**Summary**
This graduate seminar will consider scholarship on cultural history and consumption, with a particular focus on work that crosses traditional national borders. How have scholars made sense of the transnational flow of cultural commodities, and related questions about production, consumption, reception, and desires? How can a transnational approach to culture shape (or reshape) scholarly understandings of US history, and approaches to literature, 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?

**Objectives and Goals**
- Students will learn to read scholarship 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 develop their own final paper topics, and decide whether a research paper or a significant literature review would be more useful to their own development as scholars.
- Students will learn to locate new sources, plan for and give an oral presentation based on their final papers.

**Required Sources**
- Hazel Carby, *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands* (Verso, 2019)

**Recommended Sources**

**Grading and Class Requirements**
- Attendance, Participation and Two Sets of Questions on Readings (20%)
- Response papers (10%)
- Two article/book review essay, 3-4 pages each (30% combined; 15% each)
- Oral Presentation/Discussion Facilitation (based on final paper and related readings) 10%

NOTE: You will all be reading all of Adiche. Half of you will be reading Hartman and half will be reading Carby so you need not buy both (though both are wonderful and you may want to own them.) All other required sources—written texts, music clips, and films-- will be available on blackboard or other online locations. Since you will be reading significant sections of Von Eschen and Camacho, you may want to purchase these books, but I will be making relevant chapters available on blackboard.
• Final Essay, approximately 12-15 pages, double spaced, (250 words pp), footnotes required, including paper proposal and a draft (30%)

1. Participation and Questions. 20%
This crucial component of the class includes:
• Attendance, completing assignments by the designated dates, and consistent participation in class discussions. Your comments must suggest that you’ve done the reading thoughtfully and thoroughly (including attending to footnotes/endnotes). This is not a passive learning environment, and simply showing up is not enough to succeed in this component of the course. If possible, please let me know in advance if you will not be in class. Because participation is so important, missing more than two classes will affect your final grade. Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to other students, and is only acceptable in an emergency situation. Repeated late arrivals and/or early departures will also affect the participation grade. Any student who misses four or more class sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences may not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

With regard to religious holidays, students are advised to provide timely notification about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or DeanoFStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

• Two sets of questions. At any two points in the semester, you must post several questions on blackboard’s discussion section based on the weekly assignments. These questions must be posted by Tuesday at NOON; each week, you should all plan to check bb before class to see what questions have been posted. I encourage you to respond as well, but this is not required. I also encourage you to use one question in each set of questions to speculate about possible directions for your final essay; that is, use this assignment to consider how what kinds of questions you might ask (and sources you’d consult) if you were doing further research based on the week’s readings OR what kinds of questions you might ask (and sources you’d consult) if you were writing a historiographical essay based on the week’s readings.

You will not get a letter grade on these questions, but I will respond, and these questions “count” toward your grade in attendance/participation.

2. Response papers (10%)
• Two 2-page response papers (double spaced). At two points during the semester you will submit a response to any of the readings. Use these responses to test out ideas and ask questions, to react to what you’ve read (“pro” or “con”), and to stretch your writing “muscles.” You may respond to the “big picture” idea or argument in a given reading, or you may hone in on a specific passage, theme, or intervention that you think is particularly important and worth considering further. You must use one of these two response papers (or at least a paragraph in one of your responses) to consider how the material you are writing about lends itself to a final essay. MORE TBA. A first response is required by February 4. You may submit the other response at any point (but not the same week that you are writing a review essay). Please note that you must submit the response on the week that we are discussing the material you write about. While I prefer to receive these responses by noon on the day of class bb, you may bring hard copy to class and then also submit on blackboard after class. You may submit one additional response for “extra credit.”

You will not get a letter grade on these responses, but I will respond about content and style, and these responses “count” toward your grade.

3. TWO article/book review essay (3-4 pages), 30% combined.
With a focus on one article or book chapter/s, write an essay in which you explicate the author’s main argument and its significance to the study of transnational cultural history. 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?

***6. What approach would you take, what questions would you ask, and what sources would you look to if you were using this article or book as a jumping off point for your final essay?

Note: You absolutely cannot and should not try to take up all 6 of those questions in an essay of this length, and the first two questions are the most relevant for this assignment. As well, for ONE of these essays, you must incorporate question #6. It can either be the crux of your essay or one aspect of it. You will sign up for what weeks you want to submit this essay on the first day of class. At least one of these essays must be completed before spring break. Finally, 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.

4. Oral Presentation/Discussion Facilitation (based on final paper and related readings) 10%

Shortly before and then after spring break, we will be shifting gears to focus more on your final papers; at that point, all of you will be helping to set our agenda and making decisions about readings. Each of you will have one portion of one class to introduce a new reading that you feel is important—to the class as a whole and to your own final paper specifically. More TBA.

