

Professor Ruth Feldstein
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Office Hours: by appointment

Topics in Transnational History: Cultural History Across Borders, 1945-2020

History: 26: 510:508

American Studies: 26:050:550:01

Summer Session, II: 2020

Synchronous meetings: Tuesday, 5:30-7:30

Other online work requirements: Due by Thursday 9 pm and (preferably) Friday by noon

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, production, consumption, reception, and desires? How can a transnational approach to culture shape (or reshape) scholarly understandings of US history, domestic activism, migration, and more? How can a cultural approach to transnational history shape (or reshape) scholarly understandings of diplomatic and political history, space and place, encounters, and power dynamics that are not anchored in a specific nation state? And how can a transnational focus affect how we analyze primary sources—film, photographs, written texts and music?

We will consider these questions with a general, though not exclusive, focus on changing meanings of blackness and on transnational African American cultural history in the post-World War II era.

Objectives and Goals

- Students will learn to read scholarship critically.
- Students will learn to analyze written, visual and aural 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 to and respond to each other—both remotely in writing, and in synchronous discussions.

Required Sources

- Saidya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar Straus, 2008).

All other required material will be available on blackboard. See the documents section, organized by date of class meeting.

Format, Grading, and Requirements

Format: Each week will have two components:

--Online asynchronous requirements based on your analysis of primary sources. You can do this work at any point as long as your online submissions are completed by: 1. Thursday night; and 2. before class on Tuesday, but preferably by Friday at noon. Please post on the discussion board, organized by date.

--Synchronous meetings to discuss secondary sources. We will meet remotely each Tuesday at 5:30. That meeting will focus on secondary sources.

Grading and Requirements:

- Attendance and Participation in Synchronous Discussions (20%)
- 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 **SIX** synchronous class discussions. 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. Please have your camera on for these meetings.

This is not a passive learning environment, and simply showing up on zoom will not be enough to succeed in this component of the course. 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. If you miss more than one, you must be in touch with me for it to be an excused absence.

- That being said, these are challenging times and challenging circumstances. If possible, please let me know in advance if you will not be in class, OR if you have cannot access our online discussions, OR if you need to be on mute and/or no audio because of where you are and what is going on around you.

2. FOUR Discussion Board Posts and Responses to Primary Sources (20%)

- Posts: Each week I will post several questions to guide your reading/listening/watching of primary sources. You must read/listen to/watch, and then respond to one of these questions. For two of these assignments, you may generate your own question and answer that, if you prefer. Post your answers to these questions on the bb discussion board at any point during the week, but by every Thursday night by 9 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, 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 Tuesday, but I encourage you to respond by Fridays at noon (so that you have time to complete the secondary source reading). Please respond to a post for a question that you did NOT answer yourself for that week. These responses can be shorter than your posts (1-2 paragraphs), 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.

3. TWO article/book review essays (30% combined)

- At any two Tuesdays during the summer session 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 engage specifically with secondary sources. 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; indeed, you would not be able to do so in an essay of this length. While the first two questions are likely the most relevant for this assignment, even briefly considering all of them will help you to write a review essay in which you offer your own thesis, and do not simply summarize.

- Essays are due on Tuesdays on blackboard (bb), and must be about the material we are reading and discussing on that day. I'd prefer to get these essays in advance of our synchronous discussions (Tuesdays by noon),

but if that's not possible, please post on bb just before class. You will sign up for what weeks you want to submit this essay on the first day of class.

4. Final Essay, approximately 10 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.

If you would like to include a secondary source that is not on the syllabus, you may do so as well; please email me to discuss and confirm by August 1.

- Brief proposal: Tuesday, August 4
- **Optional** Draft: Friday, August 7
- Final Essay: Friday, August 14

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 learn to resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively, by using other people's ideas. If I find that you have used other people's ideas (e.g., Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, 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 assignment 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.

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. These have been challenging times, and systems of support are especially critical. RU-N has identified the following resources to further that mission of access and support:

• **Covid-related Resources:** These two links provide a comprehensive list of available resources: <https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-19-operating-status#SupportingOurStudents>; and <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid19>.

