**Summary**

This graduate seminar will consider scholarship and primary sources that engage with transnational cultural history in the decades since World War II. How have scholars made sense of the transnational flow of cultural commodities, and related questions about politics, power, desires, and identity? How can a transnational approach to culture shape (or reshape) understandings of the production, consumption and circulation of cultural commodities and popular ideologies? How can a cultural approach to transnational history shape (or reshape) understandings of diplomatic and political history, foreign policy and domestic activism, migration, and power dynamics that aren’t anchored in a specific nation state? And how can a transnational focus affect how we analyze primary sources—literature, music, government reports, and films?

**Objectives and Goals**

- Students will learn to read scholarship critically.
- Students will learn to analyze written, visual and audio primary sources critically.
- Students will familiarize themselves with some of the ways that scholars have forged transnational cultural histories, and the range of methods and approaches scholars employ to do so.
- Students will learn to write several different types of analytic essays and responses.
- Students will learn to listen/respond to each other—remotely in writing, and in synchronous discussions.

**Required Sources**


All other required material will be available on canvas, organized in weekly modules by date of class.

**Format, Grading, and Requirements**

**Format.** Each week will have two components:

--Online asynchronous requirements, usually based on your analysis of primary sources. Please post on the canvas discussion board, organized by date.
  - You can do this work at any point as long as your main online submissions are complete by Monday night at 8 pm.
  - Each week, you must also respond to two other posts. These responses must be complete before class on Wednesday, but preferably by Tuesday at noon.

--Online synchronous meetings to discuss secondary sources. We will *meet remotely each Wednesday at 5:30. These meetings will focus on secondary sources.*

**Grading and Requirements.**

- Attendance and Participation in Synchronous Discussions (20%)
- Asynchronous Discussion Board Posts: Responses to primary sources, and responses to other posts (20%)
- Two short essays on secondary sources (30% combined)
- Final essay (30%)
1. Attendance/Participation (20%)
This crucial component of the class includes:
- Attendance and consistent participation in all SIX synchronous class discussions on zoom. Your comments must suggest that you’ve done the reading thoughtfully and thoroughly, and that you are not making dinner, responding to emails, or engaging in any other tasks during our remote discussions.
- This is a graduate seminar. By definition, that means that it is not a passive learning environment. Simply showing up on zoom will not be enough to succeed in this component of the course. In fact, if you are enrolled in this class, you should want more than to simply show up; if you’re here, you should want to engage actively- with the material and with each other. Because participation is so important, missing more than two classes will affect your final grade. If you miss one synchronous meeting, that will be an excused absence, no questions asked, but if possible, please be in touch with me in advance.
- That being said, life is complicated; if/when challenges arise, please be in touch in advance if possible.

2. FIVE Discussion Board Posts/Responses to Primary Sources (20%)
- Posts: Each week I will post several questions to guide your reading/listening/watching of primary sources. These primary sources relate in central ways to the main reading of the week by scholars. You must read/listen/watch, and then respond to one of these questions. (If you have additional questions that you think are important to consider about these primary sources, you may post those too.) Post your answers to these questions on the canvas discussion board at any point during the week, but by Monday night at 8 pm, at the latest. Answers should be 2-3 paragraphs. Although these are not essays, please write these posts in full sentences and with attention to grammar, punctuation, clarity, etc.
- Responses: Each week you are required to respond to two posts from other students. These are due at any point before our synchronous meetings on Wednesday, but I encourage you to respond by Tuesdays at noon (so that you have time to complete the secondary source reading). These responses can be shorter than your posts, but again, you should write in full sentences. For each response, please note an idea that you agreed/liked/appreciated in your peer’s post (and explain why); and/or offer one way in which you disagreed (and why); and/or explain how you might have answered the same question differently.
- NOTE: Each of you may take a “pass” and skip this assignment (both posting and responding) ONCE. This does not mean that you are not required to complete the assignment that week. You might choose to use your “pass” on a week when you are writing one of your short review essays.

3. TWO article/book review essays, 3-4 pages (30% combined)
- Due before class any two Wednesday classes, and with a focus on one article or book chapter/s, submit an essay in which you explicate the author’s main argument and its significance to the study of transnational cultural history. This essay must focus specifically on a secondary source and NOT one of the primary sources (though you may reference the relevant primary sources along the way). To do so, ask yourself the following questions:
  1. What questions does this book or article seek to answer? What are the author’s main concerns? What story does this author seek to tell?
  2. With whom is the author in dialogue? What intervention is this author trying to make and what is the significance of this intervention? In other words, what is the larger professional, intellectual, and political context in which the author develops these questions, tells the story, and approaches this topic?
  3. What methods does the author employ? What are their sources? Why these and not others? How does the author use these sources and organize information to answer the main questions and forge an analysis?
  4. What are the primary benefits and/or problems with this method of doing research? What is most and least convincing about how the author uses the evidence and develops the argument? What might a given approach allow, and/or disallow?
  5. What do you like and not like about this book/article, and why?