5. Final Essay, approximately 12-15 pages, double spaced, (250 words pp), footnotes required, including paper proposal, and a draft (30%).

Your final paper is an opportunity to make this seminar as useful and productive to your own work as possible, and for you to explore issues that we have not gotten to in our readings.

• Most of you will be writing an historiographical paper (also sometime known as a literature review essay). To do so you must draw on a combination of materials— at least one source from the syllabus and one-two new sources from off the syllabus. Consider how scholars have approached a given theme, episode, cultural commodity, time period, etc. How can you use these readings to create a conversation among/across these the scholarship? How can you use this discussion of the scholarship to develop your own thesis? See the questions above in the description of the book/article review essay. These questions will be essential as you frame this essay topic.

• For those of you for whom it is important to do independent research, you may also use this final essay to write a primary-source based research paper on a topic of your choosing.

• Proposal: Tuesday, March 10 (or by Friday, March 13… as long as it’s in before spring break)
• Draft: Tuesday, April 21
• Final Essay: Tuesday May 5

Within the first few weeks of the semester, each of you will be deciding what type of final essay you plan to write.

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. 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.”

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.

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. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the 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](ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](ods@newark.rutgers.edu).

- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or [http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/](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](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](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](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](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)
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. Please silence cell phones and put phones (etc.), away before class begins. You may not use phones to read and refer to required materials during class. If you take notes or read your sources from a laptop (or other device), please remember that only that document or required sources may be open. Texting or emailing or otherwise using technology in an inappropriate way at any time during class is absolutely prohibited. Again, this should be a given in a graduate seminar, but it worth emphasizing. If I see a student using technology in inappropriate ways during class, that student will be marked as absent for the day.

Food and drink are permissible as long as neither is disruptive. We will usually (though not always) have a 5-10-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:

Jan. 21: Introductions: What is “cultural history,” what is “transnational history,” & what is transnational cultural history?


• 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. (This article is on BB, but also see google books for all but the last pages of notes: http://books.google.com/books?id=Pdl2TZ369QgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=The+cultural+turn+in+us+history&hl=en&sa=X&ei=H-


**Jan. 28**: Migrating Performances, I: The Cold War

• Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard, 2006), chapters to focus on TBA (NOTE: chapters 1-3 and notes on bb already).


**Feb. 4**: Religion, Culture, and Global Circuits


**OR:**


Feb. 11: “Beauty,” Style, and Economics


Recommended: Purnima Bose and Laura Lyons, ed., Cultural Critique and the Global Corporation (Indiana, 2010); Lynn Thomas, Beneath the Surface: A Transnational History of Skin Lighteners (Duke, 2020); Tanisha Ford, Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul (UNC, 2017); Monica Miller, Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity (Duke, 2009); Timothy Burke, Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe (Duke, 1996); L. Ayu Saraswati, Seeing Beauty, Sensing Race in Transnational Indonesia (University of Hawaii, 2013), (see especially chapter 4 for a very different approach to skin whitening).

NOTE: I will be holding extra office hours this week and/or the following week to discuss final papers.

NOTE: Saturday, February 15 is the annual Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series. This year’s theme is “Black Futures: What Seems to Be Need Not Be.” I strongly encourage you to attend. https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/news/save-date-feb-15-2020-marion-thompson-wright-mtw-lecture-series

Feb. 18. Migrating Bodies, I: Borderlands and Contact Zones

• Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands (NYU, 2008), chapters to focus on TBA

• Herbert Biberman, director, Salt of the Earth (1954)

• One-two more article or chapters, TBA.

**Feb. 25:** Migrating Bodies, II: The Personal and the Transnational

- Half the class: Saidya Hartmann, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*
- Half the class: Hazel Carby, *Imperial Histories*
- ALL: TBA

**March 3:**
Presentations and Readings, I

**March 10:**
Presentations and Readings, II

**Final Paper Project Proposal: Due by Friday, March 13** (2-pages, plus bibliography for the research paper option)

- A proposal for an historiographical essay should include the sources you plan to draw on and an explanation of the questions you are asking and your reasons for putting these sources in conversation.
- A proposal for a research paper, should identify your main research questions and themes, relevant primary sources that you have identified as relevant and available, and several secondary sources through which you can locate your research agenda in relation to work that other scholars have done.

**March 17:** Spring Break

**March 24:** Migrating Bodies, III. Fiction and Nation

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, *Americanah*


- One more article TBA.

**March 31:**
April 7: Migrating Performers, II:

• MORE TBA.

April 14:
Presentations and Readings, IV

April 21:
Draft Due, no class

April 28:
Presentations, Readings, Peer review
More TBA

FINAL ESSAYS DUE: May 5