

REIFICATION AND REVELATION: UNPACKING THE DEMONS OF DIFFERENCE

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Abstract: Nations and Nationalities, a large lecture course supplemented by small recitation sections, creates a learning environment designed to encourage students to “unpack” the cognitive bases or frames that stand in front of the psychic and emotional attachments leading to political hatred and cultural cleavages culminating in violence and genocidal episodes. Our methodology centers around the concept of reification as we seek to explain how and in what manner individuals reify their personally situated freedom in ways that deny the freedoms and humanity of others. Students learn how to grapple with the questions of otherness in ways that reveal their own tendencies to reify otherness and difference. In addition, they learn to link reification to such disparate phenomena as prejudice, racism, sexism, and nativism, not only within American society, but also across the regions of the world wherever “weak states” are said to exist.

Introduction

Nations and Nationalities: Cultural Constructions of Collective Identity is a course that explores linkages between national identities and categories of difference in both American and comparative contexts, particularly with respect to American sub-national categories of difference: race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and sexual orientation. Our 250 students meet twice a week in a large lecture and once every week with Graduate Teaching Assistants in small recitation sections. Focused on cultural constructions of collective identity, we examine classroom and instructional approaches to diversity within pedagogical contexts framed by the recognition that categories of difference tend to be determined by majoritarian-driven reifications. These reifications culturally subordinate minority groups in a wide variety of ways but with similar effects and consequences within American society as well as within national cultures rent by intercommunal and ethnic conflicts, sometimes referred to as “weak states.”

Focus Points of Reification, Course Organization and Structure

Teaching and learning oriented to diversity must focus on classroom and course explorations of the many forms that such subordination assumes. To accomplish this, we examine the implications of social phenomena configured around the follow examples that illustrate the social dynamics of collective or comparative group reification:

- ✚ the racialization of race, the genderization of difference, and the demonization of sexual orientation into reductionist binary categories such as “Black and White,” “Male and Female,” “Gay and Straight,” and, ultimately, “Us and Them;”
- ✚ patterns of reified stereotyping and the psychic or emotional dimensions reflected in the “logics of illogic” intrinsic to White “supremecism” and neo-Fascist hate;
- ✚ patterns of reified “ethnic lumping” that reduce collective categories, irrespective of cultural complexities, in a wide variety of minority group situations; this occurs with

respect to numerous cultural communities within larger minority categories that readily become lumped into “Africans,” “Arabs,” “Asians,” “Hispanics,” “Muslims,” etc;

- ✚ processes of ethnic and racial displacement and removal that materialize geographically leading to the “spatialization of otherness;” examples derive from historical episodes as well as from the contemporary world such as:
 - the ghettoization of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States and France with respect to North African populations;
 - the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II;
 - the relocation of Native-Americans to reservations and forced forms of cultural acculturation and imposed assimilation;
 - the colonialist and neo-colonialist establishment of "non-historic" states and boundaries, especially in Africa;
 - the concentration and death camps of the Holocaust;
 - the internal displacement of minorities along lines of sectarian and racial lines;
- ✚ ethnicized forms of conflicts that assail so-called weak states in order to illustrate how reification disrupts the process of nation-building by eroding the legitimacy of centralizing institutions;
- ✚ nativist driven forms of intercommunal conflict leading to systematic dehumanization, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, especially in terms of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Darfur.

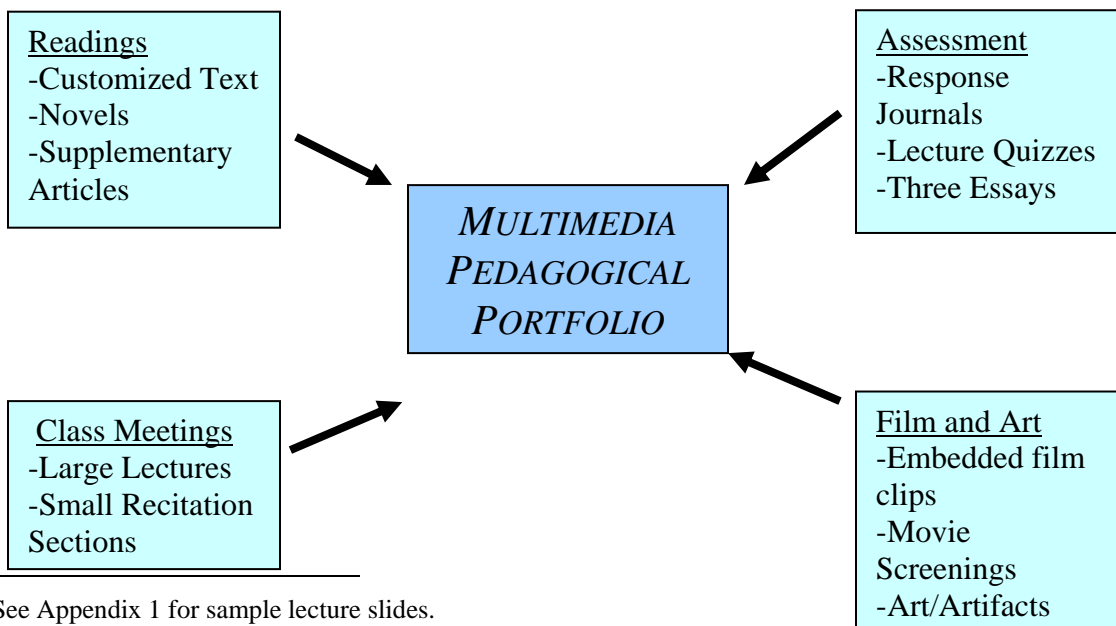
Such examples serve as classroom props to explore the nature of reification of difference. Students reflect on why and how persons of different color, different ethnicity, different religion, or divergent sexuality are so often demonized as a consequence of the psychologies of hate that revolve around the cultural *"thing-ification"* of reified difference. By establishing reification as a form of explanatory theory, we teach that emotional contempt for otherness originates in disgust toward human physicality grounded in what Ernest Becker called the "denial of death" that also rejects the "situatedness of human freedom." Students thus explore their own patterns of prejudice and stereotypes within the terms of these intellectual frames and concepts defined by the attachments of love and hate.

