

AMST 3700/01 Spring 2015

Principles and Methods of American Studies: Race, Politics, and Public Schools

TR 11-12:15 SS 2028

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Office Hours by Appointment

Email is the best way to reach me. I check mine very frequently, and I expect you to check yours often, as well.



Protest at Kennesaw

State, November 2014, photograph by Cindy Fountain

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a reading- and writing- focused course intended to introduce you to basic methods in American Studies with public education and race as our site of investigation. Analyzing methods leads us to question how we know what we know. A question or problematic—such as justice in education—explored through two different methods, archival versus ethnographic processes, for example, can produce very different results and revelations. As we move through the course, you'll feel more drawn to certain forms of investigation and research, and I will encourage you to shape your final project around your own predispositions, be they those of a documentary photographer or an oral historian. You'll find that the material in the course is organized thematically, not chronologically; we are exploring how we understand educational justice and American public schools, rather than taking a historical survey of the topic.

CLASS DECORUM and COMMUNITY: I allow laptops in class because all of our reading is online. However, if it seems that everyone is g-chatting and facebook-ing, then I will adjust accordingly and ban open laptops during class. Please do not abuse the privilege of having the internet at your fingertips. Turn off your phones, and tune in. Stay engaged. Treat your peers and your professor with respect; greet others' ideas with openness. Critique and analyze, but do not condemn and judge. Engage in spirited debate; challenge and be challenged.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required. You get THREE “free” absences before your grade is affected. There are no “make-up” assignments or quizzes. I do not differentiate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences—meaning that a doctor’s note makes no difference in your absence count—so you may want to save up your absences in case of extenuating personal circumstances or in the event that you get called for a second audition for American Idol. After THREE absences, I deduct 5 points from your total point tally (ie grade for the course) for each day missed. For example, a 220/225 becomes a 215/225 in terms of total points. If you are late to class or leave early, you will be counted as missing one-half (50%) of a class.

LATE WORK: I don’t accept late work except in rare and extremely special cases. If you think that applies, please email me so we can come to an agreement.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: The consequence for plagiarizing or other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty are severe in this class and at KSU. A first offense will result in a zero on the assignment or paper; a second offense will be brought to the attention of the university and could result in a hearing and suspension. If you are unsure about how to cite others’ words and ideas or if you are helping a peer or soliciting help on your work and not sure if your actions constitute academic dishonesty, please feel free to discuss your concerns with me.

Participation: Your investment and participation in class discussion is essential to this course. Excellent class participation throughout the semester earns you the opportunity to **drop your two lowest quiz grades at the end of the semester**. For those who have difficulty speaking in front of the class: you will be able to demonstrate your engagement with course ideas in your blog comments, and we will do group work that I will observe which will allow you to speak comfortably with a few of your peers. If you don’t pipe up in class or during group work, I will have to assume that you are not engaged with the readings and ideas of the course and will assess your participation accordingly.

READINGS:

Unless otherwise noted in this syllabus, all readings for the course are available on D2L.

On D2L, under “Course Readings,” each PDF is identified with the author’s name (the author’s names are bolded in each day’s assignments). If an assignment on the syllabus is followed by a web address, then please use that address to locate the reading by using the hyperlink in the syllabus on D2L. Or, of course, you can simply google the title and author. ***If you can’t access a reading, please email me immediately. Telling me once you get to class doesn’t do anyone any good.***

GRADING:

Quizzes and Blogged Reflections: 75 +

Midterm Paper: 100 +

Final Paper: + 125

= 300 Possible Points for the Course

Quizzes and Blog Responses (Blog address: schools3700.wordpress.com) 75 Points total: There will be ten 5-point pop quizzes throughout the semester and short reflections every class meeting. These are short and sweet; they keep you honest and keep all of us on our toes by setting aside 5-7 minutes every meeting for you to respond thoughtfully to a discussion question or to demonstrate your close reading of the material. They also help rev our engines for the day’s discussion. Because I’m old school, you will hand-write your quiz answers and reflections, meaning you’ll need a pen and piece of paper every single day. Nostalgic, huh?

