

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

## DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES

SPRING 2009

### ETHNIC STUDIES 289: POST/COLONIALISMS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**Prof. Mark Harris**

**Lecture:** Thursday 12.30-12.20 SSB 253

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2-5 pm Cross Cultural Centre and other times by prior appointment.

**Ext.:** – **E-mail:** maharris@ucsd.edu

**Office. Location:** SSB 247

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the formation of those modern nation-states that were formerly colonial possessions there remains a consistent, abiding crisis of legitimacy. The unresolved status of the Indigenous peoples and colonized populations, both within the civil polity and as legal beings, continues to haunt the (post)colonial landscape of these nations. This course will draw from postcolonial scholarship to interrogate the indeterminacy of the colonial encounter, reflecting upon the unresolved issues of sovereignty, the nexus between colonial violence and the modern-state and the question of acknowledgment of past historical injustices. This subject will consider the extent to which the law is deployed in the formulation of the “other” with particular reference to the post-colonial experience of the Indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, Latin America and the USA. Drawing from a range of post-colonial theorists we will examine the manner in which the law is utilized in constructions of race, ethnicity, indigeneity and connection to place.

#### REQUIRED READINGS

Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Mamdani, M, *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton University Press,

Chatterjee, P *The Nation and its fragments*

Gelder, K. & Jacobs, J., *Uncanny Australia*,

Feldman, A., *Formations of Violence*, University of Chicago

Comaroff, L & J. (eds) *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, University of Chicago Press,

(**N.B.** Apart from these readings that will be available from Groundworks, the other readings will be made available on WebCT or as photocopies)

# SCHEDULE

## ***Week One***

### ***Introduction- Framing the (Post)Colonial Question***

#### ***Viewing the video - Australia***

#### ***The Postcolonial Moment – “Strange Creatures from the Deep”***

An abiding theme throughout this course is the indeterminacy of the “post-colonial”, which simultaneously is defined, and yet resists definition. In the first class we will reflect upon both the (in)applicability of such a term, but also reflect upon the installation of the colonial project. More particularly we will consider the manner in which the impact of the colonial is couched upon the violent obliteration of the racial “Other”.

#### ***Readings***

Mbembe, A., *On the Postcolony*, UC Press, 2001, pp.173-211 (note: available on-line through the UCSD library site)

Wolfe, Patrick, Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race. *The American Historical Review* 106.3 (2001): 60 pars. 25 Mar. 2009  
<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/106.3/ah000866.html>>.

Wolfe, P. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, pp.168-190

Taussig, M., “Culture of Terror – Space of Death: Roger Casement’s Putamayo Report”  
*Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26 (1984), 467-97

## ***Week Two***

### ***The Colonial Struggle***

This week’s class considers the writings of Franz Fanon in his seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is worth noting that Fanon’s writing was championed by Jean-Paul Sartre (see the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*). During the height of the Algerian struggle for independence Sartre commented upon the manner in which the indigenous Algerian population (remembering that there were French colonists who were born in Algeria and who were referred to as *pieds-noirs*) were represented in the colonial thinking. He noted:

This rebellion is not merely challenging the power of the settlers, but their very being. For most Europeans in Algeria, there are two complementary and inseparable truths: the colonists are backed by divine right, the natives are sub-human. This is a mythical interpretation of reality, since the riches of the one are built on the poverty of the other. In this way exploitation puts the exploiter at the mercy of his victim, and the dependence itself begets racialism. It is a bitter and tragic fact that, for the Europeans in Algeria, being a man means first and foremost superiority to the Moslems. But what if the Moslem finds in his turn that his manhood depends on equality with the settler? It is then that the European begins to feel his very existence diminished and cheapened

From this statement by Sartre we move to Said's account of the construction of the Oriental through a variety of colonial discourses and consider his assertion that "the Orient was almost a European invention" which was "based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience"(1979:1)

*Reading*

Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove, 2004

**Week Three**

***The (im)possibility of the (post)colonial?***

Following from Fanon's cautionary observations for the future of revolutionary liberation movements we will consider the extent to which the colonial project installed two distinct modes of governance – representing the populace as either citizens (under civil authority) or as subjects (through the selective recognition of aspects of customary rule). The consequences of this bifurcated system of recognition Mamdani argues is reflected in the contemporary political and social situation within Africa. It also raises the question as to whether the transformations installed by the colonial moment are comprehensively irreversible.

*Reading*

Mamdani, M, *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton University Press, 1996

Sartre, Jean-Paul, "Colonialism is a system" (2001) *Interventions* Vol.3(1):pp.127-140

**Week Four**

***Inside/Outside the Law: The Role of Law in the colonial***

In any analysis of colonial societies it is clear that the law is implicated in the production of the colonial subject and the confirmation of the power of the colonizer. The nature of the law that is deployed and how it marks the bodies of the colonized is complicated, however, by the manner in which there is both an insistence upon the legality but also the reservation of some extra-legal capacity that transforms or alters the law as it might operate at the metropolitan center.