The course contextualizes the American experience within a comparative framework that includes a range of other cultures and societies. We have done this in order to counter the typical sets of pedagogical presumptions that prevail with respect to American exceptionalism. Courses dealing with issues of diversity, difference, and demagoguery tend to adopt perspectives that

focus either on US society with its cultural artifacts of prejudice and subordination or on sub-national tensions within other societies on a comparative basis. Our pedagogical approach in this course counters this “either/or” by placing the American experience of reification and collective construction of cultural identity alongside constructions of difference that prevail within many other cultures or societies. As a consequence, this course requires students to reflect, not only on the American experience, but also to do so on a comparative basis by reflecting on the experiences of others in numerous cultures on a spectrum of comparative analysis and understanding.

Our course revolves around bi-weekly lectures that dramatize course themes by combining PowerPoint Presentations with embedded media clips and theories and concepts with artifacts and examples.¹ Using media from art to popular film, we demonstrate the life and vitality of our discipline and encourage our students to apply the ideas they take from the lectures to the things that they see in the contemporary world.

Students enrolled in Nations and Nationalities are meant to experience the course in ways that combine "learning beyond the classroom" with traditional instructional environments. These learning experiences are designed never to be totally predictable nor routine but aim to be challenging, stimulating and embracing. We have developed a multimedia pedagogical portfolio for this purpose to encourage students to understand that there are many ways to learn and that these can be and so often are exciting to the imagination as well as to the spirit. Our multimedia portfolio seeks to encourage students in the ways of the imaginative life so that they are able to grasp the meaning and significance of intellectual curiosity. We demonstrate that learning methods are rich once embedded in life's experiences that bring social realities near just as we stand apart from them in order to analyze them. There are many points to the multimedia experiences designed according to the portfolio. These include lectures, discussion sections, readings of novels, entire films, digitized film clips embedded in lectures, PowerPoint Presentations, customized texts linked to readings and discussions, carefully calibrated essay exercises, etc. But the thrust is to demonstrate that learning is its own reward and that imagination has its own callings and demands that are worthy for themselves.



¹ See Appendix 1 for sample lecture slides.

Teaching Philosophy and Pedagogy

Our pedagogical methods center around a systematic approach designed to provide students with a theoretical framework and language that empowers them to discuss culturally and politically sensitive topics, including stereotyping, racism, hate, sexism, and nativistic forms of tribal extremism and conflict, particularly those culminating in genocide. By applying reification as an analytical tool to a broad range of historical and contemporary examples, students come to understand their own reifications of otherness and difference and thus gain the imaginative capacities to understand the processes of reification that ultimately led the Jews to the gates of Auschwitz and the Tutsis to the mass graves of Rwanda. In this sense, we do not teach diversity for the sake of diversity. Instead, we contextualize diversity within broader comparative questions of difference, othering, discrimination, and hate. This allows our students to approach emotionally charged subjects with necessary critical distance but without unnecessary sterility.

Moreover, throughout the course of *Nations and Nationalities*, we “unpack” cultural concepts in ways that avoid the dual Cartesian traps of “*objectivity without elucidation*” (ethnocentrism) and “*subjectivity without illumination*” (cultural relativism). Education cast in these modes of Cartesianism produce deadly results. The victims are our students.

Objectivity without elucidation occurs whenever teachers proceed on the assumption that the “realities” students must learn comprise a realm separate from student consciousness. This pedagogical assumption equates thinking and learning with rote memorization in the name of “objectivity.” Such a regimen requires students to eliminate their imaginative capacities in favor of objective empiricism devoid of personal understanding. At these junctures, learning becomes alienated from the self. Students become bereft of the cognitive principles that guide them. They may learn putative “answers” but in the absence of genuine questions. Whenever learning requires memorization the justification must be that it serves as a basis for further inquiry and analysis and not merely a falleness into facticity.

Such objectivity without illumination is the beginning of student alienation. Students associate learning with getting the answers “right.” And the cost of getting the answer wrong is student humiliation that shrinks their capacity for imaginative initiative. Pedagogy should emphasize problem solving; it should reveal how and why certain units of analysis provide avenues for deeper, richer or more probing questions. Students thus learn that objectivity with elucidation comes not from memorizing the “right” answers but from the critical evaluation of right analytical questions.

The Cartesian counterpart to objectivity without illumination is *subjectivity without elucidation* or a falleness into opinionation. Subjectivity becomes an end in itself. Students learn only by “expressing themselves.” Such an approach argues in relativist fashion that all forms of knowing fall into one of two categories: facts or opinions. Relativist pedagogies assume that student opinions are equally valid. Education merely encourages them to back up their opinions with “facts” rather than to dethrone facts, deconstruct opinions or argue cogently on the basis of falsifiable logics. This Cartesian trap is at the heart of the “de-centered classroom” where the pedagogical commitment to student participation and engagement is carried to far in ways that devolve into the “blind leading the blind.”

Cartesian forms of relativism represent poor learning, poor teaching, and poor lecture preparation. Facts do not speak for themselves and opinions do not persuade. To prefer chocolate rather than vanilla ice cream is an opinion hardly amenable to alteration on the basis of facts, let alone analysis. Subjectivity is important in learning, but only insofar as it guides a student's sense of relevance. The task of teachers is to demonstrate to students how to mediate between the extreme forms of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in order to make each the intellectual servant of the other.

Objectivity *with* elucidation permits students to envision "reality" in more critical ways; subjectivity *with* illumination invites students to study in deeper ways. Together, this allows them to become reflective, interpretive, even, hermeneutic, in their approaches to ideas and thus "centered" but not ideological in the ways they think and reason.

The key to bridging the pedagogical gaps stemming from Cartesian dualism is to teach in ways that encourage students to take responsibility for their own understandings. The extent to which any teacher avoids Cartesian forms of dualistic learning is the extent to which students become their own teachers.

Our lectures, class discussions, and reading materials teach students to contextualize such unfamiliar concepts as kinship, arranged marriage, circumcision, polyandry, and nativism within cultural and historical frameworks; in this, we do not allow them to "give in" to the easy answers provided by ethnocentrism but neither do we allow them the freedom to "hide behind" culturally relativist opinionation.

