

Fall, 2008
REL 465 (Wed, 9-11:50 am)
Claremont Graduate University
Electronic reserve number: jparker465(lower case only)

Faculty Website: <http://bernard.pitzer.edu/~jparker/>

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Postcolonialism and Religious Studies

Course Syllabus

Course Description:

The history of European and U.S. imperialism has impacted academic study in multiple ways, including the humanities and the social sciences. This course considers the ethical and theoretical issues raised by the complex relationship between colonialism and knowledge, and explores as a case study possible approaches to the study of religion that respond to such critiques through anti-imperialist and postcolonial approaches. Materials to be examined range from the histories of such disciplines as anthropology and history of religions to contemporary theology, Native American practices, and feminist and postcolonial theory. Students will write a seminar paper attempting to apply postcolonial methods to the decolonization of a topic of their choice.

Course Objectives:

1. Develop familiarity with the postcolonial and anti-orientalist critiques of the academy generally and specifically of the disciplinary field of religious studies;
2. Become acquainted with major terms and arguments and thinkers in postcolonial studies, including feminist critiques of and engagements with postcolonial studies;
3. Learn how to construct an object of knowledge with an awareness of the power/knowledge aspects of the process from a Foucauldian perspective;
4. Develop a working familiarity with the politics of the category of “religion” and other objects of knowledge from a postcolonial and anti-imperialist perspective;
5. Understand what the ethical, political, and intellectual costs are of constricting “religion” or “theology” or other central disciplinary objects of knowledge in a manner that excludes “knowledge,” “power/knowledge,” and “thought”;
6. Develop familiarity with a range of anti-imperialist and postcolonial approaches to the study of religion from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields;
7. Successfully apply in a seminar paper a particular anti-imperialist and postcolonial approach (or a combination of such approaches) to both a critical and constructive analysis of a topic in a field of interest to the student.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Course attendance and discussion participation: 40%

One short paper (5-7 pages): 10 %

Oral presentation of seminar paper 5%

Constructive peer critique of seminar presentations: 5%

Seminar paper (25-35 pages): 40%

Note: Students with learning or physical disabilities will be given reasonable accommodations. If you need to request accommodations or other assistance, please contact the CGU Dean of Students Office, extension 79448.

Course Required Readings:

(All textbooks are available both for purchase and at the Honnold Library reserve desk; other readings are available on Sakai and at Honnold reserve desk.)

Philip Almond, The British Discovery of Buddhism, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1988.

Vine Deloria, Jr., For This Land: Writings on Religion in America, ed. James Treat, Routledge, 1999.

Laura Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan, Eds., Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse. Routledge, 2002.

Michael Taussig, Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man. Univ. Chicago, 1987.

Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism, Cambridge Univ.Pr., 1998.

Robert Young, Postcolonialism, Blackwell, 2001.

Recommended Readings (one or more of the following—on reserve at Honnold):

Stuart Sim, ed. The A-Z Guide to Modern Literary and Cultural Theorists. Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995. (PN74 A2 1995) (or use his edited vol. The Routledge companion to postmodernism. Routledge, 2001 (also pub. as Routledge Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought 1999) or other reference works edited by Sim.

Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris, New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Blackwell Publishing, 2005. PE1580 .N49 2005

Belsey, Catherine. Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford Univ. Pr., 2002. B841.4 .B45 2002

Gandhi, Leela. Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction. Columbia Univ. Pr., 1998.

Schwarz, Henry and Sangeeta Ray, eds. A Companion to Postcolonial Studies. Blackwell, 2000.

Course Schedule:

Asterisks (*) indicate that the reading is found in course textbook; other readings may be found in the course readings packet. All textbooks are available both for purchase and on reserve at the Honnold Library reserve desk; other readings are available on Sakai and at Honnold reserves. Some course packet readings are also available on the web through the Honnold Library Reserve Readings website, using the course electronic reserve number: jparker465 (lower case only).

9-3 Course Introduction

Readings: Handouts.

Film: Sherman Alexie, **The Business of Fancydancing.**

9-10 Postcolonialism: History and Theory.

Readings: *Young, Postcolonialism, Ch. 1-3, 1-42.

*Yeğenoğlu, "Introduction," 1-13.

Recommended: Belsey, Poststructuralism, Ch. 1-2.

Young, White Mythologies, Ch. 1.

9-17 Postcolonial History: NeoColonialism, Postcolonialism, and Beyond.

Readings: *Young, Postcolonialism, Ch. 4-5 & 24-25.

Recommended: Fanon, Wretched of the Earth.

Young, White Mythologies, Ch. 2 & 4.

9-24 Postcolonialism Theory I: Beyond Said and Young.

Readings: *Yeğenoğlu, "Mapping the Field," 14-38.

