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 Eng 389P/WGS 393 Unique 34940/48570

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## Public Feelings

This course explores the role of feelings within public life and the cultural formations that create affective public spheres. We will consider what it means to talk about “public feelings” given the way that the public/private divide has so often consigned feelings to the private sphere. Using resources from Marxism, critical race theory, psychoanalysis, feminism, and queer studies, we will explore trauma, sentimentality, mourning and melancholy, and cultural memory. Of particular significance will be cultural theories that link individual affective experience to social and historical experience.

The theoretical work will proceed alongside of an investigation of U.S./ American history as a trauma history, and we will explore cultural materials that track the public memory of traumas such as slavery, the Holocaust, migration and diaspora, AIDS, and sexual violence. Primary texts such as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah will be read alongside of critical readings in order to consider how culture expresses public feelings. We will pay particular attention to the way that debates about cultural and public memory are being transformed in the wake of September 11, which has created an intense popular interest in cultural memory. “Public feelings” will also be a rubric for exploring the intersections of gender, sexuality and constructions of U.S. national identity. Through a particular emphasis on gay, lesbian, and feminist materials, the course will ask how trauma and affect redefine the public spheres of American culture.

Students will have an opportunity to work on areas of their own choosing, and this course will be adaptable to a range of specializations. The course's interdisciplinarity will also be a subject for discussion, as we consider the role of categories such as trauma and feeling within the discipline of literary studies.

Useful books and collections:

Ann Cvetkovich and Ann Pellegrini, eds. “Public Sentiments” The Scholar and the Feminist Online 2:1 [www.barnard.edu/sfonline](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline)  
 Laura Lyons and Cynthia Franklin, eds. “Personal Effects: The Testimonial Uses of Life Writing.” Biography 27:1 (Winter 2004).  
 David Eng and David Kazanjian, eds. Loss  
 Cathy Davidson, ed, No More Separate Spheres!  
 Marita Sturken, Tangled Memories  
 Lauren Berlant, The Queen of America Goes to Washington City  
 Wendy Brown, States of Injury  
 Judith Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence  
 Lisa Duggan, The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy  
 Shirley Samuels, ed. The Culture of Sentiment

Saidiya Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America

Anne Cheng, The Melancholy of Race

Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project

Avery Gordon, Ghostly Matters

Michael Taussig, The Nervous System

Kathleen Stewart, A Space by the Side of the Road

Nadia Seremetakis, ed. The Senses Still

Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

Craig Calhoun, ed. Habermas and the Public Sphere

Michael Warner, Publics and Counterpublics

Jill Dolan, Utopia in Performance

Cathy Caruth ed. Trauma: Explorations in Memory

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony

Ann Cvetkovich, An Archive of Feelings

Eve Sedgwick, Touching Feeling

Douglas Crimp, Melancholia and Moralism

Sara Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion

Books Ordered at Co-Op:

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin

Norton Critical Edition ISBN 0393963039

Monique Truong, The Book of Salt

Mariner Books ISBN 0618446885

Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

MIT Press ISBN 0262581086

Cathy Caruth, ed. Trauma: Explorations in Memory

Johns Hopkins ISBN 080185007X

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

(Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs) (ed. Anthony Appiah)

Modern Library ISBN 0345478231

Other materials will be available online either through Blackboard or EReserves. I will also prepare a master copy of the material on EReserves and make it available for copying if you prefer to get the readings that way.

## Syllabus

1. **Introduction: Current Feelings** (January 17)

Feel Tank Chicago, manifesto and other statements, [www.feeltankchicago.net](http://www.feeltankchicago.net)

2. **Public Feelings in American Studies** (January 24)

Marita Sturken, "Introduction," Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering. Berkeley: U of Calif P, 1997. 1-17.

Wendy Brown, "Wounded Attachments." In States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995. 52-76.

Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling." In Feminist Consequences, eds. Elisabeth Bronfen and Misha Kavka. NY: Columbia UP, 2000.

Avery Gordon, "Something More Powerful Than Skepticism." In Keeping Good Time: Reflections on Knowledge, Power, and People. Boulder: Paradigm, 2004. 187-205.

Judith Butler. "Violence, Mourning, Politics." Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. Verso, 2004. 19-49.

