

CHUM 329: Future Visions: Temporality and the Politics of Change

Fall 2012

MW 1:10-2:30

Fisk 210

Prof. Amy Tang

CHUM 207

Office Phone: 685-3063

Email: atang@wesleyan.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:30

Wednesday 2:30-3:30

Prof. Margot Weiss

CHUM 204

Office Phone: 685-3058

Email: mdweiss@wesleyan.edu

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30

Wednesday, 10-11

Course Description

What is the time of political change? This course will explore alternative temporal frameworks embraced by artists, writers, activists, and interdisciplinary scholars from diverse social and cultural locations. We ask: how do concepts of temporality help us understand, resist, contest, and transform prevailing social orders?

We will begin by assembling some conceptual tools for understanding the relationship of time to historical change and to racial, sexual, cultural, and national difference. Drawing on psychoanalysis, literary theory, history, trauma studies, anthropology, African American studies, queer theory, feminist studies, and postcolonial studies, we will explore the telos of modernity and narratives of liberal progress. We will then consider some of the critical and oppositional possibilities of being out of sync with dominant temporal frameworks, as they have been articulated in scholarship on alternative modernities. We will ask: are there other, perhaps more livable, temporalities? Next, we will consider the possibilities for memory and memorialization to work against historical forgetting and cultural amnesia – alongside the ways historical pasts might be appropriated to serve nationalist ends. Finally, we will turn to the question of the future as found in meditations on utopias and dystopias; in political, cultural, and ecological justice movements; in ideologies of newness; and in rhetorics of apocalypse.

As we consider social change, revolutions, and new “ends” and beginnings, students are invited to explore current social justice movements.

Course Texts

- Theresa Hak Jyung Cha (2009), *Dictee*. U California Press: 9780520261297
- Richard Handler and Eric Gable (1997). *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Duke UP: 9780822319740
- Octavia Butler (1987), *Dawn*. Warner Books: 9780446603775

Books are available at Broad Street Books, and on reserve at Olin library. Films are also on reserve at Olin (The Life and Times of Sara Baartman, Cannibal Tours, History and Memory, Avatar). All other readings available online at Moodle.

Course Assignments

- Attendance and Participation – 10%
- Weekly TPQ Memo (10) – 15%
- Two Short Papers (4-5 pp) – 30%
- Presentation (either CHUM talk or extras) – 10%
- Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography – 5%
- Final Paper/Project (9-10 pp)– 30%

Attendance and Participation

This is an intensive seminar course, so your active participation is crucial to its success. We expect you to come to class on time and prepared, and to contribute to our discussion in a positive, relevant, and respectful way. We will be reading challenging theoretical essays that often advocate opposing viewpoints. Thus, participation in this course means coming to class ready to ask questions, to think about what is at stake in these debates, and to begin to forge your own analysis. Your participation should be grounded in the reading; pointing us to relevant sections of an article or to a particular quote is most productive. If you like to take notes on your laptop, you may bring it to class; however, any use of your computer for non-class purposes will result in suspension of this privilege.

You may miss two classes without explanation or penalty. Unexcused absences after this will negatively impact your final grade. If you think you have a valid reason for missing class (emergency, health problem, etc), please contact your class dean/other relevant Wesleyan official and have that person contact us. Excused absences are **only** granted when a Wesleyan official contacts us on your behalf (**not when you send an email**).

TPQ Memo: Two Points and a Question

Every Wednesday (excluding the first and last weeks), you will come to class with a typed, printed memo containing two points and a question from the readings. The memo has two purposes: first, to give you a formal opportunity to reflect on the readings in a connective or synthetic way before class begins and second, to serve as a starting place for class discussions. The memos – and the class as a whole – will require you to read carefully, looking up terms you do not understand, and keeping notes as you read.

Once you have completed the reading, ask yourself:

How do these authors (perhaps differently) understand time and politics? Which ideas are most important, controversial, enlightening, difficult to understand, provocative? What are the disagreements or debates in this set of readings? What do these authors gain from an analysis of temporal frameworks? How do these readings connect/disconnect to other texts we have read? And finally, what do you think about these arguments, concepts and analyses?

To aid in class discussion, please note particular quotations or pages that you wish to discuss. You will turn in these memos after our class, but they will not be graded (you will receive credit/no credit, each worth 1% of your grade). However, during the semester we may periodically call on you to share your memos, or discuss them in smaller groups.

