

Professor Tina Campt
210 Barnard Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 2-4pm and by appointment
Tel. (212) 851-9476/email: tcampt@barnard.edu

**WST V3311 Colloquium in Feminist Theory:
Race, Gender, Bodies**

Spring 2014/Tuesdays 4:10-6pm/ Diana 501
Instructors: Tina Campt and Leymah Gbowee

Course Description:

What is the significance of the body for feminist theory? Why and in what ways does the body matter? The body has been of crucial importance to feminist theorists and to feminist activism more broadly. It has been the subject of contentious debate and disagreement, as well as a productive locus of protest, alliance, collective action and articulation between and among women as political agents. In this course, we will use the preceding questions to frame our exploration of feminist theory as it engages the body. Our discussions will focus on how the body functions as both a model for theorizing broader social and political processes, and at the same time, as a process of *embodiment* that constitutes individuals in differential ways. The specific site of our engagements will be the black body as a nexus of theory, activism and social policy with regard to sexuality and reproductive health and rights, particularly in the global south. The goal of our explorations will be to theorize the link between how we live our bodies on an everyday basis and the various practices that shape and produce their meaning and significance in society. Each of us has not one, but multiple bodies marked by an array of differences – none of which are fixed or unchanging, and none of which ever wholly or solely determine our identities. Looking at how feminists have theorized the black body and how these ideas play out on the ground in activist and policy contexts, our goal is to understand the value of feminist theory both within and beyond the academy.

Course Requirements:

1. **Class attendance is *mandatory*.** Failure to attend more than two classes for reasons other than a documented medical or other emergency will jeopardize your ability to pass the course.
2. **Electronic Response/Blog Posts** - You are required to post a total of **six (6)** thoughtful and carefully formulated electronic responses. In Section I of the course (“Theorizing Black and Brown Bodies”), you will post a response to a prompt that will help you develop working definition of each of the four key terms that you will define more extensively in your glossary. Postings will be made every week as specified in the schedule of readings and discussions. Your responses should articulate an original point of view or elaborate on points made by others in the course of our discussions in class or online. Postings should be made on the “Discussions Board” tab on Courseworks *no later than 5pm on the day before they are due*. Postings will be worth 20% of your final grade.
3. **Glossary** - Each student is responsible for a five to seven-page glossary due on **Tuesday, March 11th**. Please submit all papers electronically via the “Assignments” tab on Courseworks. This paper (which will be described in a detailed handout distributed in class) will be a collaborative exercise that will be written together with a fellow student. The assignment requires you to explain and define your understanding of three core concepts: race, gender and the body, based on your readings, lectures and class discussions. Your glossary will be worth 20% of your final grade.

4. **Conference Reports** – As part of our intent to place feminist theoretical in dialogue with the grassroots activism of African women, as well as with social policy on women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, you will be required to serve as a rapporteur at two conferences this semester. As a rapporteur, you will work together with a group of 4 other students to assess the merits and limitations of a core discussion or panel at each of these conferences, and present a report linking this discussion to our discussions of feminist theory. Your conference reports will be worth 20% of your grade.

5. **Final Paper** – For your final paper, you will individually revise and extend the analysis developed in one or both of your conference reports into an analytic paper of 10-15 pages. The scope of the paper will be discussed in detail in a handout that will be distributed in class. Final papers are due on *Friday, May 9th*. ***Once again, absolutely no late papers will be accepted.*** A final word of caution: please be advised that you will not be allowed to pass the course if this final paper is not of satisfactory quality. Your final paper will be worth 40% of your final grade.

*****Please note: It is my policy not to accept any late posts or papers except for reasons of documented medical or personal emergency.*** Papers submitted after they are due will be returned ungraded and unread.

Academic Honesty:

Barnard Honor Code: Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources, in their writing. Students that do not comply with the Honor Code will face appropriate sanctions.

Required Texts:

Only two texts are required to be purchased for this course, which I ask that you order these as soon as possible via amazon.com:

Leymah Gbowee, *Mighty Be Our Powers*

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*

Schedule of Readings and Discussions:

Part I. Theorizing Black and Brown Bodies

- Jan. 21st Introduction to Course
- Jan. 28th *Theorizing Bodies and Bodily Boundaries*
Elizabeth Grosz, “Bodies and Knowledges,” “Body-Cities”
Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Selected excerpts
Response post: *What is a body?
- Feb. 4th *Agency, Fugitivity and Redress: The Gendered Production of Racial Difference*
Hortense Spillers, “Momma’s Baby, Poppa’s Maybe”
Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, Chapters 1, 2 and 6??
Response post: *What is the impact of slavery on the production of racialized and gendered bodies in the US?
- Feb. 11th *Black Women’s Bodies as Sites of Resistance*
Leymah Gbowee, *Mighty Be Our Powers*
Screening: “Pray the Devil Back to Hell”, Athena Film Festival 2/9
Coteaching: *Leymah/Tina*
Response post: *What is the relationship between resistance, agency and redress? What is the role of the black body therein?
- Feb. 18th *Theorizing Bodily Difference: Gender and Sexual Difference*
Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women”
Judith Butler, “Bodies that Matter,” “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”
Response post: *What is gender and what is sexual difference?
- Feb. 25th *Social Construction of Black Bodies and African American Women’s Sexuality*
Evelyn Hammonds, “Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality”
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race”
Beth Coleman, “Race as Technology”
Response post: *How do we define ‘race’ and black women’s sexuality?
- March 4th *Intersectionality or the Mutual Constitution of Racialized and Gendered Subjects*
Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex” and
“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color”
Barbara Fields, “What One Cannot Remember Mistakenly”
Response post: *How is the black female body positioned in relation to than the white female body?

**** Glossaries Due, Tuesday, March 11th****

Part II. Bodies and Power: Mobilizing the Black Female Body

- March 11th *Rapporteur Preparation for:
African Women's Rights and Resilience Conference
Diana Event Oval, Wednesday, March 12th - 10am-5pm*
Assigned Readings: TBD
Coteaching: *Leymah/Tina*
- March 18th SPRING BREAK – No Class
- March 25th **** Rapporteur Presentations 1 ****
Assigned Readings: (To be used as models for your final projects)
UN-NGLS article summarizing outcomes - NGLS newsletter, 41-46 Courseworks)
Policy briefs of the High-Level Task Force for ICPD
<http://www.icpdtaskforce.org/post-2015/development-resources.html>
Coteaching: *Leymah/Tina*
- April 1st Body Politics, Sexuality and Empowerment: African Activists Dialogue
Assignment: Screen audio and video interview excerpts TBD
- April 8th *Field Trip/Rapporteur Preparations for:
Annual Conference of the UN Commission on Population and Development
(CPD), April 7-11*
Assigned Readings:
Background on CPD:
<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/index.shtml>
Outcomes of ICPD regional preparatory meetings held in late 2013:
Latin America:
<http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2013/Montevideo%20Consensus-15Aug2013.pdf>
Arab States
http://arabstates.unfpa.org/webdav/site/as/shared/docs/2013_Cairo_Declaration_English.pdf
Europe
<http://eeca.unfpa.org/webdav/site/eeca/shared/documents/ICPD-Geneva/ICPD%20Beyond%202014%20UNECE%20Regional%20Conference%20Report%20and%20Chair%27s%20Summary.pdf>
Asia and the Pacific
http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2013/APPC6_WP1ER3.pdf
Africa
<http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/ICPD/2014/declaration-final-e1351225.pdf>
- April 15th **** Rapporteur Presentation 2 ****
Coteaching: *Leymah/Tina*
- April 22nd Final Project workshop
- April 29th Final Project workshop