10-1 Postcolonial Theory II: Foucault.

Readings: Diamond and Quinby, "Introduction," ix-xx.

Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned," p. 22-31.

Foucault, "The Means of Correct Training," 188-205.

Recommended: Belsey, Poststructuralism, Ch. 3, 48-57.

Said, Orientalism, "Introduction."

Carrette, Foucault and Religion.

Young, White Mythologies, Ch. 5 & 7.

10-1 Short Paper Due.

10-8 Postcolonial Theory III: Bhabha and Irigaray.

Readings: *Yeğenoğlu, "Veiled Fantasies," 39-57.

Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 125-33.

Recommended: Belsey, Poststructuralism, Ch. 3, 57-62.

Young, White Mythologies, Ch. 8.

10-14 Last Day to Drop without Transcript "W"

10-15 Postcolonial Theory IV: Third World U.S. Feminist Theory.

Readings: Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes," 196-220.

Suleri, "Woman Skin Deep," 244-56.

Recommended: Massad, Desiring Arabs.

Course Schedule (cont.)

Happy Fall Break

10-22 Postcolonial Theory V: Derrida and Spivak.

- Readings:** *Young, Postcolonialism, Ch. 28.
Spivak, "More on Power/Knowledge," 25-52.
Spivak, "Not Virgin Enough," 173-9.
Recommended: Belsey, Poststructuralism, Ch. 4.
Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, eds., Religion.
Young, White Mythologies, Ch. 1 & 9.

10-29 Decolonizing the Category of Religion?

- Readings:** Asad, "Construction of Religion," 27-54.
Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," 269-84.
McCutcheon, "Religion and the Governable Self," 252-290.
Recommended: Chidester, Savage Systems.

11-5 Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives on Religion

- Readings:** *Yeğenoğlu, "The Battle of the Veil," 121-44.
*Donaldson & Kwok, Intro., Ch. 1(Donaldson), Ch. 4 (Dube) and Ch. 6 (Cooke).

11-5 Paper Proposals Due.

11-12 Decolonizing Indigenous Religions?

- Readings:** Gunn Allen, "Problems in Teaching Silko's Ceremony," 55-63.
Thornton, "Who Owns Our Past?" p. 385-415.
*Deloria, Jr.

11-12 Final Paper Proposals Due.

11-19 Decolonizing Indigenous Religions? (cont.)

- Readings:** *Deloria, Jr.,

11-26 Postcolonialism and Christianity's Others

- Readings:** *Almond, British Discovery,
Schopen, "Protestant Presuppositions," 1-23.

Happy Imperialism Day

12-3 Postcolonialism and Europe's Others

- Readings:** *Taussig, xiii-xiv, Ch. 3, 6, 7, 8,10, 11,24, 28.

12-3 Paper Drafts Due.

12-10 Student Seminar Presentations

- Readings:** Peer Review of Papers.

12-10 Written Peer Evaluation Due.

12-15 Exam Week: **Revised Papers Due** Thursday, Dec. 18, 2 pm (hand in at Pitzer office).

Other Course Readings
(Available on Sakai and at Honnold Reserve Desk)

- Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby. "Introduction." Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance. Ed. Diamond and Quinby. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988. ix-xx.
- Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned," Discipline and Punish, p. 22-31.
- Foucault, "The Means of Correct Training," The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, 188-205; also pub. in Discipline and Punish.
- Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," October, 28 (1984): 125-33.
- Mohanty, Chandra. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in Paul Chrisman and Linda Williams, eds., Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, Columbia Univ. Pr., p., 196-220.
- Suleri, Sara. "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition," in Paul Chrisman and Linda Williams, eds., Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, Columbia Univ. Pr. p., 244-56.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorti. "More on Power/Knowledge." Outside in the Teaching Machine. Routledge, 1993. 25-52.
- Spivak, "Not Virgin Enough To Say that [S]he Occupies the Place of the Other,*" Outside in the Teaching Machine. Routledge, 1993. 173-9.
- Asad, Talal. "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category." Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. 27-54.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. "Religion, Religions, Religious." Critical Terms for Religious Studies. Ed. Mark C. Taylor. The University of Chicago Press, 1997. 269-84.
- McCutcheon, "Religion and the Governable Self," in The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric, Routledge, 2003, 252-290.
- Allen, Paula Gunn, "Special Problems in Teaching Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony," in Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah, University of Nebraska Press, 1998, p. 55-63
- Thornton, Russell, "Who Owns the Past? The Repatriation of Native American Human Remains and Cultural Objects," in Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects, ed. Russell Thornton, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, 385-415.
- Schopen, Gregory. "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," History of Religions 31.1 (Aug., 1991): 1-23.