

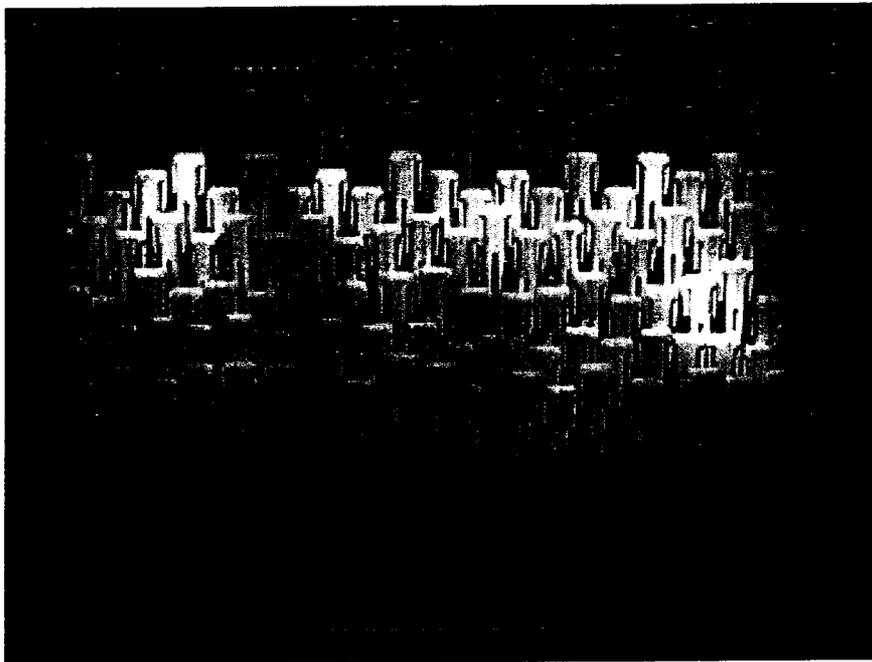


CRITICAL INQUIRY

FALL 2016: HUMN 3374.01

M 1:00-3:50 PM, BB 1217

FACULTY: DR. SHREERUKHA SUBRAMANIAN, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF LIBERAL ARTS, HSH



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Blackboard Course Site

Office Hours:
Wed 10 AM-Noon

Jose Benito, "No Tendra
Titulo" (2007)

Applied Critical Thinking Statement

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course, which means in addition to learning specific course content, students will engage with some or all of the *Elements of Thought* and *Universal Intellectual Standards* of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student's ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a *purpose*, asking *questions*, using *information*, applying *concepts*, drawing *inferences and conclusions*, identifying *assumptions*, anticipating *implications and consequences*, and recognizing different points of view. The *Universal Intellectual Standards* are applied to *Elements of Thought* in order to develop *Intellectual Traits* including *clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness*.

Course Description Students will engage critical research in contemporary humanities to think on race, class, gender, and ethnicity. This course will equip them with current knowledge on theorizing selfhood, community and culture. HUMN 3374 is interdisciplinary and comprises elements of literature, theory, and cinema. Scholarship on race, class, gender and ethnicity from diverse positions in humanities and social sciences will be invoked to help students grapple with how we read what we read. An emphasis on close-reading techniques will enrich our approach to difficult dialogues on those topics. The curriculum will address trauma and healing with respect to issues mired in historical silences. We will learn to question burials and the creation of intellectual graveyards in which discourses alive with possibility are per force, interred by demagoguery and populism. Students will learn to move past aporias and ruptures in current dialogues on these contested thematics to make productive, creative interventions in contemporary debates local and global. Through a classroom practice of sharpening critical inquiry influenced by Latin American subjectivity and philosophy, this course aims to legitimize and authorize knowledge produced from the margins as predominant in knowing, understanding, and inhabiting the world.

This course will focus primarily on contemporary novels, films, and theory that address historical erasure and self-realization. Course material comprises modern novels, poetry, plays, personal essays, films, theory and graphic novels.

Students will read, write, and think critically on thematic work in the humanities that enable the relation of “class reading” to their personal and professional lives. The course readings focus on contemporary writers, thinkers and academics who emphasize the integral function of active critical thinking as an agent of healthy living. Students will be called on to compose their own critical analyses of films and poetry. These analyses must be responsive, rather than passive or self-serving. Work required to complete assignments will be detailed in the online rubric.