Recommended:

Ann Cvetkovich and Ann Pellegrini, Introduction to "Public Sentiments," The Scholar and Feminist Online 2:1. Available at [www.barnard.edu/sfonline](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline) (Browse the entire issue, some of which we'll read later.)

3. **Sentimentality** (January 31)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin

Jane Tompkins, "Sentimental Power" (in Sensational Designs and the Norton Edition of UTC)

Recommended: Shirley Samuels ed. The Culture of Sentiment. Oxford UP, 1992.

4. **Sentimentality II** (February 7)

excerpts from Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, A Slave (Chapters 1, 2, and 10) and Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Chapters 1,2, 5, 6, 7, 10)

Saidiya Hartman, from Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America. Oxford UP, 1997. 1-48.

Lauren Berlant "Poor Eliza." In No More Separate Spheres! Eds, Cathy Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher. Duke UP, 2002. 291-324. (Also published as American Literature 70:3 (September 1998).

Linda Williams, from Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson. Princeton UP, 2001. 3-26. (Recommended: 45-95.)

Recommended:

Fred Moten, "Resistance of the Object: Aunt Hester's Scream." From In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition. U of Minnesota, 2003. 1-24.

Lauren Berlant, "Notes on Diva Citizenship," The Queen of America Goes to Washington City. Duke UP, 1997. 221-46.

5. **Racialized Public Feelings** (February 14)

Monique Truong, The Book of Salt

David Eng and Shinhee Han, "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia." In Loss, 343-71.

Anne Cheng, from The Melancholy of Race. Oxford, 2001. 3-29.

Jose Munoz, "Feeling Brown." Theatre Journal 52 (2000): 67-79. (Available online)

Phil Harper, "The Evidence of Felt Intuition: Minority Experience, Everyday Life, and Critical Speculative Knowledge." GLQ 6:4 (2000): 641-57.

Recommended:

David Eng and David Kazanjian eds., Loss. U of California Press, 2002.

6. **Feeling Capitalism** (February 21)

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History." From Illuminations. Schocken, 1969. 253-64.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (1935)

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Collector" and "The Interior, The Trace." From The Arcades Project. Harvard UP, 1999. 203-227.

Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling." From Marxism and Literature. Oxford UP, 1977. 128-36.

Michael Taussig. "Tactility and Distraction." From The Nervous System. NY: Routledge, 1992. 141-48.

Avery Gordon, from Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination. Minnesota UP, 1997. 3-28.

Recommended:

Kathleen Stewart, From A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America. Princeton UP, 1996. 90-116.

C. Nadia Seremetakis, "The Memory of the Senses, Part I." In The Senses Still, ed. C. Nadia Seremetakis. U of Chicago P, 1994. 1-18.

7. **Public Sphere** (February 28)

Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Parts I, II, III, and V: Chapters 1-11, 16-19.

Nancy Fraser. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In ed. Calhoun, Habermas and the Public Sphere. MIT, 1992. 109-42.

Michael Warner, "Public and Private." From Publics and Counterpublics. Zone: 2002. 21-63.

Recommended:

Cathy Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher, introduction to No More Separate Spheres! Duke UP, 2002. 7-26.

Lisa Duggan. The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy. Beacon, 2003.

8. **Queer Affects, Performances, and Counterpublics** (Mar 7)

Ann Cvetkovich, "Introduction." An Archive of Feelings. Duke UP, 2003.

Jill Dolan, "Performance, Utopia, and the 'Utopian Performative.'" Theatre Journal 53:3 (October 2001). 455-79. (Available online.)

Carmelita Tropicana, Milk of Amnesia.

Also: Pause for Reflection and Individual Projects

Recommended:

Solo performance by Lisa Kron, Holly Hughes, Peggy Shaw, Deb Margolin, and others. See O Solo Homo, eds. David Roman and Peggy Shaw, and Holly Hughes, Clit Notes.

Jill Dolan, Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater. U of Michigan P, 2005.

David Roman, Performance in America. Duke UP 2005.

Diana Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas. Duke UP, 2003.

Jose Munoz, Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics. U of Minnesota, 1999.

Judith Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies. Subcultural Lives. NYU Press, 2005.

## SPRING BREAK

9. **Trauma** (Mar 21)

Cathy Caruth, from Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Johns Hopkins, 1995. 3-12; 151-57.

