

**EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
CMN 5180: Seminar in Rhetoric (The Body, Performance, and Identity)**

*“Being a critical scholar is not about escaping, it is not about being or feeling better, and it is certainly not about doing easy research. Being a critical scholar is about always being accountable for not only what you intend, but what kinds of effects you put in motion. It is about holding yourself responsible even when privilege tells you are not, about listening to others even though you feel you are entitled to speak.”*

--- Deanna L. Fassett and John T. Warren’s *Critical Communication Pedagogy* p. 88

Term: Spring 2017, Section: 001, CRN: 32606

Location/Time: Coleman 1771, R 7:00 – 9:30, 3 credit hours

Instructor Name: Dr. Richard G. Jones, Jr. Office: Coleman 1751

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Office Hours: M 1-2, T 11-12, R 11-12 and 4-5, and by appointment

**Course Description:** A course devoted to evolving theories, issues and foci within the interdisciplinary field of rhetoric. May be repeated once with a change in course content.

**Course Description:**

This course aims to provide historical, theoretical, and practical context for cultural critique. Communication will be central to our discussion, as cultural and identity markers such as gender, sexuality, race, and class do not have meaning outside of language.

Drawing from performance studies, cultural studies, communication, and other fields, the course will offer a theoretical foundation of feminist, queer, performance studies, and critical theory to provide lenses through which to view culture; including popular culture and everyday discourses. Critical thinking and analysis will be crucial in identifying the ways in which power, ideology, and hegemony operate within our bodies, our identities, and culture. Through class discussion and dialogue, we will address the practicalities of our cultural positions and privileges, and illuminate the ways in which we, as consumers of culture, may perpetuate and resist these power structures.

In the course we will be doing close readings of foundational and controversial texts (including written, performed, and mediated texts) in order to determine how our varied and diverse perspectives inform, expand, and challenge the course materials.

**Objectives:**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Articulate the ways in which our bodies and our embodied performances of identities intersect with, reinforce, and resist cultural ideologies
- Articulate how power works to influence our bodies and our embodied performances of identities
- Analyze identities (race, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, and class) using relevant theories (feminist, queer, performance, critical race, post-colonial)
- Analyze identities through the lens of intersectional reflexivity
- Critically evaluate texts and discourses (scholarly texts, current events, popular culture, performances, etc.) through discussion and in writing in order to question, defend, extend, and transform existing knowledge and perceptions,

<b>GRADING AND EVALUATION</b>
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Your grade will be based on the following:

ASSIGNMENT	WEIGHT
<b>Journal</b>	<b>35%</b>
- Part 1: Questions and Musings	15%
- Part 2: Reactions and Reflections	25%
<b>Application and Analysis Essay</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Discussion and Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Culture Jamming Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
- Proposal	5%
- Jam (Documentation and Reflection)	15%
- Presentation	10%

Grading Scale: A = 90-100, B = 80 – 89, C = 70 – 79, etc.

Evaluation for graduate students will be appropriate to graduate level education.

<b>COURSE POLICIES</b>
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**Academic Integrity:** The Student Code of Conduct states that students should meet the following standard: “Eastern students observe the highest principles of academic integrity and support a campus environment conducive to scholarship.” The Code defines *plagiarism* as: “the use, without adequate attribution, of another person’s words or thoughts as if they were one’s own.” As graduate students, you are considered scholars and members of the academy. You are expected to follow the principles of academic integrity as well as the ethical credo of the National Communication Association: <http://www.natcom.org/ethicalstatements/>. Any case of academic dishonesty will result in sanctions ranging from failing the assignment to failing the class. All cases will be forwarded to the Office of Student Standards.

**Statement Regarding Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.

**Class attendance:** Because this class is discussion-driven (a seminar) your engagement is necessary. If you have an emergency, please contact me. Lack of attendance will be reflected in your final grade.

**Class structure:** We will have breaks in class. Since this class is scheduled during dinner time, you may feel free to bring food/snacks as long as their presence/consumption doesn't disturb others in the class.

**Safe Learning Environment:** This class is a safe space for communication, learning, and the sharing of ideas. Each of us will need to be conscious of our role in providing a place where every class member, given all our differences, will feel safe and function as part of our learning community. Inclusive language is important to maintaining a safe class environment—no language will be tolerated that demeans, belittles, or marginalizes someone because of her or his gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, religion, etc. Such language will not be accepted in your classroom communication, written work, or your oral presentations. If you disrupt the safety of our learning community you may be asked to leave.

**Guidelines for typed assignments:** Standard collegiate level criteria for writing assignments will be followed in this class. Typed assignments must adhere to the following criteria: (you may want to use this as a checklist to ensure you don't lose points):

12 point font size

1" margins all around

Times New Roman font everywhere (including headers and page numbers)

double-spaced (everywhere – no extra spaces between headers or paragraphs)

Additionally, for hard copy typed assignments:

single-sided prints

black ink

white paper

NOTE: Most computers do not default to 1" margins so you will have to manually change them, you may also have to manually change font or font size, so always to make sure to double-check your formatting.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading:** Some of the reading will be difficult. We will discuss strategies for effective critical reading in class, and I am always available to meet with you to provide any clarification or guidance that I can. I expect that you will read all of the assigned materials and come to class ready to discuss the readings. If you are not prepared and have not read, you will be holding back the class's progress since you will not be able to contribute to the discussion. Not reading will also diminish your ability to successfully complete the journal assignments, which account for 35% your grade.

