Unity House Seminar

Fall 2009

Ethnic Studies 98/198 (1-2 units*)
Instructor: Wade Crawford, Resident Director
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Faculty sponsor: Victoria Robinson, Ph.D.

Course objectives:

• Students will gain an understanding of how the idea of gender shapes the way others see us and the way we see others
• Students will become aware of the ways that conceptions of gender have led to inequalities in education, health, legal rights, and socioeconomic status
• Students will gain the skills to identify how language use can perpetuate gender roles and gender bias
• Students will develop a foundational knowledge base of LGBTIQ history and current issues
• Students will develop an understanding of oppression and the role of an ally
• Students will explore their own identity development with a focus on race, class, culture, spirituality and ethnicity
• Students will interact with university professors and staff who have expertise in gender and sexuality

Course expectations:

Participation
This class meets weekly. The size of the seminar is intentionally small, which means that participation is exceptionally important. As a result, attendance is MANDATORY—barring a documented emergency, you may miss no more than 1 class in order to be able to receive a passing grade. If you miss one class, you will need to attend a Gender and Women’s Studies (GWS)-related campus or community event or lecture. If you miss a second class, you will need to write a 10-page research paper on a GWS-related topic of your choice or you can choose to withdraw or accept a no-pass grade. A third absence is an automatic no-pass.

Class participation is a huge part of your grade!
• Step up, step back
• Controversy with civility—hopefully there will be some controversy in terms of ideas and opinions because that means you care and are invested and that you are a diverse group
• Speak from your own experience as much as possible
• Evaluate your language in terms of making judgments
Readings

Unless readings are marked as “suggested,” you are required to read all of the materials! There will be approximately 5-40 pages of reading each week and the readings will be from academic journals, web pages, and magazines. The readings will guide discussion each week but will not limit what students are “allowed” to talk about at a given seminar meeting.

Weekly Journals

There will be weekly journal assignments that follow the progression of topics covered in the seminar. The journal will also allow you to discuss your personal experiences, history, reflections and questions regarding your own gender-identity, sexual orientation, internalized phobias and your personal experiences with heterosexism, homophobia and the compounding complexities of race, class, culture, ethnicity, etc. Please email journal entries to wadec@berkeley.edu by the start of the next week’s class. Journals should be in Times New Roman, 12pt font, and double spaced. Journals should be 1.5 to 2 pages long. Failure to complete 2 or more of the journal entries will result in a no-pass grade. If you need to turn in a journal late, please email before it is due to request an extension.

Movies

There will be a suggested movie each week and this DVD will be available for check out in 1A30 each week. There are five required movies and you are highly encouraged to watch them as a group. We have researched syllabi from LGBT film courses around the country to come up with the list of movies below. Each movie is intended to offer students additional perspective on the upcoming topic area and while some of the movies are selected because they are cited as being groundbreaking works, others are selected because they are particularly atrocious in their depictions of gender stereotypes and/or the LGBTIQ community.

Required Movies—And the Band Played On (US), Fire (India and US), Boys Don’t Cry (US), Short Bus (US)

Suggested Movies—Watermelon Woman (US), The Wedding Banquet (China), Four Weddings and a Funeral (UK), Trembling before God (Israel and US), Dangerous Living: Coming out in the Developing Word (US), Kissing Jessica Stein (US), The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (AUS), Mean Girls (US), Heavenly Creatures (NZ), Transamerica (US)

Dinner Dates

One of the goals of this seminar and of the Unity House theme program in general is to connect students with faculty and administrators who have expertise in the study of gender and sexuality. Dinner Dates will be scheduled throughout the semester with faculty and staff, and we hope that you do your best to make time to attend these.
Final Reflection Paper
There will be 5-page final reflection paper due on the last day of finals. This paper will offer you the opportunity to discuss how the guest presenters, readings, and movies impacted you. More specific instructions will be given later in the semester.

* Grading
This seminar is offered for 1 or 2 units of credit with a Pass/No Pass grading option.

In order to receive a passing grade:

- students taking the class for 2 units of credit must meet all attendance expectations, journal expectations, and turn in the final reflection paper by 5pm on the last day of finals (Saturday, December 19th).

- students who opt to take the class for 1 unit of credit must meet all attendance expectations and may waive EITHER (a) one of the three required journals, OR (b) the final reflection paper. You must advise the instructor of your waiver choice no later than Week 10 (Wednesday, October 28th).
Weekly Seminar Presenters and Topics:

**Week 1  8/26**  
Introduction to seminar

**Week 2  9/2**  
Dr. Derek Van Rheenen, Director, Athletic Study Center and Member, Unity House Advisory Board.


**Week 3  9/9**  
Hate and Bias  
Wade and Michael Tran-Taylor  
Please watch: *Boys Don’t Cry*  
Readings will be assigned the week before

**Dinner Discussion 9/10**  
Elaine Kim, Professor of Asian American Studies  
Former Associate Dean of the Graduate Division; former Chair, Comparative Ethnic Studies Department; former Faculty Assistant for the Status of Women; and former Assistant Dean, College of Letters and Science, University of California, Berkeley  
Past President, Association for Asian American Studies; National Council, American Studies Association; co-founder and member of Board of Directors, Asian Women United of California; co-founder, Oakland Korean Community Center; co-founder, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates  
(http://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/faculty/kim/)