Themes framing the course (Steady undercurrents):

1. Intellectual humility
2. Locality and globality
3. Empathy across borders

One Primary Focus Connections, Communication, **Curiosity**, Creativity

Critical thinking is the bedrock of humanities. Critical thinking about race, class, gender, ethnicity, and other such identifiers fosters a chiseling of the muscle of sensitivity and cultivates a sense of intellectual compassion that arguably builds

the bridges expected within the discipline of humanities, bridges that effectively help carry over into the larger world signified by the universe of the 'university'. Critical thinking compels us to recognize our positions when we speak, so the depth and breadth of personal/individual viewpoint is enhanced by exposure to multiple points of view. It enables a more informed approach to complexity in the world. It unpacks "common sense" assumptions that structure our everyday lives. We aim instead for greater clarity and sophistication in our understanding of experience and consciousness.

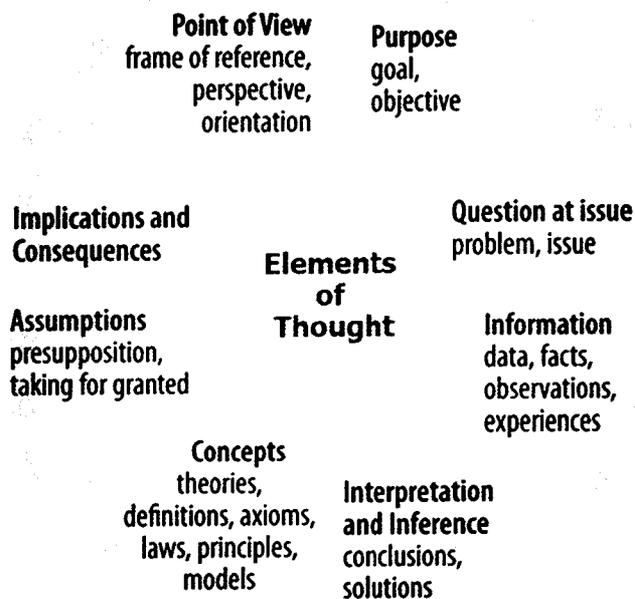
Student Learning Objectives

Students will learn to:

1. Identify the questions on race, class, gender, etc. fairly and precisely;
2. Articulate various points of view in the readings clearly and fairly;
3. Interrogate personal and collective assumptions with logical and significant insights;
4. Elaborate on the broad and relevant purpose of critical inquiries;
5. Describe the implications and consequences accurately of collective dialogues;
6. Interpret texts and share critically inflected analysis that is deep and relevant

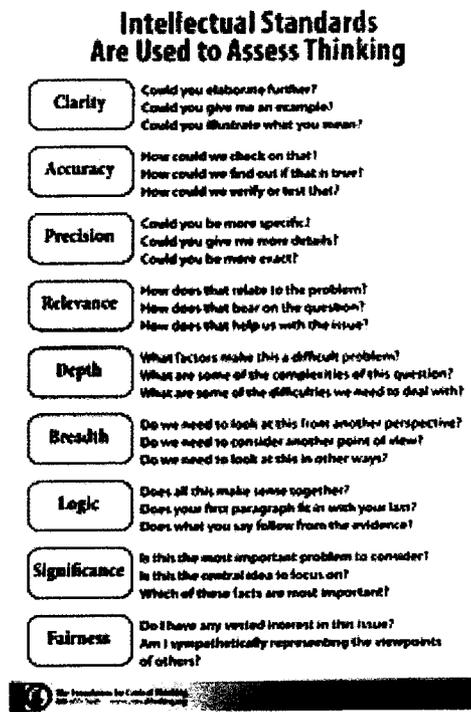
Elements of Thought

During this course, we will read, discuss and write on various types of texts that range from literary, philosophical, and poetic texts within the wide ranging discipline of humanities. As we do so, we will exercise the circle of elements to practice the art of critical thinking. These are:



Intellectual Standards

The circle of elements is enhanced by the effective comprehension and application of intellectual standards. These are:



Fundamental and Powerful Concepts

To achieve course objectives, stay tethered to 3 core de-limiting concepts recurring through the duration of this course:

Identity -- Going beyond “who am I/ who I am” to thinking on identity as negotiated, negotiable

Empathy – Going beyond “doing something about it” to thinking better about it

Community – Going beyond given communities to actively constructing community across borders

Central Questions

1. How do we re-think identity that empowers the self while making affective connections with the other?
2. Why is curiosity about the other fundamental to progress?