**Journals (35% of grade):** Everyone must keep a typed journal and write **three** questions or probes/responses from the readings to be discussed that day in class. You will also include responses to readings and class discussions in the journal. The objective is to put into dialogue

the discoveries and insights from the readings, the discussions, and your lived experience. A sample will be provided in class as guidance and you receive feedback on each journal entry.

### ***Journal Part 1 – “Questions and Musings”***

Rationale: Your journal can be a space where you work through issues relating to specific projects or communities you are working on, may work on, and/or are invested in. Ideally, the questions you pose and reflect on will help you address some of the issues you face within or questions you have about those projects/communities. This may be a good place to work through ideas that might relate to your thesis, another project, a personal interest, a social cause you are connected to, etc.

#### **How to do it:**

- Include at least three questions/probes/prompts from the readings.
  - Not three things for each reading...three things overall for the readings for that week.
- Make specific reference to a reading and provide context for your question.
- You may offer preliminary answers (musings/ruminations) on your questions as well bringing in relevant experience and personal narrative.

### ***Journal Part 2 – “Reactions and Reflections”***

Rationale: In the course we are engaging closely with ideas related to bodies, performances, and identities. And, we embody all of those things every day! Some course content will be easier for you to identify with (personally, intellectually, politically) than other content, but injecting some self-reflexivity into that gap can lead to great moments of challenge, growth, and transformation. After our class discussions, you will react and reflect in an ethical and self-reflexive way to the readings, discussion, activities, etc. In some cases you may build on the questions you posed in your journal for part 1, while in other cases you may go in a completely different direction.

#### **How to do it:**

- There will be a lot of variation in this assignment, which is okay.
- Use this as a place to reflect on your emotions, your embodied reactions, and write from your voice, your body, your mind, and your positionality.

#### **Formatting and submission:**

- Follow the guidelines for typed assignments listed earlier in the syllabus.
- Clearly label each entry with your name, whether it’s Journal Part 1 or Part 2, the date, and the topic of class that day.
- You do not need to include a title page.
- You do not need to include in-text or end references (aside from author names) unless you are citing something outside of our class materials.
- Submit each entry to the correct d2l dropbox by the due date.

**Classroom Discussion and Participation (20% of grade):** We should engage in class discussion and provide insights, grounded in the readings, and based on our relevant experiences. Contributions will be most meaningful when they are informed by the course readings. Well-

prepared students who offer insights grounded in the readings, contribute to class discussion by describing salient experiences/personal narratives, offering oral references to relevant materials, and respecting others.

The readings and discussions in this class often lead to personal exploration and reflection. The class often leads us to share personal experiences, feelings, and thoughts about our own and others' life experiences. It is important to respect the contributions made by class members. Our comments are "for our ears only" in the sense that we understand that disclosures can lead to vulnerability and should be viewed and handled as "private" information. We should try to respect and understand one another and demonstrate appropriate empathy.

I will take notes on your participation during and at the conclusion of class. If you are absent, you will be unable to earn your participation points for the day. At the conclusion of the semester, these notes will be reviewed to assess an overall participation grade. You will be able to see a running grade on d2l of your participation (if the grade was going to be determined at that moment) and this grade will be updated every two weeks. The following rubric will give you an idea of how participation will be represented as a holistic grade:

A: These students are always prepared. They independently take risks, assert an opinion and support it, and respond respectfully to others. Through participation and inquiry, these students consistently demonstrate a genuine desire to learn and to share ideas with the class. Furthermore, through their discussion, it is obvious that they have read the assigned materials. They take an active role in their own learning.

B: These students are generally prepared. Although they may take fewer risks, they still assert opinions, support them, and respond respectfully to others. Through less frequent participation and inquiry, these students generally demonstrate a genuine desire to learn and to share ideas with the class. Although their participation may be less, it is still obvious that they have read the assigned materials. They take an active role in their own learning.

C: These students generally participate infrequently and may not be prepared to discuss the assigned materials with detail or substance. They hesitate to share ideas and to take risks, and at times may be disengaged from the discussion. These students may not always respect the opinions of others. They do not regularly take an active role in their own learning.

D: These students speak rarely and are often either unprepared or shallow in their responses. They do not ask questions and are unwilling to share ideas with the class. These students display poor discussion skills, and they may be intolerant of the opinions of others. They infrequently take an active role in their own learning.

F: These students do not ask questions or share ideas with the class. They may even try to interrupt the flow of the discussion. These students may also display poor discussion skills, and/or be intolerant of the opinions of others. They do not take an active role in their own learning and may try to disrupt the learning of others.

