

**Ethnic Studies 257A: Social Theory  
An Analysis of the Modern Subject**

(http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dsilva/257A2005-Syllabus.htm)

**Denise Ferreira da Silva**  
225 Social Sciences Building  
Ext.: 4 -3405  
[dsilva@weber.ucsd.edu](mailto:dsilva@weber.ucsd.edu)

**Off. Hours:** Tuesdays - 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.  
Thursdays - 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.  
or by appointment

**THE TASK:**

What are the causes of racial/global subjection? What sort of social configurations the notions of racial and cultural difference refigure? What sort of emancipatory strategies – counter-hegemonic discourses and practices – will more successfully dissipate the effects of racial subjection?

After almost one hundred years of social scientific accounts of racial subjection, descriptions of post-slavery and post-colonial social (juridic, economic, and symbolic) configurations, raciality continues to perform its task, which is to produce social subjects to which the principles – universality and freedom (self-determination) – said to govern post-Enlightenment social configurations do not apply.

While a critical analysis of twentieth-century anthropology's and the sociology of race relations' projects would provide an answer (or rather answers) to this puzzle, in this seminar, we will search further back and explore the founding texts informing the social scientific arsenal. With the aid of Michel Foucault's excavation of modern thought, we will engage in a critical reading of the philosophical and social scientific formulations of the figure at the center of post-Enlightenment thought – namely *man*, the modern subject – seeking to identify the presuppositions and formulations guiding contemporary renderings of racial subjection, namely racial and ethnic studies and global/postcolonial studies.

**EVALUATION**

Weekly e-mail comments (1,500 words)	40%
Discussion mediation	30%
Participation	30%

**Email Responses Guidelines**

Each week you will email to everyone in the class a 1,500 word-long response to the assigned readings. In your response, you should: (a) identify the text(s)'s main concepts and formulations and (b) at least three questions (for discussion) which seek to clarify whether and how the conceptual framework developed by a given theorist informs our understanding of racial/global subjection.

## **Discussion Mediation Guidelines**

Each week two or three students will be responsible for leading the seminar: (A) **week two** through **week six** - they will prepare an itinerary which -- drawing from the questions raised in the email responses -- will guide in class discussion; and (B) **week seven** through **week ten** - the itinerary will also include a summary of four recent texts in the field of racial/ethnic and global/postcolonial studies, which implicitly or explicitly uses the concepts and formulations introduced in the given week's reading(s). Everyone will lead the seminar **twice**.

## **ITINERARY**

### **I. The Critical Analytical Position**

**Week One (September 22):** Introduction

**Week Two (September 29)**

Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*

Omi & Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States*

**Week Three (October 6) & Four (October 13)**

Foucault's *The Order of Things*

### **II. Founding Writings**

**Week Five (October 20)**

Locke's [\*The Second Treatise of Civil Government\*](#) (Selections) [online] & Kant's [\*Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals\*](#) [online]

**Week Six (October 27)**

Herder's *Philosophical Writings* (Selections) & Hegel's [\*Lectures on the Philosophy of History\*](#) [online]

### **III. Social Scientific Re-formulations**

**Week Seven (November 3)**

Marx's *The German Ideology* (Part I) and [\*Grundrisse \(Introduction\)\*](#) [online]

Freud's *Outline of Psychoanalysis* & [\*The Interpretation of Dreams\*](#) (Chapter 6) [online]

**Week Eight (November 10)**

Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society & Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Introduction & Conclusion)

**Week Nine (November 17)**

Weber's *Economy and Society* (Selections) & *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Parsons' *The Evolutions of Societies*

**Week Ten (December 10)**

Wallerstein's *The World System* (Introduction and Conclusion)

Cardoso and Faletto's *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Selections)