*Reading*

Hussain, N., *The Jurisprudence of Emergency*, University of Michigan, 2003 (copies to be distributed)

**Week Five**

***Who writes the nation?***

Renan articulates the nation as something that transcends mere linguistic or religious homogeneity and is possessed of an essence of spirituality. Paradoxically he also observed that the writing of the nation requires both the acts of remembering and

forgetting. Casting back to Spivak's enjoinder that the subaltern cannot speak we reflect upon how the nation is written and what this means for the Indigenous, racial or ethnic minorities that are consigned to the margins within society.

#### *Reading*

Chatterjee, P *The Nation and its fragments*, Princeton, 1993

#### **Week Six**

##### ***Who writes the nation?***

Place and displacement, Ashcroft et al. observe, "are crucial features of the post-colonial discourse". In this class we will examine the ways in which notions of place and space are constructed and the methods that are used to map out superior claims to the space. This class will reflect upon the writing of the nation's narrative with particular reference to the Australian experience where the Indigenous presence serves as both (for the colonizers) a distasteful reminder of the colonial violence but also the embodiment of the spirituality that can be accessed through communion with the land.

#### *Readings*

Gelder, K. & Jacobs, J., *Uncanny Australia*, MUP, 1998`

Fitzpatrick, P., *Modernism and the Grounds of Law*, Cambridge, 2001, pp.111-145. (to be made available on WebCT)

#### **Week Seven**

##### ***Identity and the quest for "authenticity"***

In this class we will consider the manner in which race, ethnicity and indigeneity are imbricated within the postcolonial discourse – noting the manner in which essentialist discourses can be deployed to limit and circumscribe the possibilities for representation of the racialised "other".

#### *Reading*

Coutlhard, G., "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2007, pp. 437-460.

Cuthbert, D & Grossman, M., "Resisting Aboriginalities" *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy* 1.1 (1998), pp. 109-126

Gonzalez de Allen, G., "Enrique Dussel and Manuel Zapata Olivella: An exploration of De-colonial, Diasporic and Transmodern Selves the Politics of Recognition", (2006)

*Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise*, Fall, pp.1-12

Mazotti, J., "Creole Agencies and the (Post)Colonial Debate in Spanish America", in Morana, M et.al. (eds.) *Coloniality at Large*, Duke, 2008, pp.77-110

Povinelli, E., "The Cunning of Being..." *Australian Feminist Law Journal* Vol.11 (1998, pp. 3-27.

Watson, I., "Illusionists and Hunters: Being Aboriginal in this Occupied Space", *Australian Feminist law Journal* Vol.22 (2005), pp.5-28

Wolfe, P., "Repressive Authenticity", in Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology, Cassell, *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, pp.213-248

### **Week Eight**

#### ***Contesting Sovereignty: Violence, Self-Determination and Autonomy***

From the earlier readings in this class it is clear that violence and the post/colonial moments are grounded in violence. In this class we will consider the manifestations of what Mbembe has termed the "*phenomenology of death*". A study of Feldman is useful in that it offers an account of violence within the post/colonial moment that is not situated in the typical locations, but rather in the violence of Ireland and the "troubles".

#### *Readings*

Feldman, A., *Formations of Violence*, University of Chicago, 2001

Mbembe, A., *On the Postcolony*, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp.173-211 (note: this text is available electronically through the UCSD library)

Trask, L., *From a Native Daughter*, U of Hawaii Press 1999, pp.101-112

### **Week Nine**

#### ***Inside/Outside the Law: the Role of law in the post/colonial***

As we observed at the outset the colonial experience has been characterized by a genocidal imperative – which can be termed logics of elimination or obliteration – that is directed towards the indigenous or native populace. The original (originating) violence of the law, deployed in the name of installing order, does not solely exist within the moment of colonial encounter. In this class we will reflect upon the manner in which the violence and terror continues to circulate within the state, and continues to be invoked against the racial other in the guise of a legitimate exercise of the sovereignty of the state

#### *Readings*

Borrows, J., *Recovering Canada: the resurgence of Indigenous law*, University of Toronto Press, 2002, pp.111-137

Comaroff, L & J. (eds) *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, University of Chicago Press, 2006

Merry, S., "Law and Postcolonialism" in Sarat, A. (ed) *Blackwell Companion to Law*, 2004, pp.569-588.

### **Week Ten**

#### ***Reflections: Repairing the ruptures of the past and global remedies***

In the final class we will review the trajectory of the course and reflect upon the issues that have arisen and the questions that (in all likelihood) remain unanswered. One tentative issue for reflection is the contradiction that exists between the trend towards globalization that homogenizes and essentialises other cultures, against the increasing claims for distinct group or cultural rights that are being articulated by ethnic and Indigenous minorities.

*Readings*

Llyod, D., "Colonial Trauma/Postcolonial Recovery?" (2000) *Interventions* Vol.2(2): pp.212-228.

Trouillot, M-R, "Abortive Rituals: historical apologies in the global era", (2000) *Interventions*, Vol.2(2), pp.171-186

Orford, A., *Reading Humanitarian intervention*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.38-81.