**Application and Analysis Essay (15% of grade):** You will write a 10 page essay analyzing the film *Paris is Burning* that brings together most of the course content and concepts. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

**Culture Jamming Project (30% of grade):** Culture jamming is a form of public activism or “guerrilla communication” that resists cultural hegemony. Your assignment is to take what we’ve learned about the body/performance/identity and make some aspect of it, which is often taken for granted, more visible. By creatively intervening in dominant ideologies associated with culture and identity we can highlight the importance of cultural criticism and activism. Students will engage in culture jamming, document it, reflect on the experience in a paper, present their project to the class, and participate in a public showcase of your culture jamming work. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

<b>COURSE CALENDAR</b>
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*Subject to revision as necessary*

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>	<b>Assignments:</b>
Week 1 01/12	<b><i>Introduction to Course</i></b>	
Week 2 01/19	<b><i>Foundational Theory and Concepts</i></b> - Positionality, Feminism, and Black Feminist Thought	Read: Alcoff – The Problem of Speaking for Others Read: hooks – Feminism is for Everybody Read: Hill Collins – Black Feminist Thought <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 01/18</b>
Week 3 01/26	<b><i>Foundational Theory and Concepts</i></b> - Performance Studies and Queer Theory	Read: Madison and Hamera – Performance Studies at the Intersections Read: Conquergood – Re-thinking Ethnography Read: Slagle – In Defense of Queer Nation Read: Yep – Other Bodies <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 01/25</b>
Week 4 02/02	<b><i>Foundational Theory and Concepts</i></b> - Intersectionality, Identity, and Reflexivity	Read: Yep – My Three Cultures Read: Calafell – Intersectionality in the I and the We Read: McIntosh and Hobson – Reflexive Engagement Read: Jones – Putting Privilege Into Practice <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 02/01</b> <b>Due: Journal Part 2 (for 1/19 and 1/26) by 11:59 pm on 02/01</b>
Week 5 02/09	<b><i>Foundational Theory and Concepts</i></b> - The Body and Privilege	Read: Terry and Urla – Deviant Bodies Read: Harold and DeLuca – Behold the Corpse Read: Santoro – Lather, Rinse, Repeat Read: Carbado – Privilege <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 02/08</b>
Week 6 02/16	<b><i>Race Ethnicity</i></b>	Read: hooks – Black Looks (Chapter 2 – Eating the Other) Read: Moreman and McIntosh – Brown Scriptings Read: Calafell – Latina/o Communication Studies (Chapter 5 – To Ricky With Love) <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 02/15</b> <b>Due: Journal Part 2 (for 2/2 and 2/9) by 11:59 pm on 02/15</b>
Week 7 02/23	<b><i>Masculinities</i></b>	Read: hooks – We Real Cool (Preface – About Black Men) Read: hooks – We Real Cool (Chapter 1 – Plantation Patriarchy) Read: Eguchi – Straight Acting Read: O’Sullivan – Playing Redneck <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 02/22</b>
Week 8 03/02	<b><i>Sexualities</i></b>	Read: Johnson: Snap! Culture Read: Jones – Queering the Body Politic: Intersectional Reflexivity in the Body Narratives of Queer Men Read: Jones – Divided Loyalties <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 03/01</b>
Week 9 03/09	<b><i>Screen and Analyze Paris is Burning</i></b>	Read: hooks – Black Looks (Chapter 9 – Is Paris Burning?) Watch in Class: Paris is Burning <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 03/08</b> <b>Due: Journal Part 2 (for 2/16, 2/23, &amp; 3/2) by 11:59 pm on 03/08</b>
Week 10 03/16	<b><i>Spring Break</i></b>	
Week 11 03/23	<b><i>National/Post-colonial Identities</i></b>	Read: Lennes – Borderland Masculinity Read: TBA <b>Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 03/22</b> <b>Due: Analysis and Application Essay by 11:59 pm on 03/26</b>
Week 12	<b><i>(Dis)Ability</i></b>	Read: Jack – Autistic Concept of Sex/Gender

03/30		Read: TBA Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 03/29
Week 13 04/06	<i>The Body, Medicine, and Illness</i>	Read: Fox – Skinny Bones Read: Hughes – Harry Potter, Metaphor, and HIV Read: Myers – The Placebo as Performance Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 04/05 Due: Journal Part 2 (for 3/23 and 3/30) by 11:59 pm on 04/05
04/13	<i>Social Justice, Policy, Politics, and Activism</i>	Read: Swartz – Social Justice (Chapter 1 – Reflections of a Social Justice Scholar) Pezzullo – Resisting Breast Cancer Awareness Month Read: Murray – Words that Wound Read: Cohen – Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens Read: Johnson: What Can We Do? Due: Journal Part 1 by 11:59 pm on 04/12
Week 14 04/20	<i>TBD</i>	
Week 15 04/27	<i>Presentations and Course Wrap Up</i>	
Final Exam Period	<i>Culture Jamming Showcase</i>	