The Fine Lines of Analytical Perspectives

Throughout the course of *Nations and Nationalities* we attempt to balance a number of pedagogical and epistemological commitments; in this we walk a fine line between several competing totalities. *Nations and Nationalities* aims to give students the analytical tools necessary to "unpack" the psychic and emotional attachments leading to the political hatreds and cultural cleavages that culminate in violence and genocide. But a course dedicated in its totality to the detachments and dimensions of political hate would, in the end, misrepresent the human condition we work so hard to illuminate. We thus shine the light of analytical clarity upon incidents, episodes, and examples of the emancipatory power of political hope, transcendence, and, of course, love. From gay-rights martyr Matthew Shepherd to Kenyan nationality proponents we encourage students to celebrate the willingness to extend equal respect to all identities regardless of markers of difference. Political acceptance encompasses civic individuality, nationality, and materiality in the celebration of difference; it is the acknowledgement that our differences make us stronger in our human commonality. Acceptance is openness to the possibilities of human freedom and emancipation; it is humility and validation in the face of the situatedness of all human freedom. Just as anxiety, disgust, reification, desire, and, ultimately, hate ground our understanding of closure to the possibilities of our own freedom, acceptance and compassion ground our understanding of our own possibilities in a universe of limitations and our willingness to accept the pain of others as the measure of our own capacity for fullness and meaning. Moreover, just as hate of others begins with contempt for oneself,

compassion for others begins with the acceptance of oneself in our humanity among fellow and sister human beings.

Literature Review

We teach through a variety of interdisciplinary resources that inform our lecture preparation, teaching, and evaluation. We have found that we teach most effectively when we assign a wide range of reading assignments from scholarly resources, contemporary fiction, and daily news sources.

We assign readings in a customized text from a wide array of authors including Martha Nussbaum, Jared Diamond, Mahmood Mamdani, and Samantha Power. Although these readings, which tend to be abstract in character, parallel lecture discussions we do not “teach to the assigned text.” Instead, we use meticulously selected readings to provide examples that elaborate lecture themes and concepts and to link student learning to vast and diverse bodies of scholarly literature and research. We introduce our students to ideas and resources that many consider to be controversial but we ground that exposure in an analytical framework that allows students to respond to ideas in similarly analytical ways that largely preclude emotional fervor.

In addition to the customized text, we assign novels, including Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, Ruth Minsky Sender’s The Cage, and Eli Wiesel’s Night, as well as poignantly graphic examinations, such as Brooks Brown and Rob Merritt’s No Easy Answers: The Truth Behind Death at Columbine and Philip Gourevitch’s We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families, to demonstrate that reification exists across cultures, time, and global regions. These novels bring course concepts “to life” and encourage students to draw linkages among the lecture topics, the readings in the customized text, and their personal experiences.² In doing so we give students the chance to examine events with which they are intellectually familiar, including the Holocaust, emotionally familiar, including school violence and the incident at Columbine, and relatively unfamiliar, including the Rwandan genocide.

Finally, we incorporate, on a daily basis, articles from newspapers and magazines that illustrate the “living” nature of our course to our students. Upon leaving *Nations and Nationalities*, students are able to use the theory of reification to explain events, historical, contemporary, and even fictional, that are otherwise unexplainable. Students frequently report that they encounter reification while reading the newspaper, watching television, or spending time with friends thus indicating that *Nations* represents more than an epistemological enterprise—it represents an ontological experience that goes to the heart of the human condition and that allows students to consolidate their understanding on resources within the context of a course that does not develop “top down” form a singular text but rather “bottom-up” from a wide array of analytical and literary assignments.³

² See Appendix 2 for excerpts from Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye that demonstrate course themes and theories.

³ See Appendix 3 for the list of course reading assignments from the customized text, the novels, and supplementary articles.

Assignments and Assessment

Because neither diversity nor culture nor reification can be evaluated in terms of objective examinations and exercises and because we believe that students cannot begin to learn until they begin to write, *Nations and Nationalities* requires that students submit written exercises continually throughout the course of the semester. Weekly journals encourage students to establish linkages between reading materials and lecture presentations and allow them to make connections between course materials and their personal experiences; these journals provide the foundation for recitation discussions, debates, and exercises. In addition, three essay assignments, completed periodically during semester, challenge students to apply analytical themes and concepts to examples and to demonstrate their grasp of the course's theoretical progression; these essays "move" students through the course but simultaneously encourage them to "go back" as they "go forward."

The first essay focuses on *formulation without facticity*. Students are given a common essay assignment and are required to respond using customized text readings, articles, and course lectures. Although the essay assignment is very precise and the requirements are very specific, this assignment encourages students, who are generally freshmen in their first semester courses, to acclimate themselves to our evaluatory expectations and to learn to link concepts to examples in ways that demonstrate analytical clarity rather than rote memorization.⁴

