

FRPG 188W *Empire, Exotica and Authenticity: Africa and Popular Culture in Postcolonial Europe*

First-Year Seminar (FYS), Spring 2009
MW 1:40-3:10, EJ Noble Center 222
Th 12:40-2:10 Valentine 105

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Course Description: In Europe, as in the USA, popular culture expresses and shapes much of what people know, say and feel about the rest of the world. This seminar gives you an opportunity to examine European cultural production in order to understand how images and ideas of Africa, Africans and African-ness circulate in Europe today. It will also ask you to reflect on the ways that different histories of colonialism and slave trading in Africa have shaped the distinct ways in which issues of race play out in former imperial European nations. Finally it will require you to investigate how African and Afro-Caribbean migrant communities in Europe, particularly since the end of formal colonialism, have shaped local cultural production. The critical reading skills which you developed in your FYP will be put to use as you analyze a range of artistic and cultural texts, some more conventionally understood as 'popular' than others. These will include films, blogs, a novel, popular music, news media and YouTube videos. You will also encounter scholarly writing that provides models for analyzing these kinds of texts and introduces key concepts. As the class goes on we will together put together a critical vocabulary which will help you in developing a research project that examines the meanings and significances of popular cultural sources. You will continue to develop your skills in written and oral communication, producing both a multi-media presentation and a 10-12 page research paper.

Note: Like your FYP this is a 1.5 credit course - so plan your time accordingly!

Course Readings:

Davis, James. P. *The Ronman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources*. 3rd Edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2007

Hacker, Diane. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th Edition. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2008.

le Carre, John. *The Constant Gardener: A Novel*. New York: Scribner, 2005.

**All other readings will be available on Angel and *you are expected to print them out and bring them with you to class (marked up with your notes and questions)*.

*** Some readings have not yet been assigned. I will select them later in the semester when your research projects have begun to develop.

Goals: The FYS strives to continue the communication skills, critical thinking, ethical reflection, and liberal learning goals of the FYP, but with a specific focus on critical inquiry and research. Each of you will engage in a research project of significant depth over the course of the semester. Our learning goals for that research project include that you:

- Be introduced to ways of conducting productive and imaginative inquiry and research in order to become a part of the various conversations surrounding issues.
- Learn to differentiate among the various ways that information is produced and presented, between popular and scholarly journals and books, between mainstream and alternative publications, between primary and secondary sources.
- Learn how to evaluate and synthesize information, whether gathered from traditional sources, e.g., books and journals, or from websites or electronic media.
- Begin to develop the skills of critical analysis in the interpretation and use of information gathered from any source.
- Be introduced to the ethical obligations that scholars have to both responsibly represent their sources and inform their readers of the sources of their information, as well as learning, and being held responsible for the proper use of, the conventions of scholarly citation and attribution.
- Present the results of your research in written, spoken, visual and/or other forms that demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively using the conventions of the mode of communication adopted.

Description of Assignments: Your on-going research project will culminate in a 10-12 page paper which considers the connections between primary source material and scholarly debates on one or more 'keywords.' In researching a related topic of your choice you will locate primary sources of cultural production. If they cannot be located otherwise and if you are bringing new questions to bear on them, these can be sources which are discussed or portrayed in someone else's work. They might include: mainstream print journalism, photojournalism, alternative media, blogs, music, music video, novels and other fiction, film, fine art objects or monuments. You must include references to some audio or visual materials. Your paper may engage with cultural production not commonly understood as 'popular' (e.g. national monuments, fine art) so long as the paper considers how it reflects and expresses its social and cultural contexts. While you are encouraged to make use of the texts we read together, you will also locate relevant scholarly work, including articles in peer-reviewed journals beyond that included in the syllabus. Additionally, you may wish to use news, electronic or alternative media as secondary source material.

Your research project is divided into the following, related, assignments:

Participating in class discussion based on shared readings (5%). You are expected to have read, made notes on and thought critically about the readings before coming to class. I expect you all to be active participants in class discussion. This means listening carefully to what others have to say and raising points you think will keep the conversation going in a productive way. You may be asked to complete quizzes on the readings or to write short responses on them in class.

Bloggng (5%). Following a workshop on blogs and blogging, you will keep a blog 'journal' of your research process, including at least one weekly entry of at least 150 words. I may give you ideas or directions for what to write on. I will occasionally require you to comment on other student's blogs. Your writing in this blog can be informal, your grade will depend on how far you make productive use of it as a resource. As well as keeping a record of your progress and collecting digital resources

and links to electronic resources you can use this space to reflect on your learning, try out ideas or articulate confusion, frustration – or joy – in relation to your research. In addition to maintaining a class blog highlighting research resources, I will post some feedback to your blog once a week commenting on where you are, raising questions and suggesting new avenues for your research.

