AMST 580: READINGS IN CULTURAL STUDIES  
CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL THEORIES  
Professor Dorinne Kondo, ASE and Anthropology  
9-11:50 am, Fridays, on Zoom

This year, “Readings in Cultural Studies” places cutting-edge new work by BIPOC and queer of color theorists in conversation. After interrogating conventional notions of “culture” in both cultural studies and anthropology, we move to the intersections of aesthetics, worldmaking cultural assumptions, and power in its multifarious forms: capitalism, colonialism, militarism, normativities of race, gender, sexuality, ability. We will consider multiple “cultural” domains, from the everyday to the culture industries: music, theater and performance, literature, cinema, and their imbrications in systems of power. Course texts engage affect theory, decoloniality, women of color feminism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, among other perspectives. Nodes of inquiry include, but are not limited to, theorizations of the “minor” in Asian/Asian diasporic studies; Black feminist/ BIPOC feminist theoretical inquiry; genre-bending works and experiments in form. In conjunction with the “Creativity, Theory, Politics” cluster in ASE, we hope to engage with some of these authors through the course of the semester.

READING LIST

Books


Articles on Blackboard

1


Kondo, Dorinne. “’M. Butterfly’: Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity.” *Cultural Critique* 16, no. 16 (1990): 5-29.


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course depends upon your full engagement in the readings and discussion, and I anticipate a lively semester of encounter, generative arguments, and rigorous fun. To make that happen, here are the guidelines:

I. Each week, you will **post a paragraph** that summarizes the main themes, theoretical engagements, and genre interventions the book makes. You will also post a substantive **question for discussion**. This is NOT an informational query, but one that can lead us into the central issues presented by the text(s). **20%**

II. One student will **facilitate discussion** for each class period, collate questions and present the key arguments of the readings. The presentation should last no longer than 20 minutes. **20%**

III. **Participation:** our seminar is premised on your thorough reading of the texts and on your engagement with our discussions in class. This includes offering constructive feedback you’re your colleagues on comment on their descriptions of their final project. **20%**

IV. A **final paper or creative project**, inspired by/ utilizing at least two key texts, will be the culmination of the class. The paper, if it is a “conventional” essay, should be between 15 and 20 pages in length. **40%**
While this course may expand your horizon of possibilities beyond your discipline, you may also use the final paper to explore your dissertation topic, revise a conference paper you have presented or write the nucleus article for publication. I am also open to mixed-genre texts inspired by the textual experimentation we will encounter during the semester. Should you choose that route, conduct research on possible publication outlets that are open to innovations in form.

We will leave time during the semester to workshop your drafts/ creative projects. This is often the most exciting and engaging part of the course, as we offer each other our generative feedback and suggestions. Looking forward to an exciting semester of serious play and rigorous fun. Feel free to take a chance! Try something different!

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*August 27*
Introduction

*September 3*
Dorinne Kondo, *Worldmaking: Race, Performance and the Work of Creativity.*

*September 10*

*September 17: Critical Indigenous Studies*
Chris Finley, selected articles.

*September 24: The Minor*
Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.*
Dorinne Kondo, “‘M. Butterfly’: Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity.”

*October 1*

*Recommended:*
Judith Butler, “Merely Cultural.”

*October 8*
Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings.*

*October 15*
Fall Recess

*October 22*
Workshopping
October 29
Maureen Mahon, “Introduction.” *Black Diamond Queens: African American Women and Rock and Roll*
Nina Eidsheim, “introduction,” and “Bifurcated Listening,” in *The Race of Sound.*

November 5
Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures.*

Professor Keeling will join us at 10 am for a Q and A.

November 12
ASA MEETING, RESEARCH DAY

November 19
Lana Lin, *Freud’s Jaw,* selections.

We will view Prof’s Lin’s film, and she will join us via Zoom.

November 26
Thanksgiving Break

December 3
Final Presentations. Papers due.