (a good sign, although silences are normal too), ninety minutes will go by quickly. Be sure you allow enough time to cover major points. Don't leave everything important for the end!

### Suggestions for Questions

1. Let students begin by giving their general impression of the readings. This can often serve to launch discussions into unexpected but productive areas.
2. What evidence and/or rhetorical turns do the authors mobilize to make their points? Are they convincing?
3. Move in the general direction of questions that reach across a whole text, jumping off from specific questions about particular points in one chapter/section.
4. Have questions that refer back to a previous week's readings and/or points raised in discussion.
5. Identify key concepts, debates, theories, and/or general questions from the readings that need clarification and further consideration. Succinctly articulate the complications you see that need to be worked out and present them to us as problems for thought.

### In the Classroom

1. Feel free to follow up a comment with a relevant question to that specific speaker. On the other hand, be careful not to stop an exciting discussion by asking a diverting question.
2. Give each separate reading its due time, but gauge your peers' interest and disinterest in certain sections and shift accordingly.
3. Feel free to incorporate past readings at appropriate times in the discussion if this makes sense to you. I will adjust my half of the discussion to accommodate what you have already covered.
4. Feel free to hand the discussion over to me at any time. I will undoubtedly have other issues that I will want to raise and will do so in the second half of each session.

## Keywords Essay

### Objective

To begin delineating the boundaries of the problem you hope to study and the terrain upon which you will eventually stake claims; towards these ends, to identify a concept crucial to your research goals and explore how you will define, situate, and use that term in a deliberate and rigorous way.

Please bear in mind that the goal of your “keyword” essay is not *generic*—in other words, not an attempt to replicate formal conventions of an increasingly popular way to consolidate ideas (even as, of course, pre-existing examples provide needed models for how to work something through both practically and theoretically). Instead, this assignment revolves around cultivating critical thinking, research, and writing skills and an orientation to longer-term processes essential for meaningful work.

### Guidelines

Please identify and choose one key term or concept that is central to the questions that bring you to graduate study. Examples include but are not limited to, off the top of my head: capitalism, imperialism, settler colonialism, food, racism, ethnicity, ecofeminism, transgender, genocide, Blackness, Latinx, environmental humanities, post-Marxism, and the list goes on and on. Depending on your choice, there are several models that might work for your paper:

1. In the originary spirit of the genre, you may choose to construct an intellectual history or genealogy of the term: tracing its origins, evolution, and utility in scholarly discourse. *Examples:* Raymond Williams *Keywords*; the plethora of anthologies put out by presses such as NYU and Wiley-Blackwell, e.g. you can search <http://keywords.nyupress.org/>
2. If the word, concept, or paradigm has already been worked over many times over (such as, for instance, “ideology,”) then you may choose to focus your essay on the most *recent* debates and discourses that are currently redefining the term’s relevance and horizons. This model might closely resemble a book review essay: centralizing 3-4 recent texts that significantly focus on your keyword and discussing the way these works conceptualize or deploy it, in relation to each other and to pre-existing influential work that has shaped the discourse. *Examples:* the journal *American Quarterly* regularly features this kind of book review essay; you may read through other journals pertinent to your own fields as well and mine for examples.
3. If you are fairly far along already in your consideration of this word, concept, or paradigm, then you can choose to write a more argumentative paper in which you not only synthesize pre-existing work on your keyword but elaborate your own claims—i.e. What is your particular approach to defining this term; how does it build on and/or distinguish itself from pre-existing limits; what compels your revision of the discourses; what does it contribute to our understanding of the problems it attempts to clarify; and what is at stake in conceptualizing this term your way versus another? *Examples:* Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*; Stephanie Neholani Teves, et. al. *Native Studies Keywords*

### Increments

1. Precis (due Week 3, 4/18): What is your “keyword” selection? How does it fit into your broader research interests, or why is it important to you; what is your compelling interest in it? What is your initial plan or strategy for your essay, in reference to the options above or some creative combination of those approaches?
2. Working bibliography (due Week 4, 4/25): Annotated bibliography of 5-6 sources.
3. Five working pages (due Week 8, 5/23): drafted or taken anywhere from the paper.
4. Final paper (due Week 11, 6/13)