



STPEC 392 H

**Histories
Social Movements
Cultural Politics**

**Junior Seminar II
Fall 2013**

Tuesdays & Thursdays
11:00 – 12:45

hari stephen kumar
hkumar@umass.edu

DESCRIPTION

Welcome to STPEC 392H! This 4-credit honors course completes your year-long STPEC Junior Seminar sequence. In Junior I, you studied the major driving forces behind the production of modernity as a Western *episteme* (the way we structure and decode the world as a Eurocentric fiction). In Junior II, we will examine how the political, social, and cultural practices and philosophies of the 20th century relate to the contradictions and pitfalls of modernity. Our focus involves:

- A balanced emphasis on theory and practice, interconnecting theories with the lived histories that produce them.
- A critique of the constructed nature of the West, especially the ways that intellectual claims are made within a Western dominated co-creation of Western & non-Western worlds.
- A sustained commitment to decolonial perspectives and critiques of modernity, focusing on nationalism as a central tenet of modernity and on liberation struggles within global neoliberal paradigms.

Thus, we will study critiques of slavery, imperialism, conquest, social transformation, resistance, and global neoliberalism in the ways they result from histories of colonialism and the theories that perpetuated it. We will connect those critiques with contemporary iterations and legacies in institutions and social structures.

OBJECTIVES

1. Read primary sources while fostering a broad critical understanding of historically grounded texts and their persistence in contemporary case studies.
2. Know the main authors of foundational theories, their intellectual and cultural lineages, and the relation of theory to historical contexts as both causal and consequential.
3. Relate abstract concepts to governmental policies and their reformulations in resistant social actions.
4. Develop an awareness of key social theories & movements, and critically identify them in your personal experiences, memories, epistemologies, and politics.
5. Incorporate reflection & research on these topics in your independent learning.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR



hari was born in India but grew up in Yemen and has lived in the USA since 1997. He worked as a software engineer for 8 years before leaving in 2008 to pursue a teaching career. He has an M.S. in Electrical Engineering from Boston University, an M.A. in Communication from UMass Amherst, and is working on his Ph.D. in English. His research uses decolonial performance methodologies to stage critical interventions in the processes of whiteness and racialization in American culture. He is married to Alexis, and they have two children: Eliana (age 3) and Micah (age 1). His website is: www.kineticnow.com

ASSIGNMENTS

Projects (2 x 30%)

These can be individual essays, but I will emphasize & encourage many options for so-called “non-traditional” scholarship such as real-world case studies, critical performances, speeches, analytical presentations, and collaborative research projects.

Stage 1 Project Due: Oct 17

Stage 2 Project Due: Dec 17

Q&A Feedback (2 x 10%)

Building on STPEC’s collective ethic, you will be involved in providing supportive and critical feedback to your peers during Q&A sessions where they will present rough drafts of their project ideas. Your participation in these sessions is crucial to developing each other’s ideas more productively.

Stage 1 Q&A: Oct 8 & 10

Stage 2 Q&A: Dec 3 & 5

Participation (20%)

Your participation includes attentive attendance, in-depth reading, contributing productively to informed class discussions, and facilitating class meetings.

GRADE SCALE

A	> 94	C+	77–79
A-	90–93	C	74–76
B+	87–89	C-	70–73
B	84–86	D+	67–69
B-	80–83	D	60–66
		F	< 60

SCHEDULE : STAGE 1

Histories, Social Movements, Decolonial & Post-modern Critiques

In this stage we will first situate ourselves theoretically with an introduction to decolonial perspectives on histories and subjugated knowledges. With that awareness in & on our mind/bodies, we will then trace the contours of key historical conjunctures in the 20th century, ranging from the Russian revolution, the Mexican revolution, the rise of fascism in Europe, national socialism in Germany, and World War II. At this point we will bring in another theoretical stream to our journey: Marxian critiques and postmodernist contributions in cultural studies, with a focus on performative approaches to cultural politics. With this added layer, we will revisit histories of local resistances and movements post-WW2, especially the Zapatista movement in Mexico in the 1990s.

