

FEMINIST AND QUEER EXPLORATIONS IN TROUBLEMAKING

Blog Address: blog.lib.umn.edu/puot0002/8190

GWSS 8190 (Section 3)
FORD 400
Spring 2010
Wednesdays 2:00-4:30

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

...trouble is inevitable and the task, how best to make it, what best way to be in it...
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble

What are the political and ethical possibilities for making trouble? How have selves or communities made trouble in effective ways? What would it mean to think about troublemaking as a virtue? What are the limits of troublemaking? What are the links between troublemaking and feminist theoretical activism? Radical democracy? Queer theory and practice? Humor? Critical thinking? How can we trouble the academy in productive ways?

In this graduate seminar, we will explore all of these questions (and more) as we closely examine the nature and practice of troublemaking. We will closely examine how troublemaking and the troublemaker are represented and performed within specific social contexts and how race, class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity shape our understandings (and evaluations) of them. And, we will critically explore the ethical and political potential of troublemaking, as a practice, method, critical lens and/or attitude. In particular, we will look at how making trouble functions in a wide range of feminist and queer theoretical, political and ethical projects of transgression and transformation. While this course will draw upon a wide range of disciplines and methodologies, we will give particular attention to (1) troublemaking in philosophical and ethical contexts and (2) bringing philosophical/ethical understandings of troublemaking into conversation with specific practices of troublemaking.

Some topics include:

- Trouble in/troubling the academy
- Judith Butler and Critical Thinking
- Staring as specular, spectacle, and ethical encounter
- Excessive emotion and subjects-beside-themselves
- Race and Nation Traitors
- Children, Disciplinary Problems and the Prison Industrial Complex
- No Future, Cruel Optimism, and Hopeful Troublemaking
- Sarah Ahmed, Queer Happiness, and the Feminist Killjoy

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2 Questions (2 @50 points each)

100 points

Question One: Related to the readings

Question Two: Related to your own discipline/research/topic

Both of these questions **MUST** be posted on our course blog by Sunday evening. A sign-up sheet will be distributed during the second week of class.

Presentation on one question

75 points

You will give a brief presentation explaining and expanding upon the discipline/research question that you posted on the blog. This presentation is your opportunity to describe and discuss your own particular interests in troublemaking as a lens/method, etc.

Class Reflection

75 points

You are required to post a reflection on one of our class sessions. This reflection should include your thoughts on the topic/reading and what other students had to say about the material. You can include questions that were raised or questions that we failed to raise. This reflection should not just be your thoughts about the reading; it must also include how we all discussed the issue/readings. There is no set format for this reflection, so you can be creative in your posting.

Book Review

150 points

You are required to write and post (on our course blog) a review of one of the books from which we are reading an excerpt/chapter. A detailed handout will be distributed in the next few weeks.

Blog Posts

100 points

You are required to make 10 posts (entries and/or comments) on our course blog.

- 5 Direct Responses to others' questions
- 2 Status Reports on your project
- 3 Entries of your choice

A detailed handout will be distributed during the second week of class.

Participation

200 points

Big Project

300 points

There are no specific requirements for this project. You are encouraged to be creative and think about what sort of project would best serve your own needs in this course. You could develop a syllabus on troublemaking, a research paper, a video project, an interactive literature review, a portfolio (complete with summaries of each reading + detailed introduction and conclusion), or whatever else you think might be helpful. I will meet with each of you individually to develop your project.

COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE

All readings will be posted on our WebCT site.

INTRODUCTIONS

January

20 Introduction to course

READING

- Butler, Judith. "1990 Preface" in *Gender Trouble*
- Chambers, Samuel and Terrence Carver. "Introduction" in *Troubling Politics*

27 Trouble in/Troubling the Academy, part 1: Feminist and Queer Blogging

READING

- Browse these blogs:
<http://trouble.room34.com>
<http://blog.lib.umn.edu/puot0002/glb4403>
www.supervalentthought.wordpress.com
- Rak, Julie. "The Digital Queer"
- Berlant, Lauren. "Politics, Desire, and the Ordinary: Two Blog Entries"
- Puotinen, Sara. "How to Blog, A Primer" online

OPTIONAL READING

- Blogging Resistance: (Web) Sites of Resistance
<http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/index.htm>

February

3 Trouble in/Troubling the Academy, part 2: Feminist and Queer Pedagogies

READING

- Kumashiro, Kevin. "Theories and Practices of Antioppressive Education" in *Troubling Education*
- hooks, bell. "Teaching to Transgress" and "Theory as Liberatory Practice" in *Teaching to Transgress*
- Davidson, Maria del Guadalupe and George Yancy, eds. Selections from *Critical Perspectives on bell hooks*.