IMPORTANT: Please keep in mind that these are the questions you should be asking yourselves as you do the required reading each week and will be particularly relevant for your final essay.

You need not answer all five of these questions for your short review essays; indeed, you would not be able to do so in an essay of this length. Still, considering them will help you to focus, and will allow you to write a review essay in which you offer your own thesis, and do not simply summarize.
Essays are due before class on Wednesdays (preferably by noon, if possible) on canvas under assignments, and must be about the material we are reading and discussing on that day. You will sign up for what weeks you want to submit this essay on the first day of class.

4. Final Essay, approximately 12 pages, double-spaced, (250 words pp) (30%)
   • In this historiographical essay (also sometimes known as a comparative literature review), put in conversation with each other 2-3 required readings. Drawing on the 5 questions above as your jumping off point, consider how scholars have approached a given theme, episode, cultural commodity, time period, etc. How can you use these readings to create connections among scholars and across the scholarship? How can you use this discussion of the scholarship to develop your own thesis? Your focus must be the scholarship; you may draw on a required primary source if doing so strengthens your discussion of the secondary sources.
   • This syllabus is anything but comprehensive, and you may have interests that are far from the topics we cover together. If you would like to use your final essay to read and write about a new secondary source that is not on the syllabus, you may do so as well; I am also open to hearing other ideas for how you can use this final paper to advance your own specific interests. If you are interested in doing so, however, please email me to discuss potential ideas as soon as possible, so that we can confirm by June 14.
     • Brief proposal: FRIDAY June 30
     • Optional Outline/Working Thesis: Monday July 3
         (NOTE: This is the holiday weekend)
     • Final Essay: Friday, July 7.

Other Important Information…

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)
As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/.

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University. Please note that consequences tend to be more severe for graduate students.

Please learn to resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively, by using other people’s ideas, INCLUDING chatGPT. If I find that you have used other people’s ideas (e.g., Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, chatGPT, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every essay must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

Names and Pronouns:
An important part of creating a respectful learning environment is knowing and using the name you use, which may differ from your legal name, as well as the gendered pronouns you use (for example, I go by she/her/hers). Please feel free to let me know your name and/or the pronouns you use at any time.

Citizenship and Community
We will be reading and discussing material on which we may not all agree; some of the themes and imagery we encounter in the sources may seem offensive or otherwise controversial. In this context especially, it is crucial for us to combine the free expression of ideas with respect for each other. This is your community and your class; each one of you has a responsibility to that community.
Technology. During our remote synchronous discussions, please silence cell phones and put phones (etc.), away. Treat our discussions as you would a “regular” in-person seminar: The required materials and our conversation are your focus for these two+ hours each week. It is important that you have the required readings with you during our discussions, whether that means printing out hard copy or having multiple windows open. Again, all of this should be a “given” in a graduate seminar, but it is worth emphasizing.

Our discussions will usually run about two+ hours and we will take a 10-15-minute break.

Please note that this syllabus is a work in progress and we will very likely be making modifications along the way, based both on scheduling issues and on your interests and priorities. I will communicate with all of you canvas email, so please make sure that you check email through canvas and/or that your Rutgers emails get forwarded to you. It is also important that each of you communicate with me so that I know what is (and is not) working in terms of how the course is organized and how you are engaging with the material.

Support Services
I welcome students with different learning styles, and Rutgers University Newark is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further that mission of access and support:

• **Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu).

• **Rutgers Learning Center** (tutoring services) Room 140, Bradley Hall (973) 353-5608 [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center)

• **Writing Center** (tutoring and writing workshops) Room 126, Conklin Hall (973) 353-5847 [nwc@rutgers.edu](mailto:nwc@rutgers.edu) [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center)

• **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall (973) 353-5805 or [http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/](http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/)

Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance
Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). To submit an incident report: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm.

Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to [Policy 10.3.12](https://policy.rutgers.edu/10)) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence
CLASS SCHEDULE

Wed. May 31  Synchronous Discussion on Zoom- Introductions: Cultural History, Transnational history, & Transnational Cultural History


IF you have read any of these essays, and are familiar with their arguments, please re-skim, but focus instead on:


REQUIRED: Please post one question or comment about each of the three readings on the discussion board in advance of our first meeting on June 1.

Further reading

June 5/7  The Cold War: Walls and Memories
Due by Monday night, June 5
- Posts about primary sources, (and responses to posts, preferably by Tuesday, June 6 at noon)
  - Read: Angela Davis, Angela Davis: An Autobiography (NY: Random House, 1973), available as ebook through the Dana Library: Contents, Chapter 3, “Waters,” pp. 139-149 (starting with “During that last year at Brandeis,” and through the end of chapter 3).
  - Watch: Two clips from the film Goldeneye (1995): Opening theme-https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGPBFvDz_HM; and tank chase through St. Petersburg-https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jB7ZWNjF8DY (option for fans to watch the end scene too-
Questions: Choose one of the questions below and respond by Monday, June 5. Please attend to the specifics in the texts and provide at least 1-2 examples from the source to support your points.