There will also be five 5-point blog assignments (*the first prompt is already posted and your responses are due by 11pm Monday, January 12th*). If there is a blog assignment for the week, I will post the question/prompt on the blog by Monday at 5pm; my prompt will offer you clear instructions as well as a deadline to submit your reflection/answer. **Please include your full name at the top of your comment.**

Midterm Essay: 100 Points (Due Monday, March 2nd. ROUGH DRAFT OPTION--If you choose to submit a rough draft on Wednesday 2.25, I will email you feedback and add two points to your essay grade. This is a 6-page analytical essay assignment; *your essay must meet the page requirement*. You are required to use at least three sources from outside the class: **please find essay topic options at the end of this document. As we get closer, I will outline my expectations for this paper in greater detail. Additionally, though I am always happy to answer questions about the writing process, you should also**

take advantage of all the expertise and support available at the Writing Center: English Building 242, <http://kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/> OR the ESL Study and Tutorial Center (Sturgis Library, rm 442).

Final Project: 125 Points (Due on Friday, May 1st) Your final project is your opportunity to creatively explore the themes of the course through the methods and readings we discussed and, if you wish, bring in outside methods and material, too. You may choose to write a 10-page analytical essay, or you may go a different route. Although every project will have a written analytical component in which you describe your process and methods, I welcome oral history, photography, ethnography, short films and other formats as a way for you to engage with the themes, theories and methods we'll cover. You will submit a 250-word proposal describing your final project via D2L by **5pm on Tuesday, April 21st** which will count as part of your grade. We will talk in more detail about your options, and I will post some suggested frameworks on D2L for you to consider as you decide what you'll examine and through what lens you'll examine it.

****This schedule is subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen events.****

1.8 R: Introduction to the Course: What are American Studies methods? Why do they matter? How are they useful to/used in the study of public education?

Framing Texts:

1.13 T: Have read and be ready to discuss: George **Lipsitz**, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the 'White' problem in American Studies" in the *American Quarterly*, 1995 (369-387)

1.15 R: Have read: David **Tyack**, Chapter 1 "Schools for Citizens" (9-37) in *Seeking Common Ground*

1.20 T: Have read: John **Dewey**, Ch. 7 "The Democratic Conception in Education," from *Democracy and Education* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/852/852-h/852-h.htm#link2HCH0007>

NOTE: This file on D2L is incomplete; please use the link above.

1.22 R: Have read: Nick Scovronick & Jennifer **Hochschild**, Introduction (1-27) *The American Dream and the Public Schools*

1.27 T: What is an Archive?: Erasure, Silence, and Oral History

Have read: Alessandro **Portelli**, essay, “The Peculiarities of Oral History” (96-107)

1.29 R: Have read: **Guajardo and Guajardo**, “The Impact of Brown on the Brown of South Texas,” *American Educational Research Journal* (501-526)

2.3 T: CLASS DOES NOT MEET. Have read: Barbara **Shircliffe**, “The Best of that World: Nostalgia and the Historically Black High School” (157-188). **Blog comment on this reading due by Friday, 2.6 at 5pm.**

2.5 R: Have read: Michel-Rolph **Trouillot**, Ch. 1 “The Power in the Story” (1-30) in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (this is a terrific but challenging reading—please give yourself time to read slowly and with care)

2.10 T: Photography and Film

Have read: Jennifer **Fuller**, “Debating the Present through the Past” (167-196) in *Civil Rights in American Memory*

2.12 R: Using powerpoint or prezi, create a 5-image “photo essay” with the theme of educational activism for sharing with the class. The images can be from any period—feel free to focus on issues we’ve discussed such as all-black high schools or Mexican American student activism, or choose your own variation on the theme. If you are using solely images from the internet, then please cite the source of the image as best you can. On each slide, include a caption of 1-2 sentences in length; captions **must come** from course readings—and you should **use a minimum of three different course texts as your sources**. Your captions should do more than summarize or illustrate; they should be in dialogue with the ideas/issues/history offered by the photograph; use the caption as a critical tool if you can. For example—your caption may even undermine the narrative of your photo, or at least complicate that narrative. Point Value: Quiz Grade (5). **Due before class on Thursday, 2/12.**