**Week 4  9/16**  
D. Rita Alfonso, Visiting Professor, Gender and Women’s Studies

D. Rita Alfonso is a feminist philosopher and phenomenologist whose work explores questions at the intersections of metaphysics with aesthetics, and epistemology with politics. Her research has focused on conceptions of space, place, and embodiment, through which she has developed ideas and images for theorizing an active, spatial receptivity. Most recently, she has published articles on ?Transatlantic Perspectives on Race: Simone de Beauvoir?s Phenomenology of Race in *America Day by Day*,?  
*(Philosophy Today, Fall 2005)*; and a queer critique of Irigaray?s spatial/metaphysical arguments for sexual difference entitled ?Towards An Ontology of Sexual Indifference?
forthcoming from SUNY Press. Currently, she is working on an essay on space, embodiment, and permeability in John Cameron Mitchell’s film *Shortbus* that is part of a series of philosophical essays on queer media and performances, as well as a book length manuscript on *Space, Embodiment, and Subjectivity*. Dr. Alfonso is currently Visiting Assistant Professor in Gender and Women’s Studies/LGBT Studies at UC Berkeley, and will be teaching introductions to GWS and LGBT Studies; feminist theory (on feminist epistemologies, gender science and knowledge); and a trans-historical, transnational course on *Culture, Sexuality, and Colonialism*. More information on her current and future work can be found at her flagship website [thinkPhilosophy.org](http://thinkPhilosophy.org).

(from http://womensstudies.berkeley.edu/faculty/alfonoso.html)

Please watch *Short Bus*

Dr. Alfonso requests that students pay special attention to 1) the opening montage; and 2) to the scene at the heart of Shortbus between Ceth (Jay Brannan) and Tobias (Alan Mandell) the former Major of New York.

Students should also take a look at this interview with former Major Ed Koch on AIDS on youtube about the aids crisis: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjNmw_JthI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjNmw_JthI)

**Dinner Discussion 9/17**

Nancy Lemon, J.D., Lecturer at Boalt Law School

Nancy Lemon, a leading authority on domestic violence for more than 25 years, pioneered its study in law schools and is the author of Domestic Violence Law, the premiere textbook on the subject. Lemon has been teaching the Domestic Violence Seminar at Boalt -the first law school class of its kind- since 1988, and also directs the Domestic Violence Practicum. Lemon has specialized in domestic violence law as an advocate and practicing attorney, working both with victims of domestic abuse and police and public agencies charged with responding to domestic crime. She currently consults and testifies as an expert witness on domestic violence in criminal prosecution, defense, family law, asylum, and tort cases. Lemon holds a B.A. degree in Women's Studies, a major she co-founded, from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and earned a J.D. degree from Boalt Hall. In 2009 she received an Outstanding Women of Berkeley Award from the Commission on the Status of Women.

**Week 5 9/23**

Bill Hershon, J.D.
Bill has been active in community advocacy for HIV-positive individuals and worked on much of the early HIV/AIDS legislation. He will speak about HIV/AIDS in the early days of the Epidemic in San Francisco.

Please watch: *And the Band Played on*
**Week 6  9/30**  
Transgendered Identities  
J’lissabeth Faughn

**Week 7  10/7**  
Ally Development  
Joshua Kuns

**Week 8  10/14**  
Dr. Marilyn Fabe, Professor of Film Studies.  
Marilyn Fabe teaches courses in the History and aesthetics of the silent film (25A), the history and theory of the sound film (25B), Film Theory (Film 100), auteur (Film 151) courses on Alfred Hitchcock, Charles Chaplin, and Woody Allen, and The Musical as a Genre (Film 108). She has just completed *Closely Watched Films*, a book on the accomplishments of fourteen film directors, beginning with D.W. Griffith and ending with Spike Lee, illustrating each director's contribution to narrative film art. Her recent research involves the connection of the director's life to his or her films. She is currently at work on a psychobiographical study of the films of Alfred Hitchcock.


**Week 9  10/21**  
Dr. Victoria Robinson, Department of Ethnic Studies and Director, American Cultures Center.  
Dr. Robinson teaches courses addressing race and ethnicity in the United States and global female migrations. She also is the faculty sponsor of the Unity House seminar.

**Week 10  10/28**  
Jauna Rodriguez, Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies  
She is the author of *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (NYU 2003) and has published numerous articles related to her research interests in sexuality studies, queer activism in a transnational context, critical race theory, technology and media arts, and Latin@ and Caribbean studies. She holds a B.A. in Liberal Studies from San Francisco State University, an MA in Comparative Literature from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley. Before joining the faculty at Berkeley, she was faculty at Bryn Mawr College and UC Davis, where she served as Director of the Cultural Studies Graduate Group. She is currently working on a book manuscript about imagining queer interventions into everyday life.
(From http://womensstudies.berkeley.edu/faculty/rodriguez.html)

**Week 11  11/4**
Rafael Colona, Ph. D. candidate
The naming process with Same-sex parents

**Week 12: No class (Veterans Day Holiday)**

**11/12 Dinner Discussion**
The surrogacy process, Troy Gilbert

**Week 13  11/18**
Dr. Minoo Moallem, Department Chair and Professor of Gender & Women’s Studies. Dr. Moallem’s research interests include: Postcolonial and Transnational Feminist Theories; Immigration and Diaspora Studies; Feminist Cultural Studies; Middle Eastern Studies and Iranian Cultural Politics and Diasporas. She is the author of *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Cultural Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*, University of California Press, 2005.

**Week 14: No class (Thanksgiving Break)**

**Week 15  12/2**
TBA

**Week 16  12/9**
Final Reflection Dialogue