

English 504 Theories of Race, Class, and Gender: “From Representation to Decolonization”  
Fall 2020  
Professor Viet Nguyen, [vnguyen@usc.edu](mailto:vnguyen@usc.edu)  
Office hours by appointment, online

Representation has been a crucial aesthetic, cultural, and political concept for minorities of all kinds in the United States and elsewhere. In literary and other artistic contexts, representation has been a key demand for marginalized populations who wish to see more stories about themselves, as well as more images, reflections, etc. “Representation matters!” has become a rallying cry, and the political stakes are high, given how the opposition to such a demand is sometimes couched as a defense of the Western canon, culture, and even civilization against the inclusion of artistically unworthy works (and the culturally unworthy populations these works represent).

A “representative” aesthetic that has been called “multicultural,” “ethnic,” “minority,” “diverse,” and more makes significant political claims about equality and justice. But is representation and its corollary—recognition—enough? Would “decolonization” be a more effective term that draws attention to how the problems of representation for minorities of all kinds cannot be separated from the history of colonization? What would a decolonizing aesthetic that includes an engagement with the material history of colonization (warfare, land appropriation, sexual violence, labor exploitation, geographical marginalization, and the symbolic violence of erasure) look like?

Week 1 August 17	Introduction
Week 2 August 24	Aimé Césaire, <i>Discourse on Colonialism</i> ; <i>Notebook of a Return to the Native Land</i> ; <i>A Tempest</i> ; Edward Said, introduction and afterword to <i>Orientalism</i>
Week 3 August 31	Albert Memmi, <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> ; Gloria Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> , first half; Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America”; María Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”
Week 4 September 7	Labor Day
Week 5 September 14	Frantz Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> ; Trinh T. Minh-ha, <i>Woman Native Other</i> , excerpts (“Difference” and “Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box”)
Week 6 September 21	Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> ; Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument”

- Week 7 September 28      Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor”; Tommy Orange, *There There*, preface\*
- Week 8 October 5      Jodi Byrd, *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*; Emil Keme and Adam Coon, “For Abiyala to Live, the Americas Must Die: Toward a Transhemispheric Indigeneity”; excerpts from *Standing with Standing Rock*\* (Lewis Grassrope, LaDonna Bravebull Allard, Andrew Curley, Elizabeth Ellis); excerpt Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas*
- Week 9 October 12      Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine*; Jodi Byrd, “Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiracism, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance”; Cheryl I. Harris, “Of Blackness and Indigeneity”; Tiffany Lethabo King, “New World Grammars: The ‘Unthought’ Black Discourses of Conquest”
- Week 10 October 19      Dean Itsuji Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai‘i Statehood*; Haunani Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (excerpt)\*; Epele Hau‘ofa, “Our Sea of Islands”; additional article from *Standing with Standing Rock*
- Week 11 October 26      Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*; Achille Mbembe, “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive”
- Week 12 November 2      Houria Bouteldja, *Whites, Jews, and Us: Toward a Politics of Revolutionary Love*; John Keene, *Counternarratives*
- Week 13 November 9      Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*
- Week 14 November 16      Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence: The Ethical in the Political*

November 20: seminar paper due date

Requirements:

10% Attendance and participation; be present and verbally engage with the presentations and readings

40% Seminar presentation; you will present for one half of the seminar and all material in the week's reading is your responsibility, except for week 12 with Bouteldja and Keene (two presenters). Most presentations will be with one person but some will be with two, depending on the signups. Since we are online, with all the attendant difficulties, I would like the presentations to include at least some minutes for breakout rooms and small discussions. During the period when the entire seminar is meeting (the majority of your presentation), you will present your interpretation/critique/coverage/contextualization of the readings and allow time for class discussion.

50% Seminar paper. You can, if you wish, directly engage with the reading material or you can use the writing to feed into your research and/or creative concerns. You have three options:

- 1) 10 page conference paper (typically equal to 20 minute conference presentation)
- 2) 20 page chapter draft for a possible dissertation
- 3) creative/critical essay/text/prose/genre-experiment (up to you) of up to 20 pages

The seminar paper is due Friday November 20

Book list (in order of appearance)

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* and *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*  
Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*  
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*  
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*  
Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*  
Jodi Byrd, *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*  
Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine*  
Dean Itsuji Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai'i Statehood*  
Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*  
Houria Bouteldja, *Whites, Jews, and Us: Toward a Politics of Revolutionary Love*  
John Keene, *Counternarratives*  
Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*  
Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence: The Ethical in the Political*

Optional:

Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*

Some works I was considering for inclusion:

Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, And the Transcontinental Railroad*

Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017*,

Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*

Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*

Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method*

Literature and film that I was considering for inclusion:

Gillo Pontecorvo, dir., *The Battle of Algiers*

Michael Haneke, dir., *Caché*

Trinh T. Minh-ha, dir., *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*

Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*

Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*

Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*

Natalie Diaz, *Postcolonial Love Poem*

Articles or excerpts:

Haunani Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii*  
(excerpt)\*

David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* (excerpt on Dakota pipeline)\*  
excerpts from *Standing with Standing Rock*

Tommy Orange, *There There*, preface\*

Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman Native Other*, excerpts

Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*

Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America”

María Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”

Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human,  
After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument”

Achille Mbembe, “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive”

Jodi Byrd, “Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiracism, and the Grounded  
Relationalities of Resistance”;

Cheryl I. Harris, “Of Blackness and Indigeneity”

Emil Keme and Adam Coon, “For Abiyala to Live, the Americas Must Die: Toward a  
Transhemispheric Indigeneity”

Tiffany Lethabo King, “New World Grammars: The ‘Unthought’ Black Discourses of Conquest”

\*these need to be copied and sent to you