Short Papers

You will turn in two 4-5-page double-spaced papers during the semester on the days listed on the syllabus. These papers should reflect your own critical engagement with the overarching themes and concepts of our course – you should connect, contrast, or synthesize the material. The short papers are analytical, argumentative essays, NOT summaries; you will need to use specific examples backed by precisely chosen textual evidence. Prompts will be distributed in advance of each deadline. Each paper will make up 15% of your grade.

Presentation

Working in groups of two to three students, you will give one 5-10 minute presentation over the course of the semester, either on one of the Monday evening lectures hosted by the Center for the Humanities, or on the “extras” on the syllabus. You can also present on relevant outside material if approved by us in advance. The presentations should give the class additional information or a perspective different from that of the main reading, complementing or expanding the readings for that day. Your task is to present this material in a clear, comprehensible way that will enhance the class’s understanding and add to our discussion. Your presentation should explain the main point of the external material and its relation and relevance to the main readings for that day. You might follow the summary with discussion questions, an exercise, a handout, short clips/media, etc. Sign-ups for presentations will take place in the second week of class, so take a look at the schedule to see what you might be interested in presenting on. The presentation is 10% of your grade.

Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography

You will submit a proposal for your final paper (see below) that outlines your research question in 300-500 words, and includes an annotated bibliography of at least three sources (one paragraph per source) that you have consulted on the subject, detailing how each source contributes to your working argument. Ask us if you have any questions on appropriate sources. You may include one source from class. These arguments, while they will undoubtedly develop over time, should be as precise as possible. Likewise, bibliography entries should *not* be generic summaries, but should explain how they specifically illuminate or take a position on your research question. The point is for you to do some preliminary research on your paper topic so that you understand the critical or scholarly conversation around it. This is 5% of your grade.

Final Paper/Project

Your final paper will be a 9-10 page essay that deals with the topic of your choice, as long as it is relevant to the themes and questions raised in this course and makes reference to one text from the course (but this text from class need not be the focus of the paper). You should choose a topic in which you are particularly interested, and integrate the concepts and frameworks you have learned in the course with new perspectives, theories, and analysis you have researched on your own. Be on the lookout throughout the semester for something you want to examine. If you are having trouble coming up with a topic, be sure to meet with either (or both) of us early in the term. Your final paper is worth 30% of your grade.

Class Policies

Due dates are final; no late papers, no extensions.

Please come see either of us in office hours if there is any course material you do not understand, or if you need guidance on expectations for papers, presentations or any other aspect of this course.

Students with Disabilities:

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to us in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with us as soon as possible [by the 2nd week of the semester], so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at <http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html>.

Honor Code:

All work must be done in compliance with the Honor Code. If you need help with proper citations or you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism, let us know or contact the Writing Workshop: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/>

Schedule

9/3, Monday: Introduction to the course

1. Modernity and its Others: Past – Present – Future

9/5, Wednesday: Modernity's Others: progress and the primitive

- Johannes Fabian, "Introduction," in *Time and the Other* (25-35)
- Valerie Rohy, "Preface" and "Three Analogies" in *Anachronism and Its Others: Sexuality, Race, Temporality* (ix-20)
- Svetlana Boym, "The Angel of History: Nostalgia and Modernity" in *The Future of Nostalgia* (19-31)
- James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern" in *Predicament of Culture* (189-214)

Recommended: Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Homosexual Body" in *Sexology in Culture*

Extras: Articles on "Human Zoo"

Film: *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman*

9/10, Monday: Discipline and Time

- E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work and Discipline in Industrial Capitalism" in *Past and Present* (57-97)
- Michel Foucault, "Docile Bodies" from *Discipline and Punish* (135-169: focus on 149-169)

In class: Tehching Hsieh

CHUM Lecture: Lynn Hunt: "Globalization and Time"

9/12, Wednesday: Imperialist Nostalgia

- Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia" in *Representations* (107-122)

Recommended: Fred Myers, "Primitivism, Anthropology and the Category of Primitive Art" "On the Making of 'Cannibal Tours'" by Dennis O'Rourke

In class: Film: *Cannibal Tours*

2. Other Times: Rethinking Linear and Progressive Time

9/17, Monday: Other Times

- Clifford Geertz, "Person, Time and Conduct in Bali" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (360 – 411)
- E.E. Evans Pritchard, "Nuer Time-Reckoning" *Africa* (189-216)