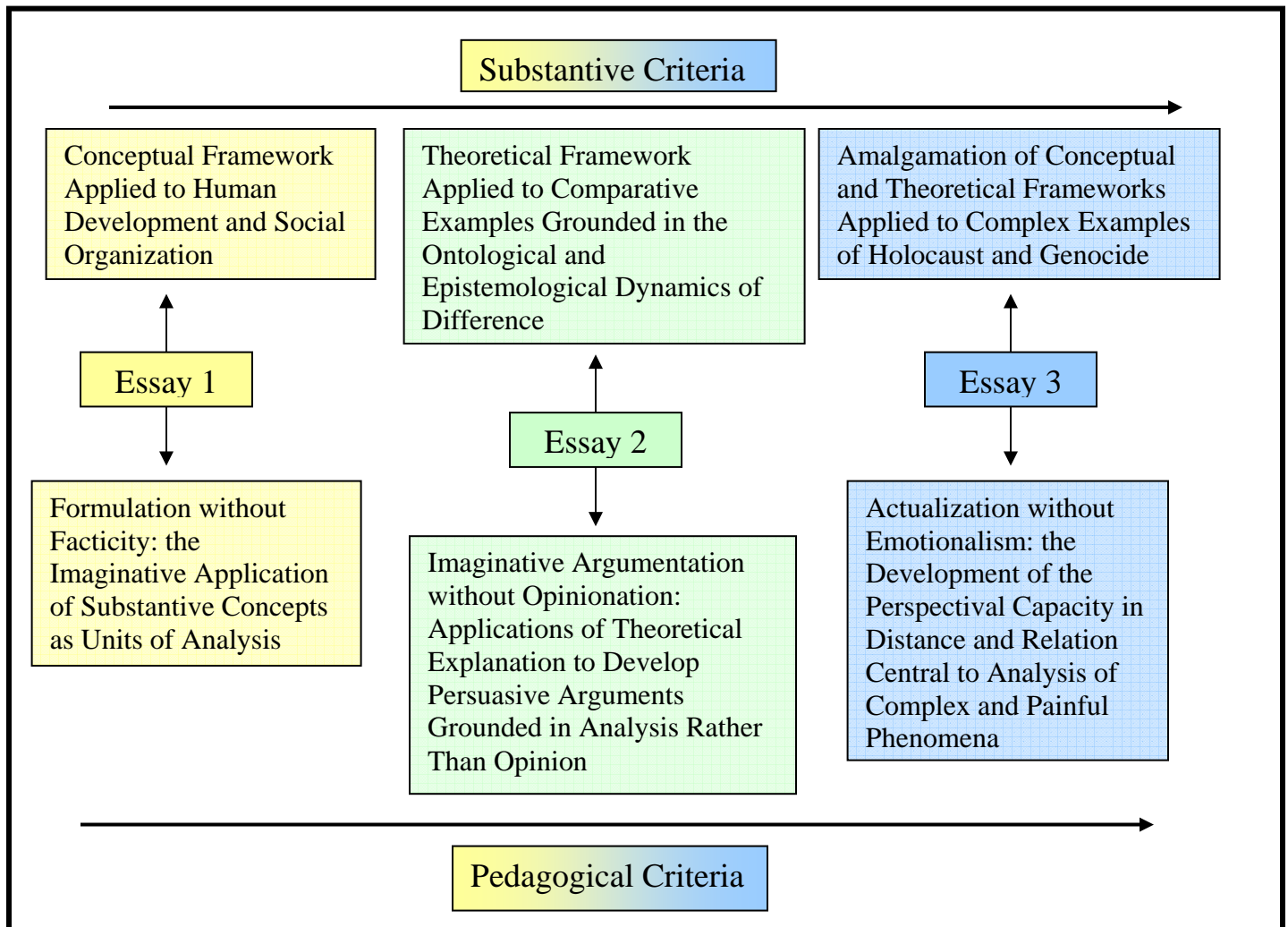
The second essay requires *imaginative argumentation without opinionation*. Students are first required to explain the theory of reification in ways reminiscent of the first essay assignment. However, they are then asked to *apply* that theory to examples from the readings, from their personal experiences, or from real-world examples. This allows students to showcase their imaginative capacities by making an argument grounded in examples that uniquely, personally, and creatively define their essays. Our best essays demonstrate a deep understanding of reification as a theoretical framework alongside carefully chosen and evaluated examples. However, many students, who frequently complain that the first essay assignment squelches their creative energies, struggle with this form of creative freedom in that they tend toward shallow opinionation rather than profound analysis.⁵

The final essay asks that students demonstrate that they understand the course in its totality by applying concepts of honor, shame, imperialism, and resource scarcity to reification in the Rwandan genocide as well as modernism, congruence, and the spatialization of otherness to reification in the Holocaust; this essay requires *actualization without emotionalism*. Because this essay addresses unprecedented levels of systematic evil grounded in collective anxiety, reification, and projection that goes beyond any previous spatialization of Otherness in the body or the world, students are often torn between two analytical postures. One is to fall into a paroxysm of emotional despair that inhibits historical or analytical understanding. The other is to distance themselves from the full depth of genocidal horror in ways that reduce them to a series of sterile explanations. In this final essay we ask students to walk the narrow ridge

⁴ See Appendix 4 for the first essay assignment.

⁵ See Appendix 5 for the second essay assignment.

between these analytical perspectives in order to explain and to understand evil in the name of “never again.”⁶



The Indispensable Role of Graduate Teaching Assistants

Essays are assessed by the Graduate Teaching Assistants who teach students’ weekly recitation sections. Assessments are designed to help develop students’ analytical and conceptual abilities to apply higher orders of theoretical, explanatory, and imaginative understandings to subjective experiences, existential realities, and historical and political events. Our evaluations measure student capacity to express ideas, linkages, and theoretical analyses in their written work rather than merely to prepare for objective examinations. Moreover, we work to guarantee that evaluations assess students equally across discussion sections. Graduate Teaching Assistants, who meet in weekly meetings with the professor, are an invaluable resource, particularly when teaching large lecture courses. To guarantee uniform teaching and evaluation across recitation

⁶ See Appendix 6 for the third essay assignment.

sections, however, coordinating structures must allow Teaching Assistants to develop their own pedagogical styles within the framework of a single analytical commitment to teaching excellence and student edification.

Because they constitute the future professoriate, Graduate Teaching Assistants must be free to develop their own lecture styles, classroom management techniques, and teaching philosophies; the opportunity to do so is perhaps the most valuable gift that a mentoring instructor can give the Teaching Assistants under his or her guidance. However, because they act as surrogates of the instructor of record, Teaching Assistants must stand for professionalism and commit themselves to overall course objectives. This balance requires that instructors and teaching assistants work together to establish procedures and policies designed to address student concerns and situations in ways that respect individual student needs as well as achieve consistency across the course as a whole.

