Department of African and African-American Studies  
AFAM 3152  L21: Expressive Bodies: Race, Sexuality, and the Arts 
Dr. Jonathon Appels  
Phone: (212) 242-1664  
MTWR 6:00pm  
Summer II (2016) 

Course Description: 
Questions concerning the media representation of race, and of gender expression and sexuality, are at the heart of this course. Each class session will be devoted to exploring these questions of race and sexual expression. Indeed, the majority of the required readings are by people of color, and more than half are by gay, lesbian, and bisexual authors, or are about gay, lesbian, and bisexual subjects. Of particular import to this course is the way in which various media communicate information on both the African continent and in the African American experience, and how differing media build bridges and extend essential human storytelling. We are concerned with the broadest range of communicative craft and technology: nonverbal communication and dance, the arts, cultural symbols, signs and languages, and new media. The course shows how bodies are able to mime and defy methods of categorization and media representation of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, and sexuality. While bodies remain agile, normative theories of how bodies are socially construed and described throughout different historical periods sometimes seem to be rigid and formulaic. In particular we consider research on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and black popular culture of the last few decades, working with texts by Kwame Anthony Appiah, Charles R. Johnson, Laura Doyle, Gail Weiss, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., as well as essays by Foucault, Butler, and French feminists. By examining their theories, in conjunction with the artistic representation of bodies (in African American literary works, and in the performing and visual arts), the course will critique the parameters of categories of African American race, gender, sexuality, and media production. In particular we consider African American dance through the work of Alvin Ailey, Arthur Mitchell, Misty Copeland, Ron Brown, Katherine Dunham, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Complexions, African and African American playwrights Soyinka, Baldwin, Hansberry, and Suzan-Lori Parks, African American literary authors Lorde, Dove, Brooks, Alexander, Hurston, and Morrison, and African American visual artists Kara Walker and Glenn Ligon. We will make use of the many cultural resources of NYC.
Attendance Policies:

No more than three absences or you risk failing the course. Tardiness of more than half an hour counts as a full absence. You are requested to drop the course after three absences unless you have the Dean’s written permission.

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you expect to miss one or two classes please speak to me in advance.

Grading Criteria:

All of the following assignments assume the clarification of a theoretical position.

60% Two papers (Final paper is 8-10 pages, and must include secondary source materials) and the Idea Book (25 pages of extended in-class writing and journal entries from the site visits).
20% Class participation and attendance, and short in class written assignments
20% Three oral presentations (comparing influences from at least three different cultures)

Late papers will be downgraded one grade per week late. No email submissions. Papers should be proofread for all grammatical and typographic errors before submission. Multiple grammatical errors will lower the overall grade.

Policy Regarding Electronics:

Electronic devices (iPods, iPads, tablets, cell phones, Kindles, Nooks texting, laptops, photography, recording devices, etc.) will not be allowed during the seminar.
Course Objectives:

- To help students develop a wide tolerance, sensitivity, and knowledge of race, diversity, class, sexuality, and gender as they are portrayed in American media and society

- To examine the narratives of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in the U.S. and to analyze how those narratives have been construed and interpreted by the mass media

- To understand the interconnectedness of race and gender with history, language, the arts, bodily expression, and media expression

- To increase knowledge of diversity and sexual expression

- To develop methods of problem solving and research focused on the history and media transmission of African American cultural expression

- To foster respect for differing points of view and to promote cross-disciplinary conversation on diversity

- To develop a wide spectrum of writing skills and oral presentation skills

- To support and expand critical and creative thinking skills

- To enhance reading comprehension and communication skills as part of scholarship and research
Texts (four required):

Gammage, Representations of Black Women in the Media: The Damnation of Black Womanhood
Dent, Black Popular Culture
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception
Noble, Black Is the Color of My TV Tube
Barlow, Voice Over: The Making of Black Radio
Harrington (ed), Positive/Negative: Women of Color and HIV/AIDS
Thomas Defrantz, Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance
Hoad, African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality, and Globalization
Susan Manning, Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion
Charles R. Johnson, Being and Race: Black Writing Since 1970
Browning, Infectious Rhythms: Metaphors of Contagion and the Spread of African Culture
Battle and Barnes (eds.) Black Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies

+ Visits to museums, galleries, and performances. In addition to seeing choreographic works by African Americans Mitchell, Ailey, and Dunham, we will also read texts by and about them. The class will also see choreography and read texts by additional African American choreographers. (Please note that some cost will be involved with the site visits to cultural institutions).