2.17 T: Have watched: *Remember the Titans* (If you want to go the honest route—and you should!—I recommend “renting” the movie on Amazon.com instant-watch for \$2.99)

2.19 R: Memoir:

Have read: Huston **Diehl**, “Where is the Jim Crow Section in this Merry-Go-Round?” (116-140) in *Dream Not of Other Worlds*

2.24 T: Have read: Melba Pattillo **Beals**, excerpt from *Warriors Don't Cry* (146-187)

2.26 R: Have read Jonathan **Kozol** Intro and Ch. 1 (1-37) in *Shame of the Nation*

REVISED DRAFT DEADLINE: FRIDAY , Feb 27th: Optional Rough draft deadline for Midterm Essays: NOON via the dropbox on D2L. (Every student who submits a rough draft is awarded two bonus points on their essay grade.)

Monday, March 2nd: MIDTERM ESSAY DEADLINE: due at 5pm via dropbox on D2L.

3.3 T: Expanding the Archive

Mary **Dudziak**, Ch. 4 "Holding the Line in Little Rock," 115-151 in *Cold War Civil Rights*

. *Today is the Last Day to Withdraw without Penalty*

3.5 R: Kevin **Kruse**, Ch. 6 "The Fight for Freedom of Association" 161-179 *White Flight: Atlanta and The Making of Modern Conservatism*

3.10.T: Ethnography

Have read: James **Clifford**, "On Ethnographic Allegory," (99-121) in *Writing Culture*

3.12 R: Ruth **Yow**, "In the Garden: Integration on Franklin Road" (1-25)

3.17 T: Ann Arnett **Ferguson**, Ch. 3 "School Rules" (49-73) in *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*

3.19 R: The Sociology of Education & Critical Perspectives

Have read: Grace Lee **Boggs**, Ch. 5 "A Paradigm Shift in Our Concept of Education"

3.24 T: Student Empowerment and Contemporary Protests, U.S. and Mexico:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-dreier/historians-should-honor-p_b_5902102.html;

<http://www.peoplesworld.org/tucson-bans-mexican-american-studies-students-walk-out/>;

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/1/guerrero-mexico-students.html>;

<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/editorials/20141019-editorial-mexico-disappearances-couldnt-come-at-a-worse-time.ece>

3.26 R: Have read Paulo **Friere**, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ch. 1 (43-69)

3.31 T: Politics and Policy: Lens and Lever

Have read: **Orfield**, Gary and Chungmei **Lee**, “Historic Reversals, Accelerating Re-segregation and the Need for New Integration Strategies.” A Report of the Civil Rights Project, UCLA, 2007 **Read the Forward carefully (pages 3-12) and skim the rest, taking a look at the graphs and charts that track resegregation.**

4.2 R: Have watched: *Waiting for Superman* (also available “for rent” for \$2.99 on amazon and on other streaming sites).

4.7 T: SPRING BREAK.

4.9 R: SPRING BREAK

4.14 T: **Class does not meet.** However, you are encouraged to meet in your groups for the Georgia Schools Debate assignment. There will be additional sources posted on D2L. Have read: Naomi Klein, “Introduction: Blank is Beautiful,” (3-21) *The Shock Doctrine*
<http://www.infoshop.org/amp/NaomiKlein-TheShockDoctrine.pdf>

PLEASE NOTE: This reading is *not* on D2L; please use the link above. If the link won’t load, then simply google “Naomi Klein info shop Shock Doctrine” and you’ll get the pdf. The assigned material starts on page 9 of the pdf.*

4.16 R: Diane Ravitch, “School Reform: A Failing Grade,” NY Review of Books, September, 2011,
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/sep/29/school-reform-failing-grade/> AND: “Did Atlanta Educators Get Equal Justice Before the Law?” <http://dianeravitch.net/2015/04/06/atlanta-cheating-scandal/> **NOTE: These readings are *not* on D2L; please use the provided links.**

4.21 T: Have read: Roberto **Gonzales**, “Young Lives on Hold: The College Dreams of Undocumented Students,” (pages 4-25) College Board Advocacy Report, April 2009; **Proposal for Final Project Due by 5pm via D2L.**

4.23 R: Have read: Jose Antonio Vargas, “My Life as An Undocumented Immigrant,”
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/magazine/my-life-as-an-undocumented-immigrant.html?_r=0.