Reworks bibliography (5%). Following a library workshop, you will build a bibliographic resource on reworks, collecting together scholarly and other relevant materials. I will list some kinds of resources which must be included, the rest is up to you. You will organize this using your own descriptors ('tags') and you will briefly annotate (summarize and discuss) a number of key sources. You will share your reworks folder/s with me electronically *and* submit a printed preliminary annotated bibliography. Your grade will depend on the quality of your writing in these annotations as well as the degree to which you chose relevant sources.

Oral Presentations on Sources (10%). You will make two short (5 minute) formal presentations to the class on a key primary and a secondary source for your research project. Your primary source presentation must include: description, tentative interpretation, discussion of the source type. Your secondary source presentation must include: summary of the argument, your position on the argument, relating the source to other secondary materials, connecting it with your primary source material. Your presentations should be polished (rehearsed) but your grade will largely depend on their content. You will write up each of these presentations in a 1-2 page document, with full citations, due the following Monday.

Keywords (5%). Every week, for the first 10 weeks of the course, we will discuss an important and contested concept – a keyword - related to the reading. Usually this will be the starting point for discussion in our Wednesday class. (In weeks two and six we will also discuss keywords during the Monday class.) I will introduce the first two keywords. From then on two students will be responsible for researching the term, bringing a working definition of the term to class and raising some discussion questions, related to the reading, on the meanings of the term.

Functional Outline (10%). After we have discussed ways of structuring your argument in class, you will then organize that argument through a functional outline. A functional outline is an organizational strategy in which the writer discusses the purpose of each section and each paragraph of his or her paper and the content to be covered. You will turn in two drafts of your functional outline on which I will give you feedback. With the first draft, you will also provide a cover letter, explaining your concerns about your outline at that point and what further work you think you will need to do. With both drafts, you will provide an updated list of your references.

Formal oral multi-media presentation (20%). You will present your work-in-progress to the class in the form of a 15-20 minute oral multi-media presentation using power-point slides. This will be followed by a brief Q and A. Your presentation must include – an account of the progress of the research project and the work you have yet to do, a discussion of one or more of the keywords we have considered in class, a discussion of some key sources, a clear account of your central argument as it stands. When devising and rehearsing your presentation you should bear in mind the differences between oral and written communication and consider the best ways to integrate audio and visual material.

Polished draft with cover letter (10%). I will provide you with more information on what I mean by a "polished draft" when we are approaching that point in the process, but you should note that this is neither a "rough draft" nor a "first draft." As with your functional introduction you will provide a cover letter with your polished draft.

Peer response letter (10%). Each of you will be assigned one of your peer's drafts to review and critique. You should compose a 3 page letter to your peer – I will tell you what issues and questions you should take into account – and bring two copies of that letter to class on the day that it is due.

Final draft with cover letter (15%). Your final draft will include a cover letter where you explain how you have responded to my comments and to those of your peers. **Note:** If you have not adequately taken account of these comments in writing your final draft you may receive a lower grade than you received for your polished draft.

Final portfolio and essay (5%). Your portfolio will include all of your written assignments, with any comments and copies of all sources used. Any digital media should be burned on a CD and you should provide stable URLs for electronic media, including your blog. You will also include a 2-3 page essay reflecting on your learning during the semester.

Resources:

FYS Mentor: O'Keefe Foster is your peer mentor, available to help you with planning, drafting, and revising your writing and speaking assignments and to assist you with research. O'Keefe will hold regular office hours (to be announced) and can also arrange for other meeting times by appointment. At certain points as your research project develops I will be requiring you to meet with O'Keefe.

The WORD Studio: The WORD Studio in ODY Library is a place to get feedback on assignments in writing, oral communication, research and the design of visual projects. You can get assistance for planning a paper or presentation, find ways to improve the ideas, organization, and style of a draft, and videotape and review an oral presentation or PowerPoint talk. Peer tutors are trained to have a conversation with you about ways to improve your work and become a better overall communicator. You may use the WORD Studio for consultations on assignments for any of your courses, although for FYS assignments you should first seek out O'Keefe, your FYS mentor.

Office of Academic Services for Students with Special Needs: I am aware that some students will have different learning needs. If you identify as a special needs student, I encourage you to work with John Meagher, director of the Office of Academic Services for Students with Special Needs. You should meet with me to discuss your needs in the first weeks of class.

