

## Theories of Power and Resistance in the Americas

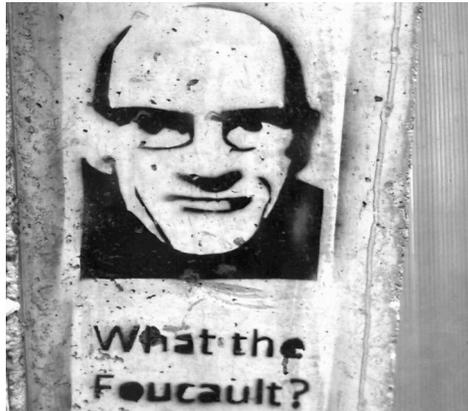


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### Professor

Marisol LeBrón / [lebronm@dickinson.edu](mailto:lebronm@dickinson.edu)

### Time and Location

MR 3:00pm – 4:15pm  
Denny 212

### Office Hours

Thursday 12:30pm – 2:30pm  
Denny Hall 302

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to key theorists and central theoretical approaches that have shaped the way scholars in the field of American Studies think about power and resistance. Specifically, we will examine the work of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Stuart Hall, and Judith Butler and consider how American Studies scholars have taken up the work of these thinkers in order to examine difference, inequality, culture, history, governance, and social movements in the Americas. In this way, we will work across the fields of gender and sexuality studies, cultural studies, race and ethnic studies, and postcolonial studies, to understand the influence of these theorists' work in an American Studies context. Grounding our discussions also in students' research interests, this course will equip students with the necessary tools to connect these key theoretical approaches within American Studies to their own research as they develop compelling research questions and embark upon their own projects.

### COURSE MATERIALS

Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (1984)

Judith Butler, *Prearious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2006)

Gilberto Rosas, *Barrio Libre: Criminalizing States and Delinquent Refusals of the New Frontier* (2012)

Eric Tang, *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyperghetto* (2015)

**Recommended:** Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History* (2016)

All other readings for this course will be available through Moodle [marked \*]. You are expected to bring these readings to class. If you are having issues purchasing the books for class, please come speak to me.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

During our time together, you will engage in discussion-based intellectual exchange with your fellow classmates and rigorous, original analysis of the weekly readings. Our class sessions will help you to develop critical thinking capacities that will prove indispensable both in the classroom and beyond.

We are collectively responsible for the quality of our time together. In other words, you will get out of this class what you invest in terms of preparedness and effort. Therefore, you are expected to arrive to each session on time, having read the assigned material, having determined relevant questions and points for discussion, and ready to engage each other respectfully in the classroom.

## **A NOTE ON DIFFERENCE, DISCOMFORT, & RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM**

Respect for difference, in all its forms, is essential to building a classroom environment where everyone feels able to learn and contribute to class discussions. The material covered in this course will engage with questions of how difference produces distinct forms of knowledge and diverse experiences. The experiences and ways of knowing discussed in the course materials may be similar or different from your own experiences, both of which can result in questions and possibly even feelings of discomfort. When these moments arise, I encourage you to view them as valuable and important components of learning.

Thus, this course will ask you to think critically and thoughtfully about social differences and societal inequalities in ways that may expand or challenge previously held ideas. That said, the goal of this class is not to “force” certain ways of thinking onto anyone, but, rather, to expose everyone to ways of thinking and being in the world that may or may not be different from their own. I expect and encourage students to disagree with the course material, fellow classmates, and me; however, I expect that everyone will remain respectful and willing to listen at all times. Although you are under no obligation to agree with the course materials, the instructor, or the other students, you are still responsible for displaying a comprehension of the texts assigned and the conversations taking place.

If you have concerns about course content or the expectations regarding the classroom environment, please consult with me during the first week to determine whether this class is a good fit for you. If you are uncomfortable with or uninterested in discussions of race, gender, sexuality, class, histories of colonization, exploitation, capitalism, and violence, this class may not be for you as these will be central themes covered throughout the semester.

## **COMMUNICATION**

*Email:* You are welcome to email me with any questions or concerns. I expect, however, that you be timely and considerate with your emails. Requests or questions related to scheduled assignments that are received less than 12 hours before the assignment is due may not receive a response. Please be professional in your email communications with all your professors, including me.

*Office Hours:* Do not hesitate to come see me if you have any questions regarding the course materials or your written work. If you are unable to attend my scheduled office hours, contact me to set up another time by appointment.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance at all classes is required. Students will be allowed *two* absences without penalty. All other absences will lower your participation grade for the course. ***Students with 4 or more absences will automatically receive a ZERO participation grade for the course.*** Students are expected to arrive to class on time; students arriving to class more than 15 minutes after the class has started will be marked absent for the day.

If an extenuating circumstance requires that you be late or miss a class session, please consult with me ahead of time. Please note that, in addition to contacting me, it is *YOUR* personal responsibility to attain and review notes for any missed classes from your fellow students.