1. How does Davis first encounter and describe the Berlin Wall? What stands out about what she says AND how she says it?
2. How—if all—does Davis make sense of what’s going on around her in East and West Germany in relation to events in the U.S.?
3. If you did not know that Goldeneye was released in 1995, what clues are there in these clips (if any) that might help you locate it in time?

Wednesday June 7: Synchronous Discussion

- Penny Von Eschen, *Paradoxes of Nostalgia: Cold War Triumphalism and Global Disorder Since 1989* (Duke, 2022), Introduction (pp. 1-20) and Chapter 4 (pp. 131-173).

Further Reading


June 12/14 Occupation and Empire

Due by Monday night, June 12:

- Posts about primary sources, (and responses to posts, preferably by Tuesday, June 11 at noon):
    - Front matter (title pages, preface, intro, table of contents);
    - Section II, pp. 9-28 and 25-36;
    - Section III: 52-59 (or last few pages, in any case).
  - Read: A.M. Hoenam, “Fire” (1946)

Questions: Choose one of the questions below and respond by Monday, June 5. Please attend to the specifics in the text and provide at least 1-2 examples from the source to support your points.

1. What stands out to you not just about what Meacham says, but how he says it? What can you glean from his language, word choice, tone, the topics he does—and the topics he does not—cover? Offer at least one specific example from the text. What questions would you ask of this source if you were using it for a research paper?
2. How and why does Meacham compare labor practices in Korea to those in the US, specifically around race? What is the significance of these comparisons? What questions would you ask of this source if you were using it for a research paper?
3. Kornel Chang chose not to draw on the short story “Fire” in his analysis of post-WWII Korea. If you were working with this story as a source, what questions might you ask? How could you “use” this story as part of a research paper and what issues could it illuminate?
-Synchronous Discussion:


Further reading

June 19/21 Music in Motion
Due by Monday night, June 19
• Posts about primary sources (and responses to posts, preferably by Tuesday, June 21 at noon). Pick any TWO of these 4 links, to listen to/watch.
  - Kimberly Gomes (2011) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h1aKzwR3RM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h1aKzwR3RM)
  - Cristina Branco. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vejaUUBqtr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vejaUUBqtr0)
  - Caedemon’s Call, “Share the Well” (2004) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do9iwp8Lat8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do9iwp8Lat8)
  - Judith and Holofernes, “When Drones Leave the Hive” (2003) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdMpqiyXS7g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdMpqiyXS7g)

Questions: Choose one of the questions below and respond by Monday, June 21. Please attend to specifics and provide at least 1-2 examples from the source to support your points.
As well, please prepare TWO questions for Professor Holton, about any aspect of her work. She will be joining us for part of class. You may email me these questions any time before Wednesday 6/19 at noon.

1. Pick one of these performances. What do you notice most about it and why? Is it the lyrics? The instrumentals? The pace and tempo? The vocals? Or is the nature of how these elements interact?
2. Focusing on either Gomes or Branco, what do you notice about the performance strategies either of these performers employ?
3. Focusing on one song, consider in what ways and to what extent it is anchored in (or communicating) ideas about nation, and/or in what ways and to what extent it is forging (or communicating) connections across borders.

Wednesday, June 21: Synchronous discussion.


Further reading

June 26/28 “Memory,” the Personal and the Transnational
Due by Monday night, June 26
- Posts about the required reading (more TBA)
  - Saidiya Hartman, Lose Your Mother, start; chapters to focus on TBA, but please try to read as much of this book as you can.
  (I encourage you to read each other's posts, but responses are not required this week.)

Wednesday, June 28: Synchronous Discussion
- Hartman, Lose Your Mother, finish; chapters to focus on TBA, but please try to read as much of this book as you can.

FRIDAY June 30: Brief (one paragraph) proposal for your final essay. Please submit on canvas under assignments.

Further reading
Hazel Carby, Imperial Histories (Verso, 2019); Christina Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being (Duke, 2016); Fred Moten, In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition (Minnesota, 2003); Cathy Park Hong, Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning (One World, 2020); Tiya Miles, Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era (UNC, 2017); Bill Schwartz, ed., Stuart Hall, Familiar Strange: A Life Between Two Islands (Duke, 2018); Viet Thanh Nguyen, Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War (Harvard, 2016).

July 3/5:
Monday, July 3: No class/no asynchronous assignment
  - Optional: Outline/Working Thesis:

Wednesday, July 5: TBD… based on YOUR interests and commitments
  - Possible topics include: Covid, disease, and transnational cultural history; global Hollywood; Afrofuturism; sexuality and transnational cultural history…… etc.

Final Essay: Friday, July 7.