• **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. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

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

- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@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>

- **Writing Center** (tutoring and writing workshops)

Room 126, Conklin Hall

(973) 353-5847

nwc@rutgers.edu

<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>

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. 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](#)) 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 Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)-353-1918, or at run.vpva@rutgers.edu. Learn more about the office here: <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva>

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 90 minutes 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 worth emphasizing.

Our discussions will usually run about 90 minutes and we will take a 10-minute break.

Finally, 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 via bb, so please make sure that you receive email through blackboard regularly.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, July 7: Synchronous Discussion

Introductions: Cultural history, transnational history, & transnational cultural history

1. • Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular” from J. Storey, ed., *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* (Prentice Hall, 1998), pp. 442-452, (orig. 1981).

OR, if you have read this essay by Hall and are familiar with it already, please re-skim, but focus instead on:

• Amy Kaplan, “‘Left Alone with America’: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” in Kaplan and Pease eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Duke, 1993), pp. 3-21.

2. • Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, J. T. Way, “Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis.” *American Quarterly* Vol. 60, No. 3 (September 2008): 625-648;

OR, if you have read Briggs already, please re-skim, but focus instead on:

• Mae Ngai, “The Promises and Perils of Transnational History,” *Perspectives on History*, December 1, 2012.

3. • Paul Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *American Historical Review* 116 (December 2011): 1348-1391.

Please post one question or comment about each of the three readings on the discussion board **in advance** of our first meeting on July 7. See the discussion board for questions to guide your reading.

Recommended

Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 7(1990): 295-310; Amy Kaplan, “‘Left Alone with America’: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” in Kaplan and Pease eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Duke, 1993), pp. 3-21 (and this entire anthology); James W. Cook and Lawrence B. Glickman, “Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History,” in Cook et al., eds., *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future* (Chicago: 2008), pp. 3-57; Micol Seigel, “Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn,” *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005), 62-90; Ian Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 453-474; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Harvard, 1993); Laura Lomas and John Moran Gonzalez, eds., *The Cambridge History of Latina/o American Literature* (Cambridge: 2018); Carole Levander, ed., *Hemispheric American Studies* (Rutgers, 2007); Special Forum, “Transnational Lives in the Twentieth Century,” and Response, “The Futures of Transnational Histories,” *American Historical Review* 118 (February 2013); Daniel Immerwahr, *How To Hide An Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (Farrar Strauss, 2019); Paul Kramer, “How Not to Write the History of U.S. Empire,” *Diplomatic History* 42 (2018): 911-931.

Week 1: The Cold War, Race Relations and Music

Due by Thursday night, July 9/Friday, July 10.

- Posts about primary sources, and responses to posts:
 - Louie Armstrong and Dave Brubeck, “The Real Ambassador,” *The Real Ambassadors* (1962), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF625TM9mCg>
 - Louie Armstrong and Dave Brubeck, “Cultural Exchange,” *The Real Ambassadors* (1962), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tp0XnEKfUzU>
 - *Come Back, Africa* (film, 196), Lionel Rogosin, director. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6ImHIT5Jig&t=52s>

Tuesday, Jan 14: Synchronous discussion

- Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard, 2006), chapters 1 and 3.
- Ruth Feldstein, “Screening Anti-Apartheid: Miriam Makeba, *Come Back, Africa*, and the Transnational Circulation of Black Culture and Politics,” *Feminist Studies* 39 (2013): 12-39.

Recommended

Matthew Pratt Guterl, *Josephine Baker and the Rainbow Tribe* (Harvard, 2014); Robin D.G. Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times* (Harvard, 2012); Kevin Gaines, *African Americans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (UNC, 2008); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War, Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, 2000, revised 2011); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (California, 2000); Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War* (Duke, 2008); Andrew Friedman, “Decolonization’s Diplomats: Antiracism and the Year of Africa in Washington, D.C.” *Journal of American History* 106 (Dec. 2019): 614-638. Rashida K. Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas: Race, Music, and Migration in Post-World War II Paris* (California, 2016); see also the podcast, Patrick Radden Keefe, *Wind of Change*, episode three, “America’s Secret Weapon” (2020), <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/wind-of-change/>.