Recommended Texts for Consultation on the Research Paper:
Richardson, The Queer Limit of Black Memory: Black Lesbian Literature and Irresolution
Ellett, Encyclopedia of Black Radio in the United States, 1921-1955
Tadiar and Davis (eds.) Beyond the Frame: Women of Color and Visual Representation
Elizabeth Alexander, Crave Radiance
Toni Morrison, A Mercy
Caton, Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation
Mudimbe, The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge
Nguyen, *The Republic of Therapy: Triage and Sovereignty in West Africa’s Time of AIDS*

Fischer-Hornung and Goeller, *Embodying Liberation: The Black Body in American Dance*

Margo Jefferson, *On Michael Jackson*

bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*

Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*

Brenda Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*


Jacques Derrida, *An Introduction to Husserl’s Origins of Geometry*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volumes 1-3*

Heitner, *Black Power TV*

Jennifer Dunning, *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance*

Suzan-Lori Parks, *365 Days/365 Plays*

Laura Doyle, *Bordering on the Body: The Racial Matrix of Modern Fiction and Culture*

Kara Walker, *After the Deluge*

Berzock and Clark (eds), *Representing Africa in American Art Museums: A Century of Collecting and Display*

Ro, *Prince: Inside the Music and the Masks*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Wole Soyinka, *Collected Plays*


Glenn Ligon, *Yourself in the World*

Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*

Rita Dove, *Selected Poems*

Susanna Sloat (ed), *Making Caribbean Dance: Continuity and Creativity in Island Cultures*

Veve Clark (ed), *Kaiso!: Writings by and about Katherine Dunham*

Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*

Nadine George-Graves, *Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of African American Dance Theater, Community, Engagement, and Working It Out*

Gail Weiss, *Refiguring the Ordinary*

Dorothea Olkowski, *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems*
Millman, Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop
Angela Y. Davis, Women, Culture, and Politics
Dubem Okafor, The Dance of Death: Nigerian History and Christopher Okigbo’s Poetry
Audre Lorde, Collected Poems
Nicole R. Fleetwood, Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness
James Baldwin, Blues for Mister Charlie
Peggy and Murray Schwartz, The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus
Zora Neale Hurston, The Complete Stories
Henry Louis Gates Jr., Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man
Ramsey, Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop
McCluskey, Imaging Blackness: Race and Racial Representation in Film
Poster Art
Rahier, Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities
Allen and Moon, Reel Black Talk: A Sourcebook of 50 American Filmmakers
Alexander, Why We Make Movies: Black Filmmakers Talk About the Magic of Cinema
Copeland, Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina
Vaughn, Beyoncé
King, On the Down Low: A Journey into the Lives of 'Straight' Black Men Who Sleep with Men
Moore, Does Your Mama Know?: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories
Course Outline:

Week One:

--Introduction and Course Objectives
--Course Requirements, Outline, and Discussion of Site Visits
--The African American Artistic Body, the Arts, and Media Representation
  --How African Americans artists create and envision gendered bodies and “bodily world views” in literature, the visual arts, the performing arts, and new media. The nature of African American gender, sexuality, and bodily aesthetics. How media representation of black culture frames, normalizes, and problematizes black culture.
--Focus: Beyoncé and Michael Jackson
--Popular Media and Social Dances: the Lindy Hop, the Twist, Rap, and Hip Hop
--Black Culture and Modern Dance: Concert Dances Before and After Ailey

Week Two:

--African American Race, Gender, Sexuality and the Body
--Black Bisexuality: Whitney Houston, Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, Josephine Baker
--Black Ballet and Black Choreography
--Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Recent Studies in Race Phenomenology
--Black Sexuality and Media Celebrity Culture
--The Meaning of Baggy Pants
  --Identity vs. orientation
--Black Sexuality and the Down Low
--Phenomenological Philosophy as a Method for Describing the African American Expressive Body
Week Three:

--Phenomenology as a North African System of Philosophical Thought Developed in Europe
--African American Bodily Artistry and Labor, African American Bodily Forms and Sensation: Categories of Efficiency vs. Expression in Relation to Race and Gender
--Black Athletes (Sam Harris)
--Embodiment in Differing Cultures: How is Embodiment Communicated Between Cultures and within Differing Media?

Week Four:

--The Subjugated Body in Slavery
--Media Forms from Recent Decades
--The Geographical Body: African American Bodies on the Continents of Africa and America
--Black Culture as Seen on TV, MTV, Radio, and Newer Media
--Affordability and New Media: Problems from Black American Culture
--Embodied Culture: Fame Before, During, and After Celebrity

Week Five:

--African American Bodily Constitution and Perception: Lived Sociality and Agility
--Black Media Embodiment
--Wrap Up and Conclusion
*Please note: Because the course will be run as a seminar, it is expected that students will come prepared with the readings. Active participation is assumed and will be reflected in the grading.

**Policy on Plagiarism:**
Please read carefully the Fordham policy regarding plagiarism, which can be found on the Fordham website.

The Academic Integrity Statement follows:
As a student of Fordham University, I recognize that I am part of a community dedicated to the disciplined and rigorous pursuit of knowledge and communication of truth. I therefore commit myself to the University Code of Conduct and upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Any work that I claim to be my own will be my own; I will give appropriate credit where credit is due; I will be fair and honest in all of my interactions with members of the Fordham community.

**Disability Statement:**
Please note the following information on disability accommodations:

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you need to register with the Office of Disability Services for Students (ODS) in order to request academic accommodations for your courses. Please contact the main ODS office at Rose Hill at (718) 817-0655 to arrange services. Staff at ODS can walk you through the process and arrange appointments at the appropriate campus. Accommodations are not retroactive, so you need to register with ODS prior to receiving your accommodations. Please see me after class or during office hours if you have questions or would like to submit your academic accommodation letter to me.

7/29/15 RS
4/22/15 SS