

“Miscegenation, Mestizaje, Mestiçagem, Métissage: Racial Mixture in the Americas”

Professor: Emron Esplin

Course Description

In this course, we will follow a “Literatures of the Americas” or “Inter-American Literary Studies” model to trace how the theme of racial mixture has been portrayed throughout the Americas. We will look across and beyond the linguistic, geographic, and political borders that divide the Americas to discover how authors from the Caribbean, Spanish America, Canada, and the United States disparately and similarly depict racial mixture, and we will interrogate these portrayals of mixture to reveal how they are connected to past and present anxieties about national identity.

We will begin the course by reading several texts which either support or challenge inter-American approaches to both history and literature in order to better understand the possible rewards and the inherent risks of this type of comparative approach. We will then analyze a pair of primary documents from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which create disparate discourses of racial mixture in various regions of the Americas. We will spend the majority of the semester reading fictional portrayals of racial mixture in novels from throughout the American hemisphere. Finally, we will conclude the course by bringing our discussion of racial mixture into conversation with the current field of positive hybridity theory.

Required Texts

Altamirano, Ignacio Manuel El Zarco, the Blue-Eyed Bandit: Episodes of Mexican Life Between 1861-1863 [El zarco]
Cable, George Washington. The Grandissimes.
Campbell, Maria. Halfbreed
Faulkner, William. Absalom, Absalom!
Gómez de Avellaneda, Gertrudis. Sab
Hopkins, Pauline. Of One Blood: Or, the Hidden Self
Vasconcelos, José. The Cosmic Race [La raza cósmica]

Required Course Pack

Bolton, Herbert Eugene. “The Epic of Greater America.” Do the Americas Have a Common History?. Ed. Lewis Hanke. New York: Knopf, 1964. 67-100.
Cohn, Deborah and Jon Smith. “Introduction: Uncanny Hybrids” and “Part One.” Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies. Ed. Deborah Cohn and Jon Smith. Durham: Duke UP, 2004. 2-19, 20-24.
Croly, David Goodman and George Wakeman. Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro. 1864. Louisville: Lost Cause Press, 1981.
Handley, George. “A New World Poetics of Oblivion.” Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies. Ed. Deborah Cohn and Jon Smith. Durham: Duke UP, 2004. 25-51.

Michaelsen, Scott. "Hybrid Bound." *Anthropology's Wake: Attending to the End of Culture*. Scott Michaelsen and David E. Johnson. New York: Fordham UP, 2008. 166-87.

Nott, Josiah C. "The Mulatto a Hybrid--probable extermination of the two races if the Whites and Blacks are allowed to intermarry." *American Journal of Medical Sciences* 6.11 (1843): 252-56.

O'Gorman, Edmundo. "Do the Americas Have a Common History?" *Do the Americas Have a Common History?*. Ed. Lewis Hanke. New York: Knopf, 1964. 103-11.

Pérez Firmat, Gustavo. "Introduction: Cheek to Cheek." *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?*. Ed. Gustavo Pérez Firmat. Durham: Duke UP, 1990. 1-5.

Calendar

Week 1 Introductions; Inter-American Literary Studies

Week 2 American Histories; Inter-American Literary Studies; Comparative Literature

-Herbert Eugene Bolton "The Epic of Greater America" in Hanke

-Edmundo O'Gorman "Do the Americas Have a Common History?" in Hanke

-Gustavo Pérez Firmat "Introduction"

-Deborah Cohn & Jon Smith "Introduction" and "Part One"

-George Handley "A New World Poetics of Oblivion" in Cohn/Smith

Week 3 19th-Century Hybridity Debates; Slavery and Racial Mixture; Creating the Discourse of Miscegenation

-Josiah C. Nott "The Mulatto a Hybrid--probable extermination of the two races if the Whites and Blacks are allowed to intermarry."

-Scott Michaelsen "Hybrid Bound" (169-175; 177-180)

-David Goodman Croly & George Wakeman Miscegenation

Week 4 The Caste System in Colonial Spanish America; From Mestizaje as Accepted Reality to Mestizaje as Nationalism

-Christina Johanna Olson "Casta Paintings: The Construction and Depiction of Race in Colonial Mexico" (read article and see images at) <http://hemi.nyu.edu/archive/studentwork/colony/olson/Casta1.htm>

-José Vasconcelos *La raza cósmica/The Cosmic Race*

Week 5 Racial Mixture in 19th-Century Cuba; Early Abolition Tradition in the Caribbean

-Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda *Sab*

Week 6 New Orleans as Space of Métissage/Mestizaje in a Nation of Miscegenation

-George Washington Cable *The Grandissimes* (Chapters 1-27)

Week 7 New Orleans as Space of Métissage/Mestizaje in a Nation of Miscegenation

NO CLASS TODAY

-George Washington Cable *The Grandissimes* (Chapters 28-61)
(You will need to have read the whole novel by this date in order to be prepared for Exam 1)

Week 8 Mestizaje in 19th-Century Mexico

-Ignacio Manuel Altamirano *El Zarco* (Chapters 1-13)

Week 9 Mestizaje in 19th-Century Mexico

-Ignacio Manuel Altamirano *El Zarco* (Chapters 14-25)

Week 10 African-American Perspectives on Racial Mixture; Miscegenation in the Late 19th- & early 20th-Century United States

-Pauline Hopkins *Of One Blood* (Chapters 1-12)

Week 11 African-American Perspectives on Racial Mixture; Miscegenation in the Late 19th- & early 20th-Century United States

-Pauline Hopkins *Of One Blood* (Chapters 13-24)

Week 12 Racial Mixture & the U.S. Civil War; Miscegenation/Incest; 20th-Century U.S. South Haunted by the Past

-William Faulkner *Absalom, Absalom!* (Chapters 1-5)

Week 13 Racial Mixture & the U.S. Civil War; Miscegenation/Incest; 20th-Century U.S. South Haunted by the Past

-William Faulkner *Absalom, Absalom!* (Chapters 6-9)

Week 14 Racial Mixture in Canada; 20th Century Hybridity Theory; Hybridity Resurrected

-Maria Campbell *Halfbreed*

-Scott Michaelsen "Hybrid Bound" (166-169; 175-177; 180-187)

Week 15 Holiday

-Watch Film of Your Choice on Racial Mixture (will appear on Exam 2)

Finals Week Final Exam; Wrap Up

-Discuss Films