Week 2: The Cold War, Labor Relations and Film

Due by Thursday night, July 16/Friday, July 17

- Posts about primary source, and responses to posts:
 - *Salt of the Earth* (film, 1954), Herbert Biberman, director. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FE1oKQCwwo4>

Tuesday July 21: Synchronous discussion

- Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (NYU, 2008), introduction and chapter 3.

- Choose 1-2 of the following articles:
 - Ron Verzuh, “Remembering ‘Salt’: How a Blacklisted Hollywood Film Brought the Spectre of McCarthyism to a Small Canadian Town,” *Labour /Le Travail*, 76 (Fall 2015): 165-198.
 - Benjamin Balthaser, “Cold War Re-Visions: Representations and Resistance in the Unseen *Salt of the Earth*,” *American Quarterly* 60 (June 2008): 347-371.
 - James Lorence, *Palomino: Clinton Jencks and Mexican American Unionism in the American Southwest*, chapter 6: “The Moment of Decision: The Empire Zinc Strike, Grassroots Feminism and Mexican American Liberation, 1950-1953,” (U of Illinois Press, 2013), pp. 91-111.
 - Carl Weinberg, “‘*Salt of the Earth*’: Labor, Film, and the Cold War,” *OAH Magazine of History* 24 (October 2010), pp. 41-45. (If you are a teacher, this essay may be of particular interest).

Recommended

Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Harvard, 2018); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the United States and Mexico* (UNC, 2013); Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (California, 2012) Jesse Hoffnung-

Garskof, *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950* (Princeton, 2010); Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham, NC, 2012); Cheryl Beredo, *Import of the Archive: U.S. Colonial Rule in the Philippines and the Making of American Archival History* (Sacramento, CA, 2013); Isar P. Godreau, *Scripts of Blackness: Race, Cultural Nationalism, and U.S. Colonialism in the Puerto Rico* (Urbana, IL, 2015); Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminism, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Duke, 2005); Laura Serna, *Making Cinelandia: American Films and Mexican Film Culture Before the Golden Age* (Duke, 2014).

Week 3: Apartheid and Religion

Due by Thursday, July 23/Friday, July 24

- Posts about primary source, and responses to posts: Exact sources TBA.
 - Jerry Falwell and Jesse Jackson, *Nightline* (1985): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLBG8TVPhb8>
 - Jerry Falwell's documentary from trip to South Africa. (1985)
 - Engelbrecht.

Tuesday, July 28: Synchronous discussion.

- Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (Oxford, 2018), chapter 7, "'The Suffering Church': Apartheid South Africa," pp. 117-143.
- Lauren Tureck, *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations* (Cornell, 2020), chapter 6, "The Challenge of South African Apartheid," pp. 151-180.

Recommended

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (California, 2011; 2001); David Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World But Changed America* (Princeton, 2017); Heather Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid* (Harvard, 2018); Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (Vintage, 2014); Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary* (UNC, 2014); Paul Stuart Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Heinemann, 1995); Timothy Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (Cambridge, 2006); James Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (UNC, 1998); Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence, eds., *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop* (UNC, 2006); Su'ad Khabeer, *Muslim Cool* (NYU: 2016); Sophia Rose Arjana, *Veiled Superheroes: Islam, Feminism, and Popular Culture* (Lexington Books, 2019).

Week 4: "Memory," the Personal and the Transnational

Due by Thursday, July 29/Friday, July 31

- Posts about *Lose Your Mother* (first half), and about primary sources, and responses to posts:
 - Clips from *Roots* (1977): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy5BH8bQ41A> (trailer and opening)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TOVYznoTLI> (Kunta Kinte, "They

have forgotten Allah")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S-WxMs-h64&t=5s> (Chicken George, Matilda and family leave).

-"The Year of Return: African Americans Moving to Ghana" (BBC report, 2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqoqhruujN4>

Tuesday, August 4: Synchronous discussion

- *Lose Your Mother*, finish
- Due: Brief proposal with your final essay topic.

Recommended:

Hazel Carby, *Imperial Histories*; 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).

Week 5: Corona Virus and Transnational Cultural History

Due by Thursday, August 6/Friday August 7:

- Primary sources TBA
- Optional Draft: Friday, August 7

Tuesday, August 11: Synchronous Discussion

- TBA

Final Essay: Friday, August 14