

**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**

Cox, Aimee. *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Deleuze and Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Eng, David L, and Jasbir K Puar, eds. “Left of Queer.” Special Issue. *Social Text* 38, no. 4 (2020).

Hong, Cathy Park. *Minor Feelings: an Asian American Reckoning*. New York City, NY: Random House Publishing Group, 2020.

Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black Futures*. New York City, NY: New York University Press, 2019.

Kondo, Dorinne. *Worldmaking: Race, Performance, and the Work of Creativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.

Lorde, Audre. *The Cancer Journals*. Argyle, N.Y: Spinsters Ink, 1980. Selections.

**Articles on Blackboard**

Brooks, Daphne. "Introduction," *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2021.

Butler, Judith. "Merely Cultural." *New Left Review* 227, no. 227 (1998): 33–43.

Eidsheim, Nina. "Introduction," and "Bifurcated Listening: The Inimitable, Imitated Billie Holiday." In *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019.

JanMohamed, Abdul R., and David Lloyd, eds. "Introduction." *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

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

Lin, Lana. *Freud's Jaw and Other Lost Objects: Fractured Subjectivity in the Face of Cancer*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017. Selections.

Mahon, Maureen. *Black Diamond Queens: African American Women and Rock and Roll*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020. Selections.

Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005. Selections.

Yapp, Hentyle. *Minor China: Method, Materialisms, and the Aesthetic*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021. Selections.

## 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**

Aimee Cox, *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*.

### **September 17: Critical Indigenous Studies**

Chris Finley, selected articles.

### **September 24: The Minor**

Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*.

JanMohamed and Lloyd, Introduction, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*.

Dorinne Kondo, “‘M. Butterfly’: Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity.”

### **October 1**

David Eng and Jasbir Puar, eds. *Left of Queer*.

Hentyle Yapp, “Introduction,” *Minor China*.

*Recommended:*

Judith Butler, “Merely Cultural.”

### **October 8**

Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings*.

Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, selections.

### **October 15**

Fall Recess

### **October 22**

Workshopping

**October 29**

Daphne Brooks, "Introduction." *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound*

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.

Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*.

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.**