Recommended: Edmund Leach, "Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time" In *Rethinking Anthropology*

Carol J. Greenhouse, "Time, Life, and Society" in *A Moment's Notice*

Mike Donaldson, "The End of Time? Aboriginal Temporality and the British Invasion of

Australia” in *Time and Society*

CHUM Lecture: Lucian Gomoll, “Chronopolitics of Nineteenth-Century *Displays of Difference*”

9/19, Wednesday: Queer Time

- Tom Boellstorff, “When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time” in *GLQ* (227-248)
- Elizabeth Freeman, “Introduction” to *Special Issue: Queer Temporalities* in *GLQ* (158-170)
- Judith Halberstam, “Queer Temporalities and Postmodern Geographies” in *In a Queer Time and Place* (1-11)

Recommended: Kathryn Bond Stockton, “Introduction: Growing Sideways” in *The Queer Child*

Extra: Queer Temporality Roundtable in *GLQ*

9/24, Monday: Racial Time

- Anne Cheng, “Her Own Skin” in *Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (1-15)
- Michael Hanchard, “Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora” *Public Culture* (245-268)
- James Snead, “On Repetition in Black Culture,” *Black American Literature Forum* (146-154)
- Raymond Williams, “Dominant, Residual, and Emergent” in *Marxism and Literature* (121-127)

CHUM Lecture: Margot Weiss, “Cultural Trauma, National Memory: BDSM Play with Slavery and Fascism”

3. Repetition and Trauma: The Past in the Present

9/26, Wednesday: Traumatic Time

- Sigmund Freud, from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (8-16) and “Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through” (147-156)
- Cathy Caruth, “Introduction: The Wound and the Voice” in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1-9)
- Ann Cvetkovich, “The Everyday Life of Queer Trauma” in *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (15-48)

10/1, Monday: Other Repetitions – the Uncanny, Performativity, Mimicry, Parody

- Elizabeth Freeman, “Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations” in *New Literary History* (727-743)
- Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” in *Inside/Out* (13-31)
- Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man” in *The Location of Culture* (121-131)

Recommended: Interview with Judith Butler, “Gender as Performance”

In class: Art of Glen Ligon, Kara Walker

Extra: Amistad Center at the Wadsworth

CHUM Lecture: Elijah Hume, Wesleyan “Saving the City”

10/3, Wednesday: Repetition and Resistance

- Theresa Hak Jyung Cha, *Dictee* (front matter through page 89)

10/8, Monday

- Theresa Hak Jyung Cha, *Dictee* (finish)
- Lisa Lowe, “Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of *Dictee*” in *Immigrant Acts* (128-153)

CHUM Lecture: Robyn Wiegman, “The Times We’re In”

Short Paper 1 DUE

4. Memorialization: The Political Use of the Past

10/10, Wednesday: Traumatic Memories, National Histories

- Marita Sturken, “Introduction” and “Camera Images and National Meanings” in *Tangled Memories* (1-43)
- Rebecca Schnieder, “Reenactment and Relative Pain” in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (32-60)

Recommended: Homi K. Bhabha, “Introduction: Narrating the Nation” in *Nation and Narration*

In class: Film: *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige*

10/15, Monday – fall break

NO CLASS

10/17, Wednesday: Recreating the Past

- Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum* (1-49)
Possible trip to Sturbridge Village

10/22, Monday: Recreating the Past

- Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum* (50-125; 220-237)

CHUM Lecture: Karen Barad, “On Touching—The Inhuman That Therefore I Am”

10/24, Wednesday: Remembering Slavery

- Rosalind Shaw, from *Memories of the Slave Trade* (1-22, 115-125)
- Paulla Ebron, “Tourists as Pilgrims: Commercial Fashioning of Transatlantic Politics” in *American Ethnologist* (910-932)
- Saidiya Hartman, “Markets and Martyrs” in *Lose your Mother* (49-75)

Recommended: Elizabeth Wallace, “Commemorating the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Liverpool and Bristol,” in *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (25-65)

Extra: CT Freedom Trail

In class: Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum* (slides of art installation)

10/29, Monday: Popular Trauma Culture

- Anne Rothe, from *Popular Trauma Culture* (7-8, 38-41)

- Wendy Brown, “Wounded Attachments” in *States of Injury* (52-76)
- Recommended: Mark Seltzer, “Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere”
In class: Oprah tours Auschwitz; *Curb Your Enthusiasm* episode “The Survivor”
CHUM Lecture: Joe Rouse “Temporality and Normativity”