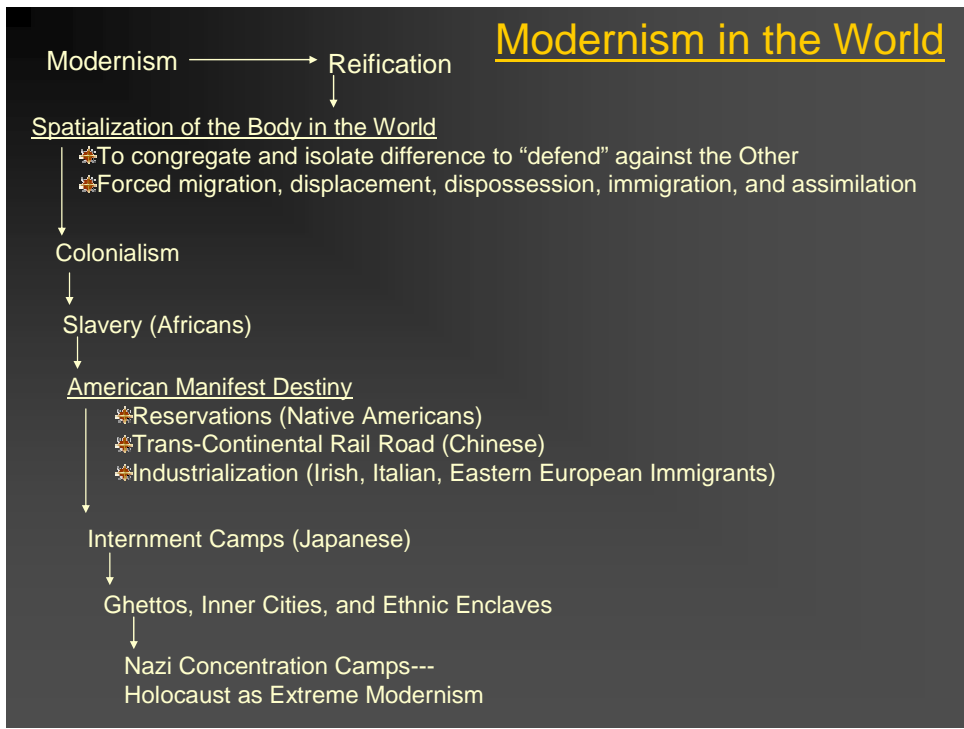
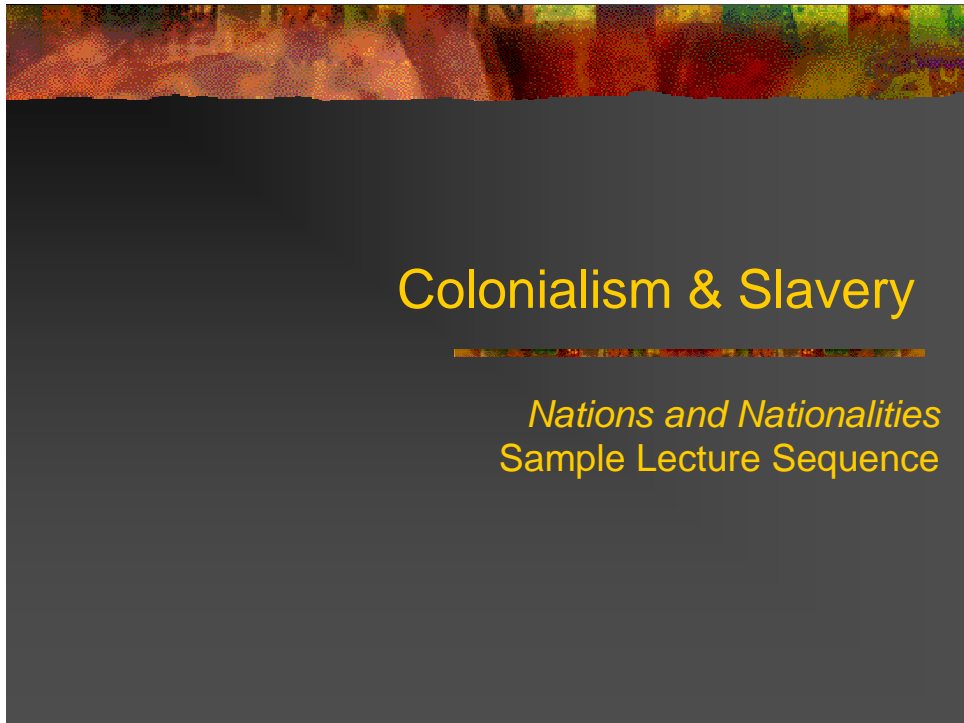
Graduate Teaching Assistants have the most immediate, personal, and frequent contact with students and can therefore be their best advocates. For the same reasons, however, students often try to set their Teaching Assistants against course structures and procedures. The best way to avoid such conflicts of interest is to form a “united front” among Teaching Assistants and the Professor. We work to promote that “unified front” through a variety of mechanisms: first, Teaching Assistants meet with the Professor in weekly meetings to discuss course concepts and linkages, student needs, and classroom procedures; second, Teaching Assistants teach from a Graduate Teaching Handbook that provides grading procedures, classroom policies, and lesson plans for each week’s recitation section; third, Teaching Assistants evaluate essays in terms of a rubric designed to promote equity across sections; fourth, the Professor and the Teaching Assistants meet to discuss essay grades, grade distributions, and special assessment needs before essays are returned to students. These coordinating mechanisms structure the relationships between the Professor, the Teaching Assistants, and the students in ways advantageous to each participant in the course.⁷

Although the teaching staff is bound by classroom procedures and structures and although we approach grading and assessment with commitments to consistency and professionalism, we refuse to treat students as mere numbers in a spreadsheet. We assure students that we reward improvement throughout the course of the semester and we take the time at the end of each semester to discuss every student’s course performance. Graduate Teaching Assistants report on each student’s mastery of assigned materials, improvement, extenuating circumstances, and enthusiasm for the course concepts and we together assign the most appropriate final grade. Our commitment to fair and accurate assessment for every student remains the heart of our pedagogy; just as our course teaches that people are not the sums of their racial, national, sexual, or material parts our pedagogy teaches that students are not the sum of their individual grades.

Conclusion:

⁷ See Appendix 7 for a sample GTA Lesson Plan. Lesson plans provide a brief outline of the course objectives and key terms. GTAs individually expand on these common lesson plans to incorporate readings and lecture materials in ways that best reflect their teaching styles and their recitation structures.

Pedagogical commitments to diversity and difference need to be approached using an analytical framework that encourages students to question their cultural assumptions, to contextualize current events within broader historical, comparative and theoretical perspectives, and to challenge easy objective answers as well as empty subjective opinions. However, while our substantive pedagogy builds throughout the course of the semester from the conceptual to the theoretical to their applications, we remain committed to developing the personal character of our students in ways that allow them to sense a solidarity with those oppressed, marginalized, and victimized by hatred. We seek to affirm the validity of caring and compassion as pedagogical values relevant to teaching and learning in Political Science in an era of turbulent change in which the parameters of social suffering seem to become extended on almost a daily basis.



Graphic organizers teach students to “move backward” as they “move forward” by adding review material to the beginning of new lectures

The Origins of Universalized Modernism

- From a cultural perspective, the origins of modernism as it becomes universalized combines
 - The instrumental logics of rationalism grounded in individualism
 - The dynamics of industrialism grounded in specialization
 - The organization of administrative bureaucracies grounded in divisions of labor and surplus
 - With the rise of centralized sovereign nation-states
 - Their exploration of colonized territories
 - Their domination of kinship societies
 - Their exploitation of global material and human resources
 - Grounded in racialized forms of slavery, servitude, and bondage
- Surplus societies thus wage war against scarcity societies
 - In ways that universalize and naturalize the cultural modalities of modernism
 - And subordinate and de-legitimate the cultural modalities of primordialism

Because lecture slides include large blocks of material and text, students are able to download them from the course website. This encourages students to listen to the lectures without copying down the slides.