Course Policies

Absences: You are expected to attend every class. If you will be absent, for good reason, please let me know ahead of time. If you are absent more than three times – excepting documented emergencies – during the semester you will lose .25 from your overall grade.

Written assignments: All written assignments should be typed in Times New Roman 12pt font, double spaced with 1 inch margins. You should always use the Chicago style of citation (Notes & Bibliography). Late assignments will lose .25 from their grade for each 24 hours past the deadline.

Office hours and emails: You should come to my office hours, or arrange an appointment with me if you want to discuss in detail material in the course, assignments, and issues regarding course content, learning and instruction. Email is to be used to ask specific short questions regarding assignments, reading, notification of class absences or other pieces of information that do not require a formal meeting. If you need to contact me urgently please call my cell phone.

Course Schedule

NB. The course schedule may change to meet your needs as your research projects develop. For example, I may substitute more appropriate readings or focus more on particular skills.

Week one. Keyword: Culture

January 19. Introduction.

January 21. **Read:** Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary (1958)," in *Resources of Hope* ed. Robin Gable (London: Verso, 1989), 3-18 **and** Simon During, "Culture High and Low," in *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 193-207.

January 22. Workshop: using primary and secondary sources.

Week two. Keywords: Discourse and Commodity

January 26. Lecture: The world made by the Atlantic Slave trade.

Read: Patrick Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1(Autumn 1985), 166-203.

January 28. Lecture: Abolition and the civilizing mission.

Read: Anne McClintock, "Soft-soaping Empire," in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 207-231.

January 29. Workshop: refworks and library research.

Week three. Keyword: Memory

February 2. **Read and Listen:** Sylvia Poggioli, "German Minorities Still Fight To Be Seen, Heard" NPR's *Morning Edition*. January 12 2009.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99189265>

Film:

February 4. **Read:** Nigel Penn, "Whites in Africa: Kenya's colonists in the films *Out of Africa*, *Nowhere in Africa* and *White Mischief*," in *Black and White in Colour: African History on Screen*, ed. Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn, (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2000), 167-184.

February 5. Workshop: blogging.

Week four. Keyword: Gaze

February 9. **Read and Listen:** Sylvia Poggioli, "French Minorities Push For Equality Post-Obama" NPR's *Morning Edition*. January 12 2009.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99298290>

Film: *Caché (Hidden)* (2005) dir. by Michael Haneke.

February 11. **Read:** Max Silverman "The Empire Looks Back" *Screen* 48 (2007) No. 2, 245-49.

February 12. Workshop on academic honesty

Primary source presentations in class.

Week five. Keyword: Subculture

February 16. Film: *Babylon* (1980) dir. by Franco Rosso.

Due: presentation on primary sources written up

February 18. Selections (TBA) from Dick Hebdige, *Subculture and the meaning of style* (1979; London: Routledge, 1988)

February 19. Workshop on research: electronic sources.

Secondary source presentations in class.

Week six. Keyword: Nation and Identity

February 23. **Read:** Beriss, David, "What is the Price of Frenchness?" in *Black skins, French voices: Caribbean ethnicity and activism in urban France* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2004), 25-48.

Due: presentation on secondary sources written up

February 25. **Read:** Ch. Didier Gondola, "'But I ain't African, I'm American!': black American exiles and the construction of racial identities in twentieth-century France," in *Blackening Europe: the African American presence*, ed. Heike Raphael-Hernandez (New York: Routledge, 2004), 201-215.

February 26. Workshop on integrating sources.

Week seven. Keyword: Development

March 2. **Read:** John le Carré, *The Constant Gardener: A Novel* (New York: Scribner, 2005)

Due: Refworks bibliography

March 4. **Read:** Michael Watts, "'A New Deal in Emotions': Theory and practice and the crisis of development," in *Power of development*, ed. Jonathan Crush (London: Routledge, 1995), 44-62.

March 5. Workshop on thesis, claims and evidence

Week eight. Keyword: Cultural appropriation

March 9. **Read:** Stuart Hall, "Museums and the construction of culture" and Annie E. Coombes, "Material Culture at the Crossroads of Knowledge: the Case of the Benin 'Bronzes,'" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997), 191-199, 219-222.

March 11. Lecture/presentation: "Luanda-Lisbon-London: *Kuduro* and global music."

Read: Selections (TBA) Keshia Fikes, *Managing African Portugal: The Citizen-Migrant Distinction* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009).

March 12. Workshop on oral communication.

Due: 1st draft functional outline with cover letter.