NOTE: This reading is *not* on D2L; please use the link above.

4.28 T: LAST DAY OF CLASS Have read: Dale **Russakof**, “Schooled,” May 19, 2014, *New Yorker*
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/19/schooled>

NOTE: This reading is *not* on D2L; please use the link above.

****Final Projects due FRIDAY MAY 1ST by 5pm via D2L. ** NO FINAL EXAM.**

MIDTERM ESSAY TOPIC OPTIONS:

1. Oral History. Using the database of the SOHP (Southern Oral History Program), access the North Carolina school desegregation interviews:
<http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/sohp/projects.html>. Under “Browse by Project,” scroll down to section K, and click on section K.2.14 or K.2.15 or K.2.16—interviews from any of those three collections will be suitable. Please choose three interviews (these are your three outside-class sources) and analyze them, using Alessandro Portelli’s essay on oral history or Barbara Shircliffe’s article on nostalgia. Using the interviews and your analysis of them, craft an argument about the relevance of oral history to current debates about whether racial integration in public schools should be actively preserved. Do the interviews testify to the lasting power of integrated schooling in the lives of students? Or do they suggest that integration wasn’t worth the sacrifice and trauma? Some questions you might consider as you analyze the interviews you chose:
 - a. How does the testimony of black and whites students differ? Male and female students?
 - b. What agenda, if any, does the interviewer seem to have? The interviewee?
 - c. Have you listened for the presence of nostalgia? If the interviewee is nostalgic does it operate as an “artful critique” as Shircliffe argues?
 - d. Having listened to the interviews and read the transcripts, how important is inflection and tone to analyzing the interview?
2. Film/Photography/Visual Analysis. Choose a major desegregation event for your visual analysis. Examples include: the Little Rock Nine at Central High; the Boston Busing Crisis; the desegregation of University of Georgia; Ole Miss; the University of Alabama; the desegregation of New Orleans’ public schools. Choose three visual documents of the event—a documentary or part of a documentary, still photographs, artistic renderings, or heavily fictionalized film representations (such as the Ruby Bridges movie by Disney). Employing some of the questions, techniques, and modes of analysis we discussed in class (mis-en-scene analysis; racial harmony vs. racial justice; Southern masculinity and femininity; critical reception; racial politics of making the film, ex. director, screenwriter, cast, etc.), make an argument for the importance of the visual evidence you chose to public memory of the incident. When assessing “public memory” of the event, consider the following questions:
 - a. Has the visual material you chose dramatically influenced the way people remember/understand/talk about the event?
 - b. Has it influenced broad perceptions of what integration was like for black students? And for white students?
 - c. According to the visual evidence, what was the impact of the desegregation event on the local community? What was its impact nationally or even internationally?

3. Democracy and Public Education. Choose a contemporary school reform debate/issue. Examples are: charter schools, the common core curriculum, the power/influence of teachers' unions, school choice and/or school vouchers, teacher evaluation and pay-for-performance, de-tracking, "holistic" or "whole child" schooling (ie the Harlem Children's Zone). Central question: Where and how is what Jennifer Hochschild calls "the paradox at the heart of the American dream" visible in the debate around the issue you chose?*
- Take a position on your chosen issue and use the Hochschild or Dewey readings as well as your own research to persuasively argue your case. For this topic, you will identify out-of-class sources as you research your issue through scholarly articles, online news articles, websites, and even education blogs—EducationWeek and eduwonk are two such examples of legitimate blog sources. (As we know, the internet can be both a treasure trove and dung heap, so if you are in doubt about whether you have gold or poop in a given website or online news source, feel free to ask me, and I'll help you assess it.)

*"The paradox lies in the fact that schools are supposed to equalize opportunities across generations and to create democratic citizens out of each generation, but people naturally wish to give their own children an advantage in attaining wealth or power, and some can do it. When they do, everyone does not start equally—politically or economically. This circle cannot be squared." (2).