You are expected to attend every class and be fully present in our collective space. Therefore, ***cell phones must be put on silent and remain out of sight. Additionally, all laptops, iPads, tablets, and digital notebooks are prohibited in class,*** unless there is a documented need for students who require specific learning accommodations. Because this is a discussion-based class, you will not need to take digital notes. Also, you must remember to bring the readings with you to class in order to appropriately reference and engage them during our discussions.

## LATE PAPER POLICY

***No Late Papers Will Be Accepted Without Penalty.*** A FULL letter grade will be deducted for every day that a paper is late (i.e., B+ to C+). Late papers also may not receive written comments. Papers cannot be rewritten. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, please come see me during my office hours.

## PAPER FORMAT

All papers must use 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spacing, and 1" margins on all sides. All students must use the following header:

Your name  
The class title  
The assignment (i.e. midterm essay)  
The date you handed in the paper (not the due date)

Students should use either Chicago or MLA style citations in a consistent manner throughout their written assignments. For more see the Library's Guide to Citing Sources: <http://libguides.dickinson.edu/citing>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any breach of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary review. I expect all students to familiarize themselves with and adhere to Dickinson College's policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be accessed here: [http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/dean-of-students/content/Conduct---Community-Standards/#Academic Misconduct](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/dean-of-students/content/Conduct---Community-Standards/#Academic%20Misconduct)

## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is the appropriation of someone else's work or ideas – whether they are written or not – without acknowledgement, proper identification of the source, or citation. It is irrelevant whether this was done intentionally or not. Further, a lack of knowledge about U.S. standards of academic citation is not an excuse or explanation. While the most egregious forms of plagiarism use entire phrases, sentences, or paragraphs verbatim without quotation marks or citation, paraphrasing someone else's work without attribution *and* altering a few words to pass someone else's ideas off as your own also constitute equally serious forms of plagiarism. The inclusion of non-textual images (i.e. drawings, maps, graphs, charts, and photos) in a paper is also considered plagiarism if the images are not properly cited.

It is *YOUR* responsibility to consult with your instructor, a librarian, or writing tutor if you are unsure or unclear about how to properly use citations.

For more information about plagiarism, please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab's webpage dedicated to avoiding plagiarism: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

## NEED HELP WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS?

As I am unable to read paper drafts, I strongly recommend visiting the Eberly Writing Center. At the Writing Center, you can work one-on-one with a trained writing tutor. Please avail yourselves of this wonderful resource – you will not regret it. For more information and to make an appointment: [http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20158/writing\\_program/2829/the\\_norman\\_m\\_eberly\\_multilingual\\_writing\\_center](http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20158/writing_program/2829/the_norman_m_eberly_multilingual_writing_center)

## ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have.

Disability Services proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer, she can be reached at (717)-254-8107 or [proctoring@dickinson.edu](mailto:proctoring@dickinson.edu). Address general inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at (717)-245-1734 or e-mail [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu).

## NAMES & PRONOUNS

If you prefer to be called by a different name or referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class discussions.

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

### ***Class Participation:*** 15%

Regular attendance, on-time completion of the reading assignments, active listening during lectures and in-class discussion, and adding to discussions by making comments and asking questions are all required of you in this course.

### ***Reading Journal and Discussion Questions:*** 20%

The reading journal and discussion questions are an opportunity for you to work through the difficult and complex issues raised in our course readings. Before each class meeting, students should write down their notes and thoughts on the reading (about 1-2 pages long-hand depending on your handwriting). I will periodically collect the reading journals in order to evaluate and grade them, so be prepared to hand them in when I request. *And, yes, I do mean an actual paper journal – no digital notebooks will be accepted.*

These are not essays, so your notes can be in the form of bulleted comments or questions. Your notes do not have to have a thesis or argument. In the pages of the journal, you should be trying to work out what exactly the author is arguing in the piece(s) you read. In other words, if I asked you to state the author's argument in your own words could you? Can you explain the different aspects of the author's argument and how they relate to each other in your own words? The pages of the journal are your space to do just that.

In addition to your thoughts and notes on the reading(s), you should prepare 3 discussion questions for each class session. These should not be yes or no questions or simplistic content questions, but rather thoughtful and thought provoking questions about the theory you are reading and its implications. We will spend time in class discussing how to write a good discussion question. You should be prepared, at my request, to share your discussion questions for the day with your classmates. These should be written in your reading journal.

Please note that you do not need to do journal entries or discussion questions on days when you are presenting.

### ***Presentation and Discussion Facilitation:*** 20%

In pre-assigned pairs, students will be responsible for leading one class over the course of the semester. I will, of course, assist, direct, and add to the conversation as necessary, but, for our first half hour together, you will be responsible for the structure and progression of class discussion. Although the format is flexible and you are encouraged to be creative, you must be sure to address the following:

- the central argument/thesis of the text(s)
- how the author(s) develops their argument (i.e. the organization of the text)
- the author's/authors' methodology
- the evidence or examples the author/authors use to support their claims
- things you would have liked the author to address/address
- what connections, if any, the day's text(s) have with other readings from the course

Although you will be going over central claims and examples, please note that this is NOT simply a presentation summarizing the text. Rather, you are being asked to pose questions to your classmates and facilitate an engaging discussion of the text. As a group, you should plan ahead and work together to get creative with this assignment. For instance, you might consider incorporating debate, small group discussions, primary source analysis, multimedia, and/or other materials and exercises. Again, please DO NOT just plan to summarize the readings and lecture the class for 30 minutes. You will be graded based

on the thoughtfulness of your presentation/discussion plan, the clarity of your analysis, your grip on the text and the relevant context, and your effectiveness in engaging your classmates.