5. Politics of the Future

10/31, Wednesday: Precarity and Post-Fordist Affect

- Lauren Berlant, “Introduction” to *Cruel Optimism* (1-16)
 - Andrea Muehlebach and Nitzan Shoshan, “Introduction: Post-Fordist Affect” in *Anthropological Quarterly* (317-343)
 - Kath Weston, “Political Ecologies of the Precarious” in *Anthropological Quarterly* (429-455)
- Extra: pathogeography: Feel Tank
Recommended: Lauren Berlant, “Nearly Utopian, Nearly Normal: Post-Fordist Affect in *La Promesse* and *Rosetta*”
 “Sensing Precarity” panel papers

11/5, Monday: Political Melancholia and Nostalgia

- Svetlana Boym, “Taboo on Nostalgia?” and “Nostalgia and Progress” in *The Future of Nostalgia* (xiii-18)
 - Wendy Brown, “Resisting Left Melancholy” in *boundary 2* (19-27)
 - Anne Cheng, “Preface” and “Introduction,” *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (ix-29)
 - David Eng and Shinhee Han, “A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia” in *Loss* (343-371)
- CHUM Lecture: Amy Tang, “Racial Trauma and Triangulation in Susan Choi’s *The Foreign Student*”**

11/7, Wednesday: Mourning and AIDS

- Deborah B. Gould, “Despairing” in *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight against AIDS* (395-438)
 - Douglas Crimp, “Mourning and Militancy” in *October* (3-18)
- Extras: AIDS Memorials (AIDS quilt, Yale AIDS Memorial Project)
 ACT UP Oral History Project
In class: Tom Burr
Short Paper 2 Due

11/12, Monday: Future/No Future

- Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff,” in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (1-31)
- Sara Ahmed, “Happy Futures” *The Promise of Happiness* (160-198)

- Heather Love, “Introduction” to *Feeling Backward* (1-24)
- Recommended: Michael Snediker, “[Queer Optimism](#)” in *Postmodern Culture*;
 Robyn Wiegman, “Feminism’s Apocalyptic Futures” in *New Literary History*
Extra: Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History”
CHUM Lecture: Lisa Cohen, “Minerals Alone Escape It’: Mourning Time”

11/14, Wednesday: History of ACT UP

- In class film: *United in Anger: A History of ACT UP*
- Recommended: Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, “Introduction” in *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Promise of the Queer Past* (1-37)

11/19, Monday: Queer Utopias, Political Visions

- José Muñoz, “Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of a Gay Pragmatism” in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (19-32)
- Ryan Conrad, *Reviving the Queer Political Imagination* –or-- Margot Weiss, “Reinvigorating the Queer Political Imagination’: Roundtable with Ryan Conrad, Yasmin Nair, and Karma Chávez of the Against Equality collective” in *American Quarterly*

Extras: Revolutionary statements
 Against Equality archive

CHUM Lecture: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Latency as Origin of our Present: Conjectures about a New Social Construction of Time”

Final Paper Topic and Initial Bibliography due

11/21, Wednesday – Thanksgiving

No class

11/26, Monday: Afro Futurism and Political Imaginaries

- Jennifer Wenzel, “Remembering the Past’s Future: Anti-Imperialist Nostalgia and Some Versions of the Third World” in *Cultural Critique* (1-32)
- Alondra Nelson, “Future Texts,” Introduction to Special Issue of *Social Text* (1-15)
- Kodwo Eshun “Further Considerations on Afro-Futurism” in *CR: The New Centennial Review* (287-302)

Recommended: Mark Dery, “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose” in *Flame Wars*

Extras: Speculative Life archive, *Social Text*
 Afro Futurism online archive

CHUM Lecture: Tom Boellstorff, “Ten Digital Preludes”

11/28, Wednesday: Science Fictional Futures

- Octavia Butler, *Dawn*
- Possible film: *Avatar* (Gina Ulysse, on *Avatar*)

12/3, Monday: Science Fictional Futures

- Octavia Butler, *Dawn*
- CHUM Lecture: Anne Cheng, “Law, Ornament, and the Quotidian Body”**

12/5, Wednesday: Future Visions
Course wrap up and discussion

12/15, Saturday: Exam Day
Final Paper Due