Slavery as the Disembodied Body in the World

- Slavery stands as the first and prototypical episode of the spatialization of the body in the world
 - The body becomes a disembodied and dehumanized object without past or future
- The body of the slave becomes severed from the continuity of ancestral linkage
 - The chain of belonging that links generation to generation in segmented lineage now becomes the chains of bondage and chattel labor
- European cultural constructions of African identity make slavery possible
 - The racialization of race led to the naturalization of the dehumanized African and of the de-historicized primordial community

The Dynamics of Modernism: European Expansion & Exploration

- The Age of Exploration begins in the early 1500's
- Exploration was closely linked to the dynamics of colonialism
 - The goals were
 - Possession
 - Accumulation
 - Exploitation of resources in ways that employed force

The Dynamics of Colonialism: 'Slavery and Subordination

- Early colonial exchange was grounded in trade based on one-way passages
 - Gold and silver from the Americas
 - Slaves from Africa first into Spain and Portugal
 - Spices from areas now identified as Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia
 - Tea and Opium from China
- These movements brought surplus cultures disciplined by guilt into contact with scarcity cultures disciplined by shame in ways that systematically subordinated shame discipline

Bittersweet Linkages Between Slavery and Sugar

- Colonialism in the new world promoted the shift to the production of sugar in slave plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil
 - This manifestation of modernism promoted the bittersweet linkages between slavery and sugar
 - Through the emergence of the "Atlantic Triangle":
 - The export of European manufactured commodities (especially guns) to Africa
 - The forced migration of African slaves to the Americas
 - To satisfy labor demand through the region
 - The importation of agricultural commodities (particularly sugar) and raw materials to Europe
 - To satisfy consumer demands and fuel early industrialization

Sugar Roots Are Slave Routes



The Trade Triangle:

- Raw Materials to Europe
- Guns to Africa
- Slaves to the Americas

Photographs, maps, and other visual aids give students different ways of "seeing" course materials

The Mission

- The war against primordial kinship communities began in the new world
 - With the dehumanization of native bodies
 - and the delegitimation of kinship discipline
 - In ways that justified the destruction of segmented lineage order
 - In the name of European civilization and modernism



4:02

Imbedded video clips give students examples of course themes from popular movies, documentaries, and other sources

Colonialism: From Primordial Communities to Surplus & Dehumanized Instrumentalism

- Colonialism replaced traditional forms of economic production with specialization, division of labor, and industrial rationalism
 - From primordial forms of foraging, horticulture, small-scale peasant farming
 - To the rise of plantations
 - From handicraft
 - To manufacture
 - From primordial sustainability
 - To mercantile cash-cropping
 - From kinship forms of social division of labor based on ascription
 - To instrumental and rationalist forms of division of labor based on dehumanized native and slave labor

Quotations from Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye that Demonstrate the Dynamics of Reification

- ✚ *Willing the Unwilling:* It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights---if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, "Why look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes." ... Every night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time. ---page 46
- ✚ *Projection of Self-Hatred:* They had extemporized a verse made up of two insults about matters over which the victim had no control: the color of her skin and speculations on the sleeping habits of an adult, wildly fitting in its incoherence. That they themselves were black, or that their own father had similarly relaxed habits was irrelevant. It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth. They seemed to have taken all of their smoothly cultivated ignorance, their exquisitely learned self-hatred, into a fiery cone of scorn that had burned for ages in the hollows of their minds—cooled—and spilled over lips of outrage, consuming whatever was in its path. They danced a macabre ballet around the victim, whom, for their own sake, they were prepared to sacrifice to the flaming pit. ---page 65
- ✚ *Superiority/Inferiority and Jealousy/Envy:* We were sinking under the wisdom, accuracy, and relevance of Maureen's last words. If she was cute—and if anything could be believed, she *was*—then we were not. And what did that mean? We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser. Dolls we could destroy, but we could not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen Peals of the world. What was the secret? What did we lack? Why was it important? And so what? Guileless and without vanity, we were still in love with ourselves then. We

felt comfortable in our own skins, enjoyed the news that our senses related to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars, and could not comprehend this unworthiness. Jealousy we understood and thought natural—a desire to have what somebody else had; but envy was a strange new feeling for us. And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the Enemy and not worthy of such intense hatred. The *Thing* to fear was the *Thing* that made *her* beautiful, and not us. ---page 74

✚ *Spatialization of Difference in the Body*: She looked at Pecola. Saw the dirty torn dress, the plaits sticking out on her head, hair matted where the plaits had come undone, the muddy shoes with the wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles, the soiled socks, one of which had been walked down into the heel of the shoe. She saw the safety pin holding the hem of the dress up. Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked at her. She had seen this little girl all of her life. Hanging out of windows over saloons in Mobile, crawling over the proches of shotgun houses on the edge of town, sittin gin bus stations holding paper bags and crying to mothers who kept saying "Shet up!" Hair uncombed, dresses falling apart, shoes untied and caked with dirt. They had stared at her with great uncomprehending eyes. Eyes that questioned noting and asked everything. Unblinking and unabashed, they stared up at her. The end of the world lay in their eyes, and the beginning, and all the waste in between...Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked. "Get out," she said, her voice quiet. "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house." ---page 92

✚ *Reified Violence*: I destroyed white baby dolls. But the dismembering of dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls. The indifference with which I could have axed them was shaken only by my desire to do so. To discover what eluded me: the secret of the magic they weaved on others. What made people look at them and say, "Awwwww," but not for me? ---p. 22

NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES: ASSIGNED READINGS

WEEK 1 - BEING AND KNOWING

- Article -- A Young Woman Says 'No' to Rural India's Child-Marriage Tradition
- Article -- Branded in a World of Gang Warfare
- Article -- Growing Beyond the Pull of the Tribe in Kenya
- Article -- The Culture of Nations
- Article -- What Really Causes Civil War?
- Article -- Young Singers Bring Message of Hate
- Fine: Symbolic Interactionism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
Customized Text
- Becker: The Birth and Death of Meaning -- Nations and Nationalities Customized
Text