***Final Paper Proposal and Bibliography:* 15%**

Students will write 2-3 pages outlining their proposed final paper. Please include a bibliography with the texts you plan to use in your final paper. In addition to course materials, you must use at least SIX primary and/or secondary sources that you locate on your own or with the assistance of a research librarian. This assignment is due **October 30** at the start of class.

***Final Research Paper:* 30%**

For your final, you will write a 12-15 page research paper that examines power and resistance within the Americas. You are free to select a topic that you are interested in as long as it touches on issues addressed in the course. In your final paper, you must draw upon course materials and the theories they utilize in order to support your analysis of the topic you are researching. **DUE DECEMBER 15 at 1PM.** No late essays will be accepted – finals handed in after the deadline will receive an automatic ZERO on the assignment.

**Week One: How to Read Theory**

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Monday, August 28

- Introduction to the course

Thursday, August 31

- Kyla Wazana Tompkins, “We Aren’t Here to Learn What We Already Know”  
<http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/>

**Week Two: Historical Materialism**

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Monday, September 4

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, excerpt from *The German Ideology* \*

Thursday, September 7

- Karl Marx, excerpt from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* \*

**Recommended:** Hall, Lecture 4: “Rethinking Base and Superstructure”

**Week Three: Ideology**

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Monday, September 11

- Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” \*

Thursday, September 14

- Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis*, Introduction and Chapter 1 \*

**Recommended:** Hall, Lecture 6: “Ideology and Ideological Struggle”

**Week Four: Hegemony**

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Monday, September 18

- Antonio Gramsci, “Hegemony, Relations of Force, and Historical Bloc” \*
- Raymond Williams, “Hegemony” \*

Thursday, September 21

- Alfonso Gonzales, *Reform Without Justice*, Introduction and Chapter 1 \*

*Recommended:* Hall, Lecture 7: “Domination and Hegemony”

**Week Five: Hegemony, Ideology, and Crisis**

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Monday, September 25

- Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 \*

Thursday, September 28

- Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, Chapters 3 and 5 \*

**Week Six: Repression and Resistance**

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Monday, October 2

- Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, Chapter 9 \*

Thursday, October 5

- Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, Chapter 10 \*

**Week Seven: Vectors of Power**

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Monday, October 9

- Paul Rabinow, “Introduction” in *The Foucault Reader*
- *In class screening:* sections from “Human Nature: Justice versus Power”

Thursday, October 12

- Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power” in *The Foucault Reader*

**Week Eight: Coercion and Control**

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Monday, October 16

- *No class – enjoy!*

Thursday, October 19

- Michel Foucault, “The Body of the Condemned,” “Docile Bodies,” and “The Means of Correct Training” in *The Foucault Reader*

**Week Nine: Bio-Power**

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Monday, October 23

- Michel Foucault, “Panopticism,” “Complete and Austere Institutions,” and “The Carceral” in *The Foucault Reader*

Thursday, October 26

- Michel Foucault, “The Right of Death and Power over Life” and “The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Foucault Reader*

**Week Ten: Who is grievable?**

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Monday, October 30

- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, Preface and Chapters 1 and 2
- **Final Paper Proposal and Bibliography due at the start of class**

Thursday, November 2

- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, Chapters 3 and 5

**Week Eleven: The Right to Kill**

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Monday, November 6

- Graham Willis, *The Killing Consensus*, Part One \*

Thursday, November 9

- No class – Professor LeBrón at American Studies Association conference

**Week Twelve: Borders of Violence**

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Monday, November 13

- Gilberto Rosas, *Barrio Libre*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Thursday, November 16

- Gilberto Rosas, *Barrio Libre*, Chapters 2, 3, and Interlude

**Week Thirteen: Criminal Deaths/Depths**

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Monday, November 20

- Gilberto Rosas, *Barrio Libre*, Chapters 4, 5, Interlude, and Conclusion

Thursday, November 23

No class – Thanksgiving Break

**Week Fourteen: Warzones**

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Monday, November 27

- Eric Tang, *Unsettled*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Thursday, November 30

- Eric Tang, *Unsettled*, Chapters 2 and 3

**Week Fifteen: Unsettled**

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Monday, December 4

- Eric Tang, *Unsettled*, Chapters 5 and 6 and Conclusion

Thursday, December 7

- Wrapping up

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS WILL DUE ON DECEMBER 15 @ 1PM.  
NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED – NO EXCEPTIONS.**