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching" and "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." From Testimony. Routledge, 2002. (also in Trauma, 13-19; 44-60; 61-75)

Claude Lanzmann, Shoah (excerpts from the film)

Claude Lanzmann, "Seminar with Claude Lanzmann, 11 April 1990." Yale French Studies 79 (1991), 82-99. (Available online)

10. **Trauma II** (March 28)

Tentative: Art Spiegelman, Maus

Marianne Hirsch, "Mourning and Postmemory." From Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory. Harvard UP, 1997. 17-40.

Possible further readings on: second-generation and transgenerational trauma; museums and memorials; 9/11

### 11. **Testimony and Human Rights** (April 4)

Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, "Conjunctions: Life Narratives in the Field of Human Rights." Biography 27:1 (Winter 2004). (Available online)

Anne Cubilie, "Grounded Ethics: Afghanistan and the Future of Witnessing" in "Public Sentiments" (Available online)

Meg McLagan, "Human Rights, Testimony, and Transnational Publicity" in "Public Sentiments" (Available online)

Steven Reisner, "Private Trauma/ Public Drama: Theater as a Response to International Political Trauma" in "Public Sentiments" (Available online)

Allen Feldman, "Memory Theaters, Virtual Witnessing, and the Trauma-Aesthetic." Biography 27:1 (Winter 2004). 163-202. (Available online)

Recommended:

Laura Lyons and Cynthia Franklin, eds. "Personal Effects: The Testimonial Uses of Life Writing." Special Issue of Biography 27:1 (Winter 2004).

### 12. **Psychoanalysis and Other Theories of Emotion** (April 11)

Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholy" in General Psychological Theory. NY: Collier, 1963. 164-79.

Douglas Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy" and "Melancholy and Moralism: An Introduction." From Melancholia and Moralism. MIT Press: 2002. 129-49, 1-26.

Eve Sedgwick. Introduction and "Shame, Theatricality, and Queer Performativity." In Touching Feeling. Duke UP, 2003. 1-26; 35-65.

Sara Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion, Edinburgh UP, 2004. TBA.

Teresa Brennan, The Transmission of Affect. Cornell UP, 2004. TBA.

### 13. **Leftovers** (April 18)

A selection from the things there weren't room for on the syllabus and other items that have surfaced over the course of the semester:

Lauren Berlant, ed. Intimacy; Mark Seltzer, Serial Killers; Sharon Holland, Raising the Dead; Saidiya Hartman and Stephen Best, eds. "The Redress Project," Representations 92 (Fall 2005); Paul Gilroy, Postcolonial Melancholia; Ron Eyerman, Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Making of African American Identity; Pierre Nora, "Between History and Memory: Les lieux de memoire"; Miriam Hansen on counterpublics in Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience; Brain Massumi, Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation; Ruth Leys, Trauma: A Genealogy; Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery; Judith Greenberg, ed, 9-11: Trauma at Home; Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw, eds. Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community; E. Ann

Kaplan, Trauma Culture; James E. Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning; Alessandro Portelli, The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome; Anne Cubilie, Women Witnessing Terror: Testimony and the Cultural Politics of Human Rights; Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, et al, eds. Social Suffering and Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery; Sianne Ngai, Ugly Feelings; Elspeth Probyn: Blush: Faces of Shame; Jean Carlomusto, Shatzi Is Dying (video); Gregg Bordowitz, Fast Trip, Long Drop (1993) and/or Habit (2000) (video)

14. and 15. **Final Projects and Conclusions** (April 25 and May 2)  
(with possible additional meeting on May 9)

Recommended Online Materials:

Jean Carlomusto and Jane Rosett, AIDS: A Living Archive The Scholar and the Feminist Online 2:1 [www.barnard.edu/sfonline](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline)  
Here Is New York (September 11 photography exhibit) [www.hereisnewyork.org](http://www.hereisnewyork.org)  
The Virtual Casebook Project at NYU: 9-11 And After  
[http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/case\\_911\\_FLASHcontent.html](http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/case_911_FLASHcontent.html)  
Pixel Press [www.pixelpress.org](http://www.pixelpress.org) Witnessing the War  
Witness: Using Video and Technology to Fight for Human Rights [www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)