Course Format: This course will consist of lectures, discussions, small group work, group presentations, in-class writing, films, and on-line communication.

Email: Feel free to communicate with me during office hours, via the office phone, or email me via Blackboard, while properly identifying the matter of your correspondence in the subject box. I will do my best to reply within the day and thus, Blackboard is a sure way of staying in touch with me. Unless your question is of a personal nature, such as a family emergency you need to report, please direct your general questions in the “Questions for Professor” thread in the Discussions so that everyone may benefit from the information.

Required Texts:

- ◆ Louise Erdrich, *The Round House* (NY: Harper, 2012).
- ◆ John Lewis, Andrew Aydin & Nate Powell, *March: Book Two* (NY: Top shelf comix, 2015).
- ◆ Valeria Luiselli, *The Story of My Teeth*, trans. Christina MacSweeney (MN: Coffee House P, 2015).

Students are responsible for gaining access to books for the course. Books should be purchased at the UHCL bookstore early in the semester since they will not be available beyond the first few weeks. I also provide all the course materials at the reserve desk (2 hour, in-library use) in our Neumann Library in case you are without any of the texts. Some of the materials on our “Calendar of Readings” can be found online or Blackboard under “Reading Materials.”

Course Requirements

Papers (CRITICAL THINKING-CENTERED)	35 %
Attendance, Group Presentations & In-class participation	15 %
Weekly journal entries (CRITICAL THINKING-FOCUSSED)	15%
Final Exam (CRITICAL THINKING-CENTERED)	35%

Grades are non-negotiable unless there has been a clerical error. I do not post grades or send them via email. Final grades are available from the UHCL website.

Papers Papers increase in length and graded weight with each paper. Paper #1 (4 pages): 15%; Paper #2 (5 pages): 20%- both papers are to be submitted via Blackboard.

Papers # 1 and 2 will formulate theses and central ideas/arguments/analyses through various prompts provided as assignments a couple of weeks in advance of the deadline. While the papers will be graded on and advance their arguments based on

elements of thought and intellectual standards, in addition to the grade and formal feedback, the paper will be assessed on 1 element that is key to the paper. Paper #1, through its thesis and analysis, be able to articulate various points of view in the readings clearly and fairly (SLO #2). Paper #2, through its thesis and analysis, interrogates personal and collective assumptions with logical and significant insights (SLO #3).

PAPER #1

Student Learning Objective	E	A	U
SLO 2: Articulates various points of view in the readings fairly and clearly	Student weaves together multiple points of view with her own in order to fully articulate how texts can be understood in multiple ways and how/why this clearly produces a richer reading of the material	Student carefully lists multiple points of view in short story and essays with clarity. Student begins to engage with how these positions enhance the 'reader' lens.	Brief, incomplete and/or grammatically unsound sentences. Repetitive without a main arc of thought uniting the response. Regurgitates author's positions without inserting one's own voice into the response.

PAPER #2

Student Learning Objective	E	A	U
SLO 3: Interrogate personal and collective assumptions with logical and significant insights	Student expresses various assumptions (can be individual or collective) that limit an initial reading of the text. Student also is able to demonstrate how working through such assumptions can lead to more logical and significant readings of the novel.	Student manages to detail one or two assumptions that she brought to the text and how it impedes her relationship to the content. It is logical and/or significant to a degree.	Brief, incomplete and/or grammatically unsound sentences. Repetitive without a main arc of thought uniting the response. Regurgitates plot summary without inserting one's own voice into the response.

Provide your name, date, and paper number on top right corner. Be sure to number each page in the bottom right corner. Use standard font (Times New Roman or Calibri), 12 pt., double-spaced with 1" margins. Use quotes, but use them sparingly, and cite them correctly. Write your own response around a central idea you gain from the reading(s). Attempt to give yourself enough time to revise a couple of times before submitting the paper to me. It is always a good idea to find kind peers and ask them to review your work. Always do your spell-check. I will provide the suggested questions in advance of the due date. It is a good idea to mark main passages, annotate, and choose themes you might wish to write upon as you read these various texts.

Presentations

During the semester, the students will present with a group to the class at least once, if not more. The group will present on the material to be discussed in class the same day. The group presentation should last less than ten minutes and involves chatting, emailing, or meeting with your group members at least once before the talk. I expect the group to use the ten minutes to engage the class on the day's lesson – this means that you can tackle a particular thematic or question that arises in the text and stage a discussion for your peers. This should not include a summary, Wikipedia information, or other online-drive information generation. Instead I expect the group to stage a sophisticated and interesting discussion on some aspect of the day's reading.