WEEK	TOPIC / READINGS
Sep 3 Sep 5	Course overview; Intro to decolonial critiques of history & modernity Malea Powell, “The Story Takes Place.” Walter Dignolo, <i>The Darker Side of Western Modernity</i> , selections. <i>Connection to J1: Shohat & Stam (Unthinking Eurocentrism)</i>
Sep 10 Sep 12	Russian Revolution, Fascism, National Socialism, and World War II Eric Hobsbawm, <i>The Age of Extremes (1914-1991)</i> , selections. <i>Connection to J1: Marx (Communist Manifesto), Hobsbawm (Age of Empire)</i>
Sep 17 Sep 19	Embodied challenges to Western textual histories Chandra Talpante Mohanty, <i>Feminism Without Borders</i> , selections. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, <i>Decolonizing Methodologies</i> , selections. Edward Said, <i>Orientalism</i> , selections. <i>Connection to J1: Maria Lugones (Heterosexualism)</i>
Sep 24 Sep 26	Postmodernism and Marxian critiques of cultural studies Dick Hebdige, “Postmodernism and ‘the other side’” Kuan-Hsing Chen, “Post-marxism: beyond/between critical postmodernism and cultural studies.” Dwight Conquergood, “Beyond the text: Toward a performative cultural politics.” <i>Connection to J1: Stuart Hall (Marxism Without Guarantees), Gramsci</i>
Oct 1 Oct 3	Revisiting histories: Revolutions, resistances, coalitions Eric Wolf, “Mexico” in <i>Peasant Wars of the 20th Century</i> . <i>Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico</i> . Selected chapters. Andrea Smith, “Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy.” <i>Connection to J1: J. Scott (Peasant resistance), Andrea Smith (Conquest)</i>
Oct 8 Oct 10	Presentations & performances of Stage 1 Project first drafts with Q&A. Participation this week is worth 10% of your total course grade.
Oct 17	Stage 1 Projects due. Debrief, community check-in, shift to Stage 2.

SCHEDULE : STAGE 2

Whiteness, Neoliberalism, American Right-Wing Cultural Politics

In this stage we will return to the late 1860s and begin tracing specific contours of American cultural ideologies through the 20th century. We will focus particularly on racial formations and their deeply material connections to political movements in the American right-wing by following the complex evolution of American racism from the early 20th century up to contemporary times. Parallel to this evolution, we will also follow the construction and consolidation of ideologies of whiteness in American cultural politics. We will particularly focus on the consequential development of the “culture wars” in the USA during the 1990s, with their continued reverberation globally and locally in contemporary times through both so-called “social issues” as well as the more pervasive economic ideologies of globalization and neoliberalism. We will study the persistence and importance of white nationalism as an increasingly mainstream political force in the USA. We will end with studying the articulation of extremism in American right-wing cultural politics.

WEEK	TOPIC / READINGS
Oct 22 Oct 24	Material histories of race and the evolution of American racism Khalil Gibran Muhammad, <i>Condemnation of Blackness (1890–1940)</i> , selections. Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> , selections. Douglas Massey & Nancy Denton, <i>American Apartheid</i> , selections. <i>Connection to J1: Laurent Dubois (Enslaved Enlightenment), Charles Mills (Racial Contract)</i>
Oct 29 Oct 31	Cultural politics of race, whiteness, and anti-racism Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s relevance for the study of race and ethnicity.” Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, <i>Racism Without Racists</i> , selections. Tim Wise, <i>White Like Me</i> , selections. Alastair Bonnett, “Whiteness in European and American anti-racist discourse.” <i>Connection to J1: Gramsci, Raymond Williams (Base & superstructure)</i>
Nov 5 Nov 7	White nationalism and the American “culture wars” of the 1990s James Davison Hunter, <i>Culture Wars</i> , selections. Leonard Zeskind, <i>Blood and Politics: History of White Nationalist Movement from Margins to Mainstream</i> , selections. Jessie Daniels, <i>White Lies: Race, Class, Gender & Sexuality in White Supremacist Discourse</i> , selections. Steven Rosenfeld, “The surprising unknown history of the N.R.A.” Arie Perliger, “Understanding America’s violent far-right.” Center for Counter-Terrorism Report (Nov 2012). <i>Connection to J1: Althusser (Ideology & ideological state apparatuses), Bourdieu (Aristocracy of culture)</i>
Nov 12 Nov 14	Globalization, neoliberalism, and “development” ideologies Arturo Escobar, <i>Encountering Development</i> , selections. Stuart Hall, <i>Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left</i> , selections. Henry Giroux, <i>The Abandoned Generation</i> , selections. James Ferguson, <i>Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order</i> , selections. <i>Connection to J1: Dipesh Chakravarty (Provincializing Europe), Maria Mies (Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale)</i>
Nov 19 Nov 21	The articulation of extremism in American politics Stanley Aronowitz, “Toward radicalism: Death & rebirth of the American Left.” Anthony DiMaggia, <i>The Rise of the Tea Party</i> , selections. David Neiwert, <i>The Eliminationists: How Hate Talk Radicalized the American Right</i> , selections. Henry Giroux, <i>The University in Chains</i> , selections.
Nov 26	Debrief, community check-in, preparing for Stage 2 Projects.
Dec 3 Dec 5	Presentations & performances of Stage 2 Project first drafts, Q&A feedback. Participation this week is worth 10% of your total course grade.

POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Reading & Coursework

This is a 4-credit honors course at the 3rd-year college level. The material and workload are thus set with high standards, both for me as an instructor/facilitator and for you as a student/participant.

You can expect to be assigned about 150-200 pages of readings weekly. These will introduce you to “primary sources while fostering a broad understanding of historically grounded texts.”

I expect you to search beyond the assigned material on your own initiative, and based on your own interests, to find background information and contemporary examples that help explain the “intellectual and cultural lineages” of the readings.

All texts will be posted as PDFs on our course Moodle page. You are welcome to bring your laptops/tablets to class if you prefer not to print the readings.

You can expect vigorous in-class discussions that require you to read both broadly and in-depth each week. I expect you to contribute to our learning of the readings through your participation in collective co-facilitation for each week.

I expect you to engage relationally in exploring the readings together, including in meetings with me but also by arranging reading groups with each other on your own initiative, whether in person or online.

I will NOT email you reminders of reading assignments. Again, this is a 4-credit honors course. You are responsible for managing your workload and time to keep pace with the course schedule.

Learning Accommodations

I am committed to supporting your learning needs, recognizing that all of us learn in many different ways. If you require accommodations in partnership with the University’s Disability Services office, please make arrangements with me during the first two weeks of class. If you have any physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual learning needs that you feel might make it difficult for you to engage the workload or participate in class, please contact me or the STPEC staff at any time. We will strive to provide a supportive and productive learning solution for you.

Attendance

Please attend. No, seriously, we will miss you deeply if you are absent. This is our collective learning journey—your presence & participation enriches all of us.

Attentive Attendance: Beyond your physical presence, I expect you to be alive, awake, attentive, aware, alert, and actively engaged with the class.

Excused Absences: If you need to miss class due to a known issue, please email me in advance to check if it can be excused. If you are absent due to serious illness or a personal emergency, please email me as soon as reasonably possible.

Unexcused Absences: You are allowed up to two unexcused absences. Each further absence takes away 3 points from your total grade. For unexcused absences you are responsible for catching up on missed work on your own.

Lateness: I expect punctuality. I will excuse the occasional or rare lateness, but habitual or disruptive lateness will affect your course grade.

Classroom Civility

I expect us to engage each other respectfully, voicing our perspectives while maintaining genuine curiosity about ideas and experiences that are in conflict with our own. We will engage several “hot-button” issues in this course, but we will always strive to approach them seriously and with critical depth. We will persistently question “soundbites” or “cliches” but always sensitively and openly, in a spirit of encouraging each other toward deeper understanding. If you feel you cannot speak in class, please talk with me privately or with a trusted STPEC staff member so that we can figure out more fruitful strategies.

All of us, including myself, are bound to the University’s Code of Classroom Civility available here:

<http://bit.ly/umass-civility>

Academic Honesty

It is fine to use ideas, words, and short passages from others in your own work as *long as you acknowledge the source!* Failure to do so is considered plagiarism, a serious academic offense which can result in automatic failure and possible suspension. Please see the University’s policy on Academic Honesty:

<http://bit.ly/umass-honesty>

Grading & Evaluation

You will be evaluated based on the quality of your work and your participation. Your grades will not be based on your beliefs or whether you agree with the views presented in class. If you have concerns, please talk with me privately. FERPA law restricts me from discussing your grades in public or over email.

Communicating With Me

Email is the best way to reach me. During the work week I check my email constantly. You can expect a reply within 12 to 24 hours. However, my Sabbath observances include not checking email on weekends. Please note that emails written in Facebook/Twitter/SMS style are injurious to my health and will be treated accordingly.

My Office Hours

Machmer E-27 (STPEC main office).
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9.30 – 10.30.

Please email me for an appointment on other days/times. We can also arrange a Skype session or a phone call instead if those work better for you than an in-person meeting.