THTR 210: Theatre: A Cultural Context  
Race, Gender, and Performance  
Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:15  
CFA 152

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Office hours: Thursday 1-4, or by appointment

Course description
How do we understand race and gender? How does a person’s racial identity inform their gender identity and vice versa? This class will explore these questions by analyzing the intertwined performances of race and gender. Through a variety of sources, including theatre, performance art, and film, we will interrogate the relationship between race and gender along with other influential cultural markers like class and sexuality. In so doing, students will read a diversity of material to become familiar with a range of strategies for constructing identity.

Student Learning Outcomes:
- Students will analyze plays and performances from a variety of perspectives that reflect differing racial and gender identities
- Through written assignments and in-class discussion, students will develop strategies for interpreting and analyzing portrayals of race and gender onstage. Students will locate performances within their historical, social, and political contexts, attending to markers of inequity, including power dynamics and class struggle
- Through informal and formal writing assignments, students will develop strategies for writing about theatre and performance

Assignments and Grading

Participation
Attendance:
To be successful in this course, it is essential that you attend class on a regular basis and come prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Attendance will be taken. You are allowed up to three unexcused absences; more than three will result in your overall grade reduction of half a grade for each unexcused absence (i.e. A to A-). Please arrive on time to class; three arrivals of more than ten minutes late will result in an unexcused absence. I will allow laptops and tablets in class to access reading and take notes only. Cell phones are not allowed in class; use of a cell phone will result in an unexcused absence.

Quizzes:
In addition, 10 unannounced quizzes will be given. Each quiz will consist of two to three simple questions about the reading. If you come to class and complete assigned reading, you will do well on the quizzes.
**Reading responses**
Another part of your participation grade is to write a brief response for each performance. Writing is a way in which to think through your ideas about a work of art, and in this course, we will practice formal (papers) and informal (reading responses) approaches to writing. Each response will be given full credit if you turn it in on time and you follow the parameters of the response. To write a response, select a brief passage or moment from a performance and analyze its significance. A reading response should be three sentences minimum and seven sentences maximum. Upload your response to our course website by 8am the morning before class. If a performance is discussed over several class sessions, you may select a session to upload your response.

**Written Assignments**
Papers will be evaluated on organization, development of argument, and quality of prose. Paper guidelines and grading rubrics will be distributed closer to assignment deadlines.

**A note about drafts:** Part of improving writing is to develop editing skills, so in this course, we will practice writing in drafts. By turning in a completed first draft (note that it is not called a “rough draft” and will be graded), we will work on ways to improve our critical eye towards developing our arguments and polishing our prose.

**Late paper policy:** Due to the schedule of drafts, it is important to turn in papers on time. Unexcused late papers will be docked half a grade for each 24-hour period late (i.e. A to A-). If extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency) prevent you from turning in a paper draft on its assigned date, please contact Prof. Nakamura before the due date to arrange an alternative schedule.

**Paper 1**
3-5 page close reading: take a moment from a performance we have discussed in class—a line, or a brief exchange in a scene; analyze that moment as representative of how that play constructs gender and/or racial identities.

**Paper 2**
5-7 page comparison of different strategies of identity construction in two performances. Students must also incorporate one outside source from a scholarly book or article to develop a critical framework in which to compare plays.

**Grading Distribution**
Quizzes 10%
Reading Responses 15%
Paper 1 35% (all paper assignments will factor into grade; distribution to be handed out in class)
Paper 2 40% (all paper assignments will factor into grade; distribution to be handed out in class)

***This class will give +/- grades.***
Statement on Academic Dishonesty:
Cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include giving an F for the assignment or for the course. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog.

A Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism (copying all or part of someone else’s work and passing it off as your own) is a serious form of academic misconduct and will not be tolerated in this class. “The work of another” does not just mean whole papers or articles copied from another source. It includes any information, ideas, sentences, or phrases that came from somewhere other than your own head (i.e. books, articles, internet sites, videos, documents, lecture notes, or handouts from other courses, and any other sources used in your paper). These must be properly acknowledged by providing references either in the text or in a footnote, along with a bibliography giving the complete publication information for all sources used in your paper. Even if you paraphrase someone else’s ideas and do not quote them directly, you still must acknowledge your source. Citations should also be given for little-known facts and statistics. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism. If you are not sure whether you need to provide a source for a piece of information or how to cite a source, ask me.

Statement on Disability Services
Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Statement on Academic Success Service
Your student fees cover usage of the University Writing Center (http://www.unr.edu/writing-center) (775) 784-6030. It is your responsibility to take advantage of this service. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording
Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Schedule of Topics and Readings
Week 1: Introduction
Erving Goffman’s theory of performance of everyday life
Week 2: Performance in everyday life
Applications of performance in everyday life beyond Goffman

Week 3: Race on Stage: Introduction
Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun

Week 4: Race and Display
Wolfe, The Colored Museum

Week 5: Performances of Minstrelsy today I
Lee, The Shipment
***Paper 1 Proposal Due

Week 5: Performances of Minstrelsy today II
Gotanda, Yankee Dawg you Die
***Paper 1, Draft 1 Due

Week 6: Gender, Race, and Class I
Churchill, Cloud Nine
***Paper 1, Draft 1 Returned

Week 7: Gender, Race, and Class II
Livingston, Paris is Burning

Week 8: Race and Gender on Broadway I
Valdez, Zoot Suit
***Paper 1, Draft 2 Due

Week 9: Race and Gender on Broadway II
Hwang, M Butterfly

Week 10: Racial Stereotypes onstage
Parks, Death of the Last Black Man...

Week 11: Mixed race performances
Adrian Piper’s performance art

Week 12: Racial intersections I
Wong, Kimchee and Chitlins

Week 13: Racial Intersections II
Uyehara, Big Head
***Paper 2 Proposal Due

Week 14: Race and the Body
Geiogamah, Body Indian: A Play in Five Scenes
Week 15: Race and Gender in Popular Culture
Students bring in clips of racial and/or gender performance in movies, tv, or on youtube.

Week 16: Week: Wrap up
***Paper 2 Due