WEEK 2 - CULTURE AND BELONGING

- Article -- Female Circumcision
- Saitoti: My Circumcision -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Kottak: Culture -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Nussbaum: Upheavals of Thought, Part I -- Nations and Nationalities Customized
Text

WEEK 3 - BONDING

- Article-- A Demand for Hussein's Release
- Article -- A Family Torn by Sudan's Strife
- Article -- A Young Woman Says 'No' to Rural India's Child-Marriage Tradition
- Article-- Accommodating Genocide
- Article -- Afghan Women: The Infinite Folly that Fundamentalism Brings
- Article-- Darfur: Another Conflict
- Article-- In Darfur's Death Grip
- Article -- The Danger of Asia's Preference for Sons
- Article-- Women Killed for Family Honor
- Goldstein: When Brothers Share a Wife -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Pasternak: Descent Groups -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Pasternak: The Meaning of Marriage -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 4 - THE NATION-STATE

- Article -- Tribalism Lives On
- Shively: Holding the State Together -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Danforth: Ethnic Nationalism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Diamond: From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 5 - NATIONALISM

- Article-- A Tale of Two Genocides
- Smith: Ethno-symbolism and the Study of Nationalism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Greenfeld: Nationalism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 6 - REIFICATION

- Article -- A Chance for Europe to Check A Wave of Hate
- Article -- Abuse in the Land of Promise
- Article -- Closet Bigotry
- Article -- Denying Who We Are By Stifling Our Children
- Article -- Growing Number of Youths Seen as "Gender Fluid"
- Article -- Immigrant Wives' Visa Status Keeps Them Out of the Workplace
- Article -- The Origins of Human Intolerance
- Nussbaum: Upheavals of Thought, Part II -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Novel -- No Easy Answers
- Novel -- The Bluest Eye

WEEK 7 - ETHNICITY AND RACE

- Article -- A Trap for Muslim Women in Europe
- Article -- Ban Passed on Religious Symbols in Schools
- Article -- Eastern Europe's Immigration Challenge
- Omi and Winant: Racial Formations -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Myers: The Roots of Prejudice -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Kottak: Ethnicity and Race -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 8 - THE U.S. ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

- Article -- A Linguist's Alternative History of "Redskins"
- Article -- Immigrant's Children Fuel Growth Among Latinos
- Article -- Judge Orders Father to Not Speak 'Hispanic'
- Article -- The Roots of Hispanic
- Article -- The Strange Death of Segregation
- Espiritu: Panethnicity and U.S. Racial Politics: The Asian American Case -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Rodriguez: On Becoming a Chicano -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Estrada: Chicanos in the United States: A History of Exploitation of Resistance -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 9 - RACIALIZATION OF RACE

- Article -- A Misguided Debate Over Black Underachievement at School
- Article -- An Emerging Catastrophe
- Article -- Lowering the Bias Rate
- Article -- Mortgage Lenders Analyzed For Bias
- Article -- Studies Suggest Potent Race Bias in Hiring
- Article -- U.S. Racial Categories
- Grant and Orr: Language, Race, and Politics: From Black to African-American -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Sung: Bicultural Contact -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Gordon: Assimilation in America -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 10 - GENDERIZING DIFFERENCE

- Layng: What Keeps Women In their Place? -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Lorde: Age, Race, Class, and Sex -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text

WEEK 11 - HOLOCAUST AND MODERNISM

- Article -- Germany's Opportunity to Look its Own History in the Eye
- Article -- In Kendall Buster's World, Modernism Ends on Top
- Article -- Primo Levi on Guantanamo
- Novel -- Night
- Novel -- The Cage

WEEK 12 - COLONIALISM AND CLIENTISM

- Wimmer: Who Owns the State? -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Brown: Ethnic and Internal Conflicts -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Mamdani: Defining Postcolonial Citizenship -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Brewer: Marxist Theories of Imperialism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Novel -- We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families

WEEK 13 - GENOCIDE AND NATIVISM: RWANDA

- Article-- A Survivor of Rwanda
- Article -- At the Heart of Rwanda's Horror
- Article-- Living Among the Dead
- Article -- Reading the Rwandan Genocide
- Article-- Rwandan Suicides Prevent Closure
- Article -- Rwanda's Cure: 'there is no ethnicity here'
- Article -- Saying 'No' to Killers
- Article-- Taken Over By Satan
- Article -- Ten Years After
- Article -- The Rebuilding Starts with Children
- Article -- Would You Like Your Children Burned or Shot? Mamdani: The Racialization of the Hutu/Tutsi Difference under Colonialism -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Novel -- We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families

WEEK 14 - GENOCIDE AND NATIVISM: EUROPE AND ASIA

- Article -- Details of Srebrenica Emerge as Hague Readies for a Trial
- Power: A Problem from Hell: Srebrenica -- Nations and Nationalities Customized Text
- Novel -- We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families

WEEK 15 - CONCLUSIONS

- Article -- A Plan to Strengthen UN Peacekeeping
- Article -- Hague Judge Shaped by Barbarity and the Bard

ESSAY 1: FROM KINSHIP TO THE NATION-STATE

Your task in this assignment is three-fold. First, you must demonstrate an understanding of kinship communities. Second, and most importantly, you must describe and discuss the transition from kinship communities to societies governed by the state and legitimized by the nation. Third, you must discuss the nation-state. *While the essay is broken into three parts, you must connect all three parts in your essay in a cogent and coherent way.* You must cite at least three readings from the customized text in your essay and use material presented in lecture.

Detailed Description of Assignment:

Your first task in this essay is to discuss kinship communities using the lectures and reading materials presented in Units 1-3. You should be able to discuss the characteristics of kinship communities, the importance of ritualized rites of passage and symbols, and the methods of intergenerational survivability and sustainability. You will want to discuss topics such as ancestry, primordialism, segmented lineage order, marriage, descent, shame, and honor.

Having explained primordial communities, your second task in this essay is to discuss the historical transition from communities based on kinship to societies governed by dynastic chiefdoms and Classical states. You will need to use the readings from Unit 4 to explain this transition. Discuss the specific limitations of primordial communities that led to the formation of more hierarchical forms of governance. You should be able to discuss economic surplus, specialization, individualism, dynastic chiefdoms, centralization, extraction, and legitimacy as elements of the transition from kinship to the nation-state.

Finally, your third task is to discuss the nation-state. You must answer the following: What is a nation? What is a state? What is a nation-state? How does a state obtain legitimacy? What makes a state strong or weak? Rely on the readings in Unit 4 to support your discussion.