Spring Break

Week nine. Keyword: Diaspora

March 23. **Read:** Stuart Hall "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Harlow, Essex: Prentice Hall, 1993), 421-427 **and** William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, No. 1 (Spring 1991), 83-99

March 25. **Read:** Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, "Recasting 'Black Venus' in the 'New' African Diaspora" in *Globalization and Race: transformations in the cultural production of blackness*, ed. Kamari Maxine Clarke and Deborah A. Thomas, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 206-266.

Read and Listen: Sylvia Poggioli, "Immigrants Forced To Margins of Italian Society" NPR's *Morning Edition*. January 13 2009.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99255579>

March 26. Workshop on Powerpoint

Week ten. Keyword: Authenticity

March 30. **Read:** Paul Gilroy “Jewels Brought from Bondage’: Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity” in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993)

Due: 2nd draft functional outline.

April 1. **Read:** bell hooks, “Postmodern Blackness,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Harlow, Essex: Prentice Hall, 1993), 421-427.

In-class: College Success Questionnaire (CSQ).

April 2. Rehearse presentations.

Week eleven.

April 6. Formal oral multi-media presentations.

April 8. Formal oral multi-media presentations.

April 9. Formal oral multi-media presentations.

Week twelve.

April 13. **Read:** TBA

Due: Polished draft with cover letter.

April 15. **Read:** TBA

April 16. Workshop on polishing writing

Week thirteen.

April 20. **Read:** TBA

April 22. In-class peer review.

Due: Peer response letter.

April 23. Workshop on polishing writing II

Week fourteen.

April 27. Summing up

April 29. Evaluation

April 30. Conferences.

Week fifteen. Exam week

May 8. *Due:* Final draft with cover letter. Final portfolio and essay.

First-Year Program Philosophy and Goals 2008-09

A residentially-based, interdisciplinary first-year program is an ideal environment for beginning the four-year process of developing the complex intellectual and social skills that are at the heart of a liberal education and the habits of considered values and engaged citizenship that such an education should produce. The First-Year Program (FYP) and First-Year Seminar (FYS) are the core of our institutional commitment to improving your ability to engage in critical inquiry and research, to design and deliver written, spoken and/or visual texts that demonstrate rhetorical sensitivity, and to be sophisticated readers, listeners, and viewers of the texts of others. We believe that these same competencies can help develop your ability to communicate across differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, political views) as you find ways to live and learn together in the residence halls and as engaged and ethically reflective citizens both during and after your college years. These goals should be understood as the first step in our work with you over a four-year process of helping you to meet the University's Aims and Objectives.

We hope to help you see that writing, speaking, research, and interacting with others are rhetorical endeavors. Effective communicators are, by definition, rhetorically sensitive. Rhetorical sensitivity means understanding that all communication, whether formal or informal, involves having to make choices about your messages, whether written, spoken, or visual. To become an effective communicator, you need to recognize that the creation of a meaningful and powerful message involves both a creator and an audience, and that therefore the voice you adopt in your communication, and the audience you imagine yourself communicating to, matter a great deal in creating your message. The choices you make in writing and speaking are central in determining how people read and hear your voice. Becoming conscious and reflective about those choices, and their ethical dimensions, is a central goal of the FYP and FYS

Working with you so that you become more rhetorically sensitive means that you should be increasingly able to assess the requirements of a particular task and make intentional decisions about which mode or modes of communication and inquiry would be most effective in addressing it. To do so, you must develop specific writing, speaking, research, and technological competencies. To accomplish these goals, the FYP and FYS will present you with assignments that ask you to engage in a process that involves **recognizing** the rhetorical situation, **planning** communication strategies to address the task at hand, **composing and presenting** the message, and then engaging in **critical assessment** of your own work and that of others. The results of that assessment process will allow you to rethink, restructure, and revise your work. We further recognize that this process is not linear and that the effective creation of texts requires that you move back and forth among these four elements of the message creation process. This is why we require that your writing and speaking assignments be "projects" that include preparatory exercises and multiple drafts or rehearsals, all of which ask you to continue to reflect critically on the choices you have made in constructing your message.

This process of increased rhetorical awareness and skill development is at the heart of the philosophical and pedagogical perspectives that inform the work of the FYP and FYS. Because this process both transcends and integrates a variety of specific skills, the program has a philosophical commitment to designing assignments that ask you to integrate various modes of communication in furtherance of the higher-level rhetorical goals in which they are situated.

To ensure that the program is meeting its stated goals, all FYP and FYS syllabi are read by other faculty in the program to determine if they include a variety of assignments that forward the writing, speaking, research, and literacy goals of the program. All FYP and FYS courses have to be approved by faculty in the program before they are offered.