

HS 2021 – B.A. Seminar
Race and the American Cultural Imaginary
Prof. Elisabeth Bronfen
Wednesdays 14.00-15.45

(1) Sept 22 **Meet & Greet on Zoom**
Online! James Baldwin. “Stranger in the Village”* (1955)

THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

(2) Oct 13 Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave* (1845)
Online! – “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July”* (1852)

(3) Oct 20 Harriet Beecher Stowe. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)
James Baldwin. “Everybody’s Protest Novel”* (1955)

(4) Oct 27 Harriet Beecher Stowe. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* cont.
Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Hollis Robbins. “Introduction”* From *The Annotated Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Norton, 2007.

(5) Nov 3 William Wells Brown. *Clotel or, The President’s Daughter* (1853)

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

(6) Nov10 W.E.B. du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

(7) Nov 17 Oscar Micheaux. WITHIN OUR GATES (released 1919)

(8) Nov 24 Ann Petry. *The Street* (1946)

CONTROVERSIES OF PASSING

(9) Dec 1 Jessie Redmon Fauset. *Plum Bun: A Novel without a Moral* (1928)

(10) Dec 4 **Special Workshop on Race and Ethnicity**

(11) Dec 8 Fannie Hurst. *Imitation of Life* (1933). Douglas Sirk. IMITATION OF LIFE (released 1959)

(12) Dec15 Philip Roth. *The Human Stain* (2000)

(13) Dec 22 Mithu Senyal. *Identitti* (2021)

Background Reading

- Donald Bogle. *Bright Boulevards, Bold Dreams. The Story of Black Hollywood*. Ballantine Books 2006.
- Thomas Cripps. *Slow Fade to Black. The Negro in American Film, 1900-1942*. Oxford University Press 1977.
- . *Making Movies Black. The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era*. Oxford 1993.
- Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay (eds.) *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. Norton 1997.
- Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett (eds.). *The New Negro. Readings of Race, Representation, and African American Culture 1892-1938*. Princeton University Press.
- John Stauffer and Henry Louis Gates Jr. *The Portable Frederick Douglass*. Penguin: 2016.
- Michael Rogin. *Blackface, White Noise. Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. University of California Press 1996.

Course Requirements

Portfolio (20% of final grade)

Students are required to complete the following tasks as part of the portfolio:

Forum Posts: You must write a preliminary discussion (approx. 250 words) for 10 seminar sessions, to be posted on the course's OLAT Forum by 9 a.m. on Wednesday of the respective week. Contributions should entail a thesis, but could also contain a series of questions, comments, or associations. This should not only help you practice your argumentative skills, but also facilitates class discussion by allowing us to see in what directions you have been thinking while preparing for each session. The point is not to read out what you have written, but, using what you have developed in writing, to engage in a dialogue with the other members of the class. Please note that thesis papers that are not posted on time will not be counted towards your portfolio grade.

Short Research Paper or Visual Research Essay: Students are required to do background research on the subject of the session assigned to them and to compile this research either in a short, written essay or a visual essay. They will be asked to speak to the content of their research in the corresponding session. It should be 2 pages long (or no more than 2.5 minutes). A final version of the research paper, as a PDF or transfer link, depending on the chosen format, should be sent to morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch one week after the session.

Handing in your portfolio: At the end of the semester, please compile the thesis statements you have posted and short research paper/visual essay using the template provided on OLAT. Upload the complete portfolio as a PDF using the Portfolio Drop Box on OLAT by **December 23, 2021**.

Final Essay (80% of final grade)

All students should hand in an essay (4000-5000 words) in printed format by **March 1, 2022** in the pigeon hole at the secretary's office. Additionally, it should be handed in as a PDF version (incl. *Selbstständigkeitserklärung*) to morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch.

The essay should be based on the materials covered in this B.A. seminar, as well as the class discussions. Your essay must include a strong thesis statement (this can be several sentences) at the beginning of your paper (within the first page). A thesis is a statement that is arguable; but also one that requires a coherent argument and materials supporting the argument. You are also expected to do research on your topic beyond the recommended literature and the theoretical texts discussed in the seminar.