10 Trouble in/Troubling the Academy, part 3: The "Street/Straight" Binary

READING

- Nyong'o, Tavia. "Punk'd Theory"
- Lugones, Maria. "Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker"
- Sandoval, Chela. "US Third World Women and Differential Consciousness"
- Singer, Linda. "Author's Introduction," in *Erotic Welfare*

17 Judith Butler on making trouble and thinking critically

READING:

- Butler, Judith. "Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity"
- Birulés, Fina. "Interview with Judith Butler: Gender is Extramoral"

<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/butler160509.html>

- Butler, Judith. "Value of Difficulty"

24 Calling into Question, Provoking into Action?

READING:

- Foucault, Michel. Excerpts from *Ethics*.
 1. "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations"
 2. "What is Enlightenment?"
 3. "The Masked Philosopher"
- Excerpts from *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization*
 1. Shepherd, Benjamin and Ronald Hayduk. "Introductions: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalization"
 2. Shepherd, Benjamin Interviews Sarah Schulman. "The Reproductive Rights Movement, ACT UP, and the Lesbian Avengers"
 3. Morgan, Tracy. "From WHAM! To ACT UP"
- Foster, Susan Leigh. "Choreographies of Protest"

FILM: Clips from *Expression = Life ACT UP, video and the AIDS crisis*

March

3 Hey, what you are looking at? Staring as specular, starting as spectacle, staring as ethical encounter

READING:

- Irigaray, Luce. Selections from *Speculum of the Other: Woman*
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. Selections from *Staring: How We Look*
- Villiers, Nicholas de. "Glancing, Cruising, Staring: Queer Ways of Looking"
<http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/57/queer.html>
- Clare, Eli. "Gawking, Gaping, Staring" in *GLQ*

FILM: Clips from *Female Trouble*

10 Excess and Being Beside (but not outside) of oneself, part 1: grief, rage, shame

READING:

- Lorde, Audre. "The Uses of Anger" in *Sister Outsider*
- Lugones, Maria. "Hard to Handle Anger" in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*
- Butler, Judith. "Beside Oneself" in *Undoing Gender* and other selections
- Warner, Michael. "The Ethics of Shame" in *The Trouble with Normal*
- Ngai, Shane. "On Disgust" in *Ugly Feelings*

17 SPRING BREAK

24 Excess and Being Beside (but not outside) of oneself, part 2: laughter

READING:

- Irigaray, Luce. Selections from *This Sex Which Is Not One*
- Rowe, Kathleen. Excerpt from *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*

FILM: *Making Trouble*

31 Race Traitor

READING:

- Segrest, Mab. Selection from *Memoirs of a Race Traitor*
- Pratt, Minnie Bruce. Selection from *Rebellion*
- Bailey, Allison. "Locating Traitorous Identities" in *Hypatia* 13 no 3

April

7 Nation Traitor (terrorist)

READING:

- Puar, Jasbir. Excerpt from *Terrorist Assemblages*
- Munoz, Jose Esteban. "Introduction" + "Vaginal Crème Davis" in *Disidentifications*

14 The troublemaker as disciplinary problem, part 1: the Child/children

READING:

- Stockton, Kathryn Bond. *Growing up Sideways*
- Selections from *Curiouser*

21 The troublemaker as disciplinary problem, part 2: the Criminal

READING:

- Davis, Angela. From *Are Prisons Obsolete*
- Rodríguez, Dylan. Excerpts from *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison System*
- James, Joy, ed. Selections from *Warfare in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy*

28 Future? What Future?

READING:

- Edelman, Lee. "Introduction" in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*
- Munoz, Jose Esteban. "Cruising Utopia"
- Berlant, Lauren. "Cruel Optimism"
- Sneider, Michael. Excerpt from "Introduction" in *Queer Optimism*

May

5 Let's put the hap back in happiness: Queer Unhappiness and the Feminist Killjoy

READING:

- Ahmed, Sara. Selected essays on happiness