

Winter 2009

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

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Off. Hours: Tue & Wed 10:00a–12:00p or by appt

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The Task:

What are the causes of racial/global subjugation? 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 global/racial subjection, namely racial/ethnic studies and global/postcolonial studies.

Evaluation

Weekly e-mail comments (Online)	50%
Participation	50%

The Itinerary

I. The Critical Analytical Position

Week One

Introduction

Week Two

Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*

Butler's *Kindred*

Week Three & Four

Foucault's *The Order of Things*

II. Founding Writings

Week Five

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

Week Six

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

III. Social Scientific Reformulations

Week Seven

Marx's [The German Ideology-Part I](#) [Online] & [Grundrisse](#) (Introduction) [Online]

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

Week Eight

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

Week Nine

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

Parsons' *The Evolution of Societies* (Selections)

Wallerstein's *The Modern World System* (Selections)

Week Ten

Butler's *Fledgling*