

Power and Social Change
IIS/GFS 50
Fall 2008
(This syllabus is posted on Sakai)

Course Instructors

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Course Description

"Power to the people!" "Knowledge is power." "Taking power." What exactly does one mean by power, and how may altering power relations lead to social change? This course will critically examine different theories of power, the relationship between power and violence, and how power can be used to liberate as well as dominate and manipulate. The course introduces students to interdisciplinary theories of power and their implications for effective social change work. Students will examine works from various interdisciplinary fields and movements, such as Marxism, feminism, postmodernism, anti-colonial and postcolonial movements, and grassroots movements.

Course Requirements

1. Class participation: Come to all classes and participate in discussion. We expect everyone to have done the readings and be able comment on the materials. The quality of your comments is more important than their quantity.

2. Weekly email responses/ reactions to the reading: These reactions may include critiques, disagreements, questions, concerns, and thoughts on the most important aspects of the readings. DO NOT SUMMARIZE the readings!

You must send your email responses from your pitzer.edu (or cmc.edu, etc.) account!!

Email responses are due by **Wednesday by 3 pm each week.**

3. Take home midterm essay (5-8 pp., double-spaced, 12pt. font): Due October 2.

We will assign a couple of essay questions, based on readings.

4. Team project proposal (5-8 pp. double-spaced, 12 pt. font): Due November 6.

Your proposal should address:

- a. *WHAT*: The questions/ issues your project will engage.
- b. *WHY*: The theoretical underpinning of these issues/ questions (use class and outside readings to emphasize theoretical underpinnings) and the broader relevance of your questions for social change/justice.
- c. *HOW*: How are you going to address these questions? Tell us about your method/ approach (the nitty-gritty) to addressing your questions.
- d. *DIVISION OF LABOR*: This is a team project, and we expect that you will share work in a fair way. Give us an idea of how you will do this, who is responsible for what? What is your work plan? How will you ensure group accountability (vs. having one person bear most of the burden)?
- e. *BIBLIOGRAPHY*: Evidence that you are well on your way to engaging your topic. Give us a list of sources.

5. Creative team-based critical project: Due December 16.

Team project that critically addresses questions of power, activism, and social change (i.e. public art installation, video, street theater performance, etc.). This project is based on your proposal.

Grade Breakdown

Informed in-class participation: 30%

Response/reaction emails: 10%

Take home midterm essay: 20%

Project proposal/outline: 15%

Team project: 25%

Note: Students with learning or physical disabilities will be given reasonable accommodations. If you need to request accommodations or other assistance, contact the Academic Support Services Office, extension 73553. Students who do not give sources for ideas and information not their own or common knowledge are practicing plagiarism; they will be given one chance to rewrite the paper and correct the problem, and if it is not corrected on that assignment and if the problem recurs they will not receive credit for the assignment.

Required Texts

All texts are available at Honnold library reserve and for purchase at Huntley bookstore.

- Cohen, Cathy. 1999. *Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*, University of Chicago Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish*, Vintage.
- Polletta, Francesca. 2006. *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. Univ. Chicago.
- Weedon, Chris. 1997. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 2nd ed., Blackwell Pubs.

All other required readings available on Sakai in Resources Folder

- Alexander, Jacqui. 1994. Not Just (Any) Body Can be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality, and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas. *Feminist Review* 48: 5-23.
- Alexie, Sherman. 1998. I Hated Tonto (Still Do). *Los Angeles Times*. June 28, 1998.
- Ball, Terence. 1992. New Faces of Power. In Warternberg, Thomas. (ed.) *Rethinking Power*. State University of New York, 1992. Pp. 14-31.
- Bennis, Phyllis, *Challenging Empire: How People, Governments, and the UN Defy US Power*, Olive Branch Press, 2006. Select pages.
- Foucault, Michel. 1982. The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.8, No.4: 777-795.
- Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*. Excerpts from *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second edition. Pp: 469-500. Edited by Robert C. Tucker.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. Beyond the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 85, No.1: 77-96.
- Patel, Shailja. 2002. *Eater of Death*. <http://www.shailja.com/work/eaterofdeath.html>
- Puar, Jasbir. 2005. On Torture: Abu Ghraib. *Radical History Review*. Issue 93:13-38.
- Raheja, Michelle H. 2007. Reading Nanook's Smile: Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and Atanarjuat (*The Fast Runner*). *American Quarterly*. 1159-85.
- Rancière, Jacques. "The Rationality of a Hatred." *Hatred of Democracy*. Verso, 2006. Pp. 71-98.
- Winant, Howard. 2000. Race and Race Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26:169-185.

CLASS SCHEDULE
Textbook (T), SAKAI (S)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	9/2	Introduction and class overview	Syllabus review
	9/4	Introduction to perspectives on power	Ball: New Faces of Power (S)
2	9/9	Theories of Power: Prototype 1	Alexander: Not just anybody can be a citizen (S)
	9/11	Theories of Power: Prototype 2	Foucault: The subject and power (S)
3	9/16	Power and social change: Class revolution	Marx: Communist Manifesto (S) Pp: 1-32 (Skip Appendix)
	9/18	Power and social change: Colonial revolutions	Fanon: Wretched of the Earth Pp. 35-48, 88-95, 102-106
4	9/23	Power and social change: Colonial revolutions	Fanon: pp. 107-147
	9/25	Screening: <u>Battle of Algiers</u>	Fanon: pp. 152-157, 185-205
5	9/30	Power and Race/Eurocentrism	Winant: Race and Race Theory (S)
	10/2	Feminists on Power	Weedon: Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory (T) Ch. 1-2 Take home essay due!
6	10/7	Feminists on Power	Weedon: Ch. 4.
	10/9	Screening: <u>Persepolis</u>	Weedon: Ch. 7.
7	10/14	Resisting Exclusions	Cohen: Boundaries of Blackness (T) Preface & Ch. 1
	10/16	Resisting Exclusions	Cohen: Ch. 2 & 10
8	10/21	No class	Happy Fall Break!

	10/23	Disciplinary Power	Weedon: Feminist Practice and Postructuralist Theory (T) Ch. 5 Foucault, Discipline & Punish (T) pp. 16-31.
9	10/28	Disciplinary Power	Discipline & Punish: Pp. 135-56, 170-94.
	10/30	Disciplinary Power	Discipline & Punish: Pp. 195-228.
10	11/4	Power and the Indigenous	Raheja: Reading Nanook's Smile (S) Alexie: I Hated Tonto (Still Do) (S)
	11/6	Screening: <u>Business of Fancydancing</u>	Alexie: TBD (short story and poem) Project outline/proposal due!
11	11/11	Social Movements	Polletta: It Was Like a Fever (T) Pp:1-4, 21-31, and Ch.3
	11/13	Social Movements	Polletta: Ch. 5
12	11/18	Guest Speaker: Diana Pei Wu	Polletta : Ch. 6 and pp.166-79
	11/20	Power and the State	Mitchell: Beyond the State (S)
13	11/25	Power and Democracy	Rancière: Rationality of a Hatred (S)
	11/27	No class	Happy Thanksgiving!
14	12/2	Power in the War on Terror	Bennis: Chapter 4 (S)
	12/4	Screening: <u>War, Inc.</u>	Shailja Patel: Eater of Death (S)
15	12/9	Power in the U.S.	Puar: On Torture (S)

	12/11	Putting It All Together: Power and Social Change	Review course readings
16	12/19	Exam Week	Final project due December 16!!