ENGLISH 416/516

POWER AND REPRESENTATION

Critical analysis of works by colonized peoples, women, and ethnic minorities, with a focus on the issue of representation.
Not offered every year.
PREREQS: Sophomore standing.

Course Attributes:
Core, Synth, Global Issues

Rationale for conversion to four credits: This course asks students to respond to the representation of contentious subjects channeled through various media forms. Students are asked to keep response logs for every class as they assess the different media representations; the material from some of these logs will then be posted on a class blog for further discussion; students will share posting responsibility.
This course continues to meet outcomes for Contemporary Global Issues.

The four credit version will:
• add instruction on research across different media representations, including digital and print sources;
• add written requirements for class log and class blog.
The core syllabus represents the three credit version last taught.

Course Description:

This winter, a Harvard alumni setting sail for a $10,000, 2-week tour of the Moroccan coast on the 34-person yacht Callisto may be plying the same sea-lanes as illegal immigrants from Africa in leaky boats struggling to reach the coast of Spain. While some international travelers may find their homes-away-from-home at the Paris Ritz Carleton, the Mumbai Deluxe Taj Mahal, or the Copacabana Palace in Rio de Janiero, others traveling to the same places may occupy temporary quarters in the concrete world of a bidonville or the hectic streets of a basta, or construct a flimsy shack built scrap wood, flattened tin plates, and plastic tarp in a favela. Most of us inhabit the large borderland that connects the two extremes.

“Power and Representation” is designed to encourage you to think through your assumptions about mimesis, that is how reality is reflected in or created by art and by discourse more generally. Students will become familiar with concepts such as heteroglossia, deconstruction, hegemony, and orientalism which help to foster critical thinking about the ways art mediates reality, and the ways global systems of power mediate what we find in art. Using three case studies of contentious borderlands, we will explore borders not as thin lines where opposites clash, but rather complex webs of relations, interests, and representations connecting one life to another and implicating us all the creation of extremes.

In addition to some of the critical theories addressing the construction of borderlands, we will examine literary works that explore three complex border situations. Alicia Gaspar de Alba uses the detective genre to bring the gendered crimes occurring on the El Paso / Ciudad Juarez border into popular attention in Desert Blood (2005); Sandy Tolan writes the biographies of two people and one house to trace the history of Palestine and Israel in The Lemon Tree (2006); and story of the relationship between “Fortress Europe” and a “Planet of Slums” is rehearsed in the life
stories told in Laila Lalami’s *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005) and Fideles Odun Balogun’s *Adjusted Lives: Stories of Structural Adjustments* (1995). Each of these borderland cases has generated other kinds of representations—performance art, video documentaries, and poetry and social commentary.

“Power and Representation” fulfills the Baccalaureate Core requirement in “Contemporary Global Issues” which shall:

A. Be upper division and at least 3 credits;
B. Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
C. Focus, from a historical perspective, on the origin and nature of critical issues and problems that have global significance;
D. Emphasize the interdependence of the global community;
E. Use a multidisciplinary approach and be suitable for students from diverse fields; and
F. Include written composition.

Our world has become increasingly interdependent. Social, economic, political, environmental, and other issues and problems originating in one part of the world often have far-reaching ramifications in other parts of the world. These issues and problems not only transcend geographical boundaries but also cross academic disciplines. Therefore, if students are to acquire understanding of and to discover effective responses to such issues and problems, they must acquire both global and multidisciplinary perspectives. (Students are encouraged to complete their baccalaureate core perspective requirements before taking the Contemporary Global Issues course.)

**Texts:**

There will be additional works available on blackboard and on reserve at Valley Library for specific assignments.

**Learner Expectations:**
1. Come to class on time and stay the entire period;
2. Complete reading and homework assignments by the date indicated
3. Participate in class discussions and activities.

**ENG 412 Outcomes:**
1. Ability to define theoretical concepts such as gender, Orientalism, power/knowledge, discourse regimes, overdetermination, hegemony, public sphere, etc.
2. Ability to analyze the ways in which a given work of art appeals to ethos, pathos and logos, and how these same appeals may variously received by different audiences.
3. Ability to explain the connections between given literary and artistic representations and social contexts in which they occur.
4. Ability to critique creative works as both descriptive and prescriptive representations of reality.
5. Ability to differentiate between the performance and the “hidden transcript” in resistance works.
6. Ability to assess the effects of power on the creation, production, distribution and reception of a given work.

**FURTHER ENG 516 OUTCOMES:**

1. **ANALYZE AND APPRAISE CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM CONCERNING COLONIZATION AND REPRESENTATION.**
2. **DEMONSTRATE MASTERY OF A VARIETY OF RESEARCH METHODS APPROPRIATE TO THE STUDY OF COLONIAL HISTORIES AND REPRESENTATION, INCLUDING USE OF ONLINE SOURCES.**
3. **THROUGH AN ADDITIONAL ONE HOUR MEETING EVERY OTHER WEEK, COMPLETION OF AN ADDITIONAL READING ASSIGNMENT.**

**SEE UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING BELOW.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
All students will write weekly journal entries about the works we are reading. Students will also be expected to write a book review of one of the texts on reserve for one of the case study areas. Participation in class discussions and informal writing is an important element for the kind of critical thinking the course material demands. Students will write term papers about one of the three case study areas. Graduate students will meet for an additional hour every other week to discuss an assigned additional reading assignment on the material we are covering.

**Grading Policy:**

**Undergraduates:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage (Grading)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10% (attendance and discussion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Log</td>
<td>40% (graded twice; see guidelines on blackboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>50% (see guidelines on blackboard)</td>
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**Graduates:**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage (Grading)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10% (attendance and discussion; includes grad meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Log</td>
<td>40 % (graded twice; see guidelines on blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
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**Grading Scale:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 to 93</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>89 to 87</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>86 to 83</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>66 to 63</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
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Scores will be rounded up to the nearest half percent.
Plagiarism:
Plagiarism may result in the failure of the course and further consequences as specified in university policy: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm

Statement Regarding Disability Access Services:
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.
**SYLLABUS: ENG 415/515**

**Week 1:** Jan 09  Introduction to Course  
Video: *Rights on the Line: Vigilantes at the Border* [documentary]

[video essay on border theory]

**Week 2:** 16  Video: *Señorita Extraviada*. Lourdes Portillo, 2001. [documentary]

18  Gaspar de Alba, *Desert Blood* [detective genres]

**Week 3:** 23  Gaspar de Alba, *Desert Blood*

25  Gaspar de Alba, *Desert Blood*

**Week 4:** 30  Video: Edward Said, *On Orientalism* [video essay]

Feb 01  Video: Landrum Bolling, *Searching for Peace in the Middle East*;  
Lecture: historical background

**Week 5:** 06  Videos: Bitton, *Wall*; Alatar, *Iron Wall* [material culture]

08  Media and the Middle East (various media coverage and web sites)

**Week 6:** 13  Tolan, *The Lemon Tree* [biography / personal narrative]

15  Tolan, *The Lemon Tree*

**Week 7:** 20  Tolan, *The Lemon Tree*

22  Tolan, *The Lemon Tree*

**Week 8:** 27  Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums”

Mar 01  Lecture: “Fortress Europe”

**Week 9:** 06  F. Odun Balogun, *Adjusted Lives* [folklore/fiction]

08  F. Odun Balogun, *Adjusted Lives*

**Week 10:** 13  Leila Lalami, *Hope & Other Dangerous Pursuits* [fiction]

15  Leila Lalami, *Hope & Other Dangerous Pursuits*

**Week 11** 16  Term Paper due during finals week