

AMST 700: Theories and Practices of Professional Development (10491D)

M, 5-7:20 PM Zoom and/or KAP 462

John Carlos Rowe: Office Hours, M, Zoom by appointment (johnrowe@usc.edu)

Course Description/ Program:

This seminar is the “prospectus course,” in which each person completes a draft of his/her/their dissertation prospectus by the end of the Fall semester. Along the way, we will talk about how each dissertation project fits into the disciplines of American and Ethnic Studies, including practical matters of preparing for the job market and less tangible issues such as theories of these disciplines and their related scholarly and pedagogical practices.

The core of our work will be ongoing presentations of your work on the prospectus, culminating in public presentations to the ASE community at the end of the semester. Depending on enrollment, each person will do at least two presentations within the regular seminar, culminating in a third presentation for the ASE community (details below under “Requirements”). Beginning as soon as we can (probably Week 4, 9/19), we will have two presentations per week, beginning with less formal “discussions” or “brain-storming” sessions, in which each person tries out his/her ideas for the prospectus/ dissertation, and moving toward a more formal presentation, including (at the very least) a powerpoint presentation that will be the rehearsal for the public presentation of your work in the final week of the semester.

Beginning in Seminar 11 (November 7), we will begin “rehearsals” of your presentations of your prospectuses to our ASE colleagues. We’ll do through rehearsals for three seminars (Weeks 11, 12, 13), criticizing everything from your content to your technical skills and your mode of presentation.

In that final seminar meeting (November 28), each member of the seminar will present his/ her dissertation prospectus to our colleagues (ASE faculty and graduate students, invited guests) in KAP 462. (It is possible this date and/ or the times will get changed slightly, because we have to work with our colleagues’ schedules, but we’ll tentatively plan on this date and time allotted to the seminar, 5-7:20 PM).

Reading and Writing Together:

We should consider our work together as similar to a “writing group,” which many scholars join to provide ongoing feedback to their writing. Our Research Clusters are similar to such “writing groups.” For us, some contexts will be necessary for each project, so each member of the seminar will be asked to recommend a short reading assignment to the seminar – in addition to whatever written/ other media work that member presents – that will help us contextualize their project. The simplest example of such “reading” would be an influential book (part of it!) or essay for your own project, as in “My project begins where Omi and Winant’s famous study of race left off. . .” or “I expect to fulfill Ruth Gilmore’s challenge in *Golden Gulag* that the next major work in prison reform scholarship will be . . .” But you might also choose simply a general theoretical work: “I’m trying to situate my own work in relationship to what Jared

Sexton claims is the next stage of African American Studies in his contribution to *A Concise Companion to American Studies*.” Alternatively, you might be offering textual/ media material your audience must know to understand your project: “You cannot understand my project without watching at least a few episodes of *Dancing with the Stars* (!). . . .”

The basic rules for such supplemental materials are as follows: you distribute the work to the rest of us; we must receive it one week in advance (7 days) of the seminar in which you will be making your presentation (or the default rule kicks in: we probably won’t have time to read it); it should not be longer than about 25 pages of text or the equivalent in other media (see previous default rule!).

Syllabus

Seminar 1: August 22, M: Introduction

Finalize format for seminar: Zoom, hybrid, in-person. Choose seminars in which you will present material. Discuss “open seminar” on Job Market (see below). Protocols for sharing work. Rehearsals for public presentations at end of semester.

Seminar 2: August 29, M: Open Seminar on Preparations for the Job Market

This seminar (or another, if we choose a different date) will be open to all ASE graduate students. We will discuss how to draft a general letter of application, a good curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, and a research statement (for postdoctoral fellowships). We will discuss how to choose a writing sample and what constitutes a good writing sample. We will discuss how and when to contact your referees, diplomacy in reminding them of letters due, etc. Samples will be distributed.

SEPTEMBER 5: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY (NO SEMINAR)

Seminar 3: September 12, M: What’s My Project?

Roundtable discussion of everyone’s project for the dissertation. Time allotted for each presentation will be determined by enrollment. Expect something like 10 minutes to describe your plan for the dissertation, followed 10 minutes of discussion. No Ptx, just conversation.

Seminar 4: September 19, M.: What’s a Prospectus?

I’ll share some with you via Blackboard the week before, and we’ll review the specific language in the Graduate Handbook. Beyond the formal details, we’ll discuss how a prospectus is useful as you plan the individual chapters and how the prospectus may or may not be useful as an “introduction” to the dissertation.

Seminar 5: September 26, M.: Presentations

We will do two presentations per seminar for Seminars 5, 6, and 7 (more, if needed). These presentations should follow the format studied in Seminar 4 (and outlined in the Graduate Handbook). Each presentation should be made by way of some Pptx or other visual/multimedia platform. In this round of presentations, no draft is circulated ahead of the presentation, just the oral presentation and some visual accompaniment (such as you might use in the final public presentation).

1. _____

2. _____

Seminar 6: October 3, M.: Presentations

1. _____

2. _____

Seminar 7: October 10, M.: Presentations

1. _____

2. _____

10/13-14: FALL RECESS**Seminar 8: October 17, M.: Presentations, Round 2**

This round of presentations should be based on a draft of the prospectus, which members of the seminar receive one week before the presentation (i.e., October 10 for this seminar).

1. _____

2. _____

Seminar 9: October 24, M.: Presentations, Round 2

1. _____

2. _____

Seminar 10: October 31, M.: Presentations, Round 2

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

NOVEMBER 3-6 (TH – SU), AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONVENTION IN NEW ORLEANS

Seminar 11: November 7, M.: Rehearsal

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

Seminar 12: November 14, M.: Rehearsal

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

Seminar 13: November 21, M.: Rehearsal

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

November 23-27: THANKSGIVING RECESS

Seminar 14: November 28, M.: Public Presentations to the ASE Community. Day and hours to be confirmed later.

December 7, W.: PROSPECTUS DUE TO ME BY EMAIL.

December 15 – January 8: WINTER RECESS