Your essay must be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, typed, 12-pt font with one-inch margins. We encourage you to speak to your GTA before and during your writing process to gather and expand your ideas. Your essay is due at the beginning of lecture on Wednesday, September 27th. Any late papers will be subject to penalty. Virginia Tech's Honor Code applies.

ESSAY 2: REIFICATION

Your principle task in this essay is to analyze and apply the process of reification. This assignment requires that you demonstrate a clear, cogent understanding of the psychological and emotional origins of reification as well as its effects between individuals and upon particular groups.

The dynamics of reification operate in the real world in many ways. Lectures, readings, and discussions have focused on them. Your essay must examine, not only the origins and dynamics of reification, but also their effects in real-world terms. Thus your essay should be divided into three parts:

Part I: Your essay must explain reification as a process that originates with anxiety and leads to “thingification” of the self and to the reification of otherness on the basis of difference.

Parts II and III: Your essay must include two examples that illustrate the dynamics and process of reification in concrete ways. One example must illustrate self-reification and internalized “thingification.” A second example must illustrate the projection of reification onto others on the basis of reified difference(s). You may use examples from readings in the customized text, *The Bluest Eye*, *No Easy Answers*, or other resources.

Please do not apply reification to episodes of extreme nationalism, Holocaust, genocide, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity; do not discuss the Holocaust, Rwanda, Darfur, Yugoslavia, or other episodes of genocide in this essay as this is the task of your final essay assignment.

Your essay should demonstrate an understanding of reification by referring to and applying such concepts as: modernism and materialism, cosmic self worth, anxiety, disgust, “willing the unwillable,” denial of the “situatedness of freedom,” the “illogic of logic.” You must explain projected reification in terms of materialism and fixed binary oppositional categories.

*Your essay should be 5-7 pages long, double-spaced, typed, 12-pt font. You must use **two sources from the customized text, Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, and Brooks Brown’s No Easy Answers either to support your theoretical explanation of reification or as the source of your applied examples.** We encourage you to speak to your GTA before and during your writing process to gather and expand your ideas. **Your essay is due at the beginning of lecture on Wednesday, November 1st.** Any late papers will be subject to penalty. The Virginia Tech Honor Code applies to this assignment.*

ESSAY 3: REIFICATION AND EPISODES OF GENOCIDE

Due Date: December 6 IN LECTURE--- This essay represents your final exam, so there can be no extensions.

In this final essay, we ask that you explore the socio-cultural and psychological conditions that have historically provoked episodes of genocide. Your essay must systematically examine the Holocaust by applying the conceptual perspectives introduced by our discussions of modernism; in addition, you must examine the Rwandan genocide from the analytical perspectives addressed by the concept of nativism.

Your task is to develop a clear, cogent and compelling essay that links a series of explanations and brings them to bear on the most horrific events of modern times. We are especially interested in your analysis of the distinct processes that differentiate the Holocaust from the Rwandan genocide. Your essay should examine modernism against the background of the lingering impacts and influences of the spatialization of otherness in the body and in the contemporary world. To what extent do industrialism, spatialization, and reification enable us to understand modernism and interpret the Holocaust?

Since Imperialism represents the historical process through which modernism was universalized, your essay should examine nativism against the background of the lingering impacts and influences of Imperialism in the contemporary world. To what extent do imperialism and its effects enable us to understand nativism and interpret the Rwandan genocide?

Introduce concepts and units of analysis from previous parts of the course. Your essay should represent a culmination of what you have learned; it will certainly represent what you take from the course. Concepts such as hate, disgust, and reification all should become part of your analytical effort as should kinship, culture, nation, and state. But your emphasis should be the anxieties, instrumentalities, and forms of spatialized difference experienced historically during the Holocaust and in the course of the Rwandan genocide.

In sum, you have six primary tasks: 1) analyze the anxieties that ultimately led to the Holocaust; 2) apply the process of reification to the Holocaust; 3) explain how the Holocaust is an example of extreme Modernism; 4) analyze the anxieties that ultimately led to the Rwandan genocide; 5) apply the process of reification to the Rwandan genocide; 6) explain how the Rwandan genocide is an example of extreme Nativism. You must use the Holocaust and Rwanda novels and at least 2 readings from the customized text.

Your essay must be 7-8 pages, double-spaced, typed, 12-pt font with one-inch margins. We encourage you to speak to your GTA before and during your writing process to gather and expand your ideas. Your essay is due at the beginning of lecture on December 6, 2006. Since this essay acts as a final exam, late papers will not be accepted and extensions will not be granted under any circumstances. Virginia Tech's Honor Code applies.

UNIT 12: COLONIALISM & CLIENTISM**Objectives:**

- ✚ Explain colonialism, imperialism, clientism, nativism, and the consequences relative to reification, the spatialization of otherness, and the Rwandan genocide

Key Terms and Concepts:

- ✚ **Non-historical Nations**
 - Lack of legitimacy
 - Nation-building becomes top-down rather than bottom-up
 - Marginalizes major portions of a population
- ✚ **Artificial/Weak States**
 - State lines drawn by colonial power
 - No regard to geography or tribal locations
 - No congruence between nations and states
- ✚ **Imperialism**
 - Exportation of culture
 - Established non-historical nations and artificial states for purposes of domination over local peoples and resources
 - Occurred across the globe
 - Particularly in Africa (map)
- ✚ **Clientism**
 - Use of state control for patronage of certain groups, often based on ethnic or kinship ties/loyalties
 - Massive corruption, cronyism, kleptocracy (relate back to Diamond article)
 - Oppression of groups not in power often led to sub-national conflict
 - Return of kinship with a vengeance – introduction of nativism
- ✚ **Post-Colonialism**
 - Aftermath of imperialism
 - Neo-colonialism begins when the colonizers pull out of the colony leaving political, economic, and social turmoil behind
 - See readings from customized text and novels
- ✚ **Mimetic Dysfunctionalism**
 - Mimeticism is a form of imitation means
 - Occurred in neo-colonialism particularly among previously favored groups
 - Leaders of the now-independent colonies often crudely imitated the colonizers to a dysfunctional degree. This often led to continued corruption or oppression after the colonizers left.
 - Example: Barbados video in lecture
- ✚ **Nativism**
 - Return of kinship legitimacy with a vengeance
 - Often divides post-colonial populations into clientist and nativist groups