Participation

Be present and on time! Plan on adding to the conversation by speaking up at least once during each class meeting. You can speak up by asking a question, sharing a comment, or answering a question posed by the instructor or a peer. Be prepared with the reading and writing assignment, and be ready to speak if I call upon you.

As topics in this class may likely lead to controversial discussions on the expression/interpretation of various cultural, religious, beliefs, etc., it is highly important that you treat your classmates and their beliefs/opinions, however contrary to your own, with respect.

Do not talk over your classmates and do not interrupt them. If you have something to say, raise your hand.

Turn off all cell phones, beepers, iPods, and all electronic devices.

Journal Entries

Write at least one page minimum for each reading assignment, i.e. for one day's lesson, you might have to read more than 2 or 3 or several different texts and excerpts. Write a thoughtful response in your journals. This can start with a simple one paragraph summary of what you think is the textual meaning. Then, attempt a dialogue with the text through a critique, questions or other strategies to intellectually engage with what you read. The more thorough and probing your response is, the more generous your daily journal grade which will vary between unacceptable (U), acceptable (A) and exemplary (E). At the beginning of most classes, time permitting, I will walk through and look at your black composition journal notebooks to see your weekly work.

Journal entries should demonstrate fluency and are a practicing space for honing your critical thinking skills. In the journal entries, you can possibly 'read' the texts closely and identify the questions on race, class, gender, ethnicity, amidst others, that arise for you in a fair and precise manner, in ways that help you think through old tropes anew (SLO #1). Or, instead, in broader terms, you can utilize the reading at hand to elaborate on the broad and relevant purpose of such critical inquiries, and express how such inquiries enlighten, heal, or deepen your sensitivity to erstwhile difficult subjects (SLO #4). In doing so, you can even describe the implications and consequences of collective dialogues (SLO #5) so they don't remain mired in stalemates and impasses but instead as an exercise of self-reflection, you do what Wesley Morris suggests: rather than arrive at empathy through futile national conversations, "it's a conclusion you reach first in conversation with yourself."

Final Exam

Final exam (35%) is very similar in format to the papers you write all semester long for me. You will be given a series of questions in order to give you intellectual range and choice in the subject you choose to write on. You will compose a strong thesis and present good textual evidence to provide good critical reading to substantiate your thesis statement. You will have the freedom to write on materials read throughout the semester.

Similar to the papers you write for this course, the final exam rests on the bedrock of critical thinking by expressing a fluency with elements of thought and intellectual standards. In addition to the grade given to the final paper, the paper will be given an assessment of "Exemplary," "Acceptable" or "Unacceptable" depending on how well the student interprets texts and shares critically inflected analyses that is deep and relevant (SLO #6).

FINAL EXAM

Student Learning Objective	E	A	U
SLO 6: Interpret texts and share critically inflected analyses that are deep and relevant	Student interprets chosen texts from across the semester and shares critically-inflected analyses that remain deep and relevant. The paper demonstrates a curiosity and commitment to empathize across borders that moves the reader to reconsider ossified ways of reading the world.	Student manages to detail one or two interpretations that she raises from the text and how it enlightens her relationship to the content. It might not be as relevant or probing.	Brief, incomplete and/or grammatically unsound sentences. Repetitive without a main arc of thought uniting the response. Regurgitates plot summary without inserting one's own voice into the response.

This is a take-home open book/open notes exam. You are expected to abide by the universal honor code of remaining honest in your work; do your work on your own and avoid online surfing as you write your final essay. Questions will be distributed on the last day of formal class on Nov. 28. Final Exams will be due on Dec. 5 at 1 PM.

4 Golden Rules of Good Discussion (Bartlett 1999)

1. No hogging the floor.
2. No blaming or shaming.
3. No personal attacks.
4. Always respect the confidentiality of the classroom.

Class Preparation: Expect to spend three to four (or more, depending on your reading speed) hours of outside time preparing for each class meeting. This is an intensive course. Participate without hesitation and expect to be called on at any time with questions based upon the readings of the day. On occasion, there will be in-class written work that should demonstrate your reading comprehension.

Late Policy: Due dates are not subject to change - turn in papers on the dates given below. If due to some circumstance, you have an emergency, let me know via Blackboard or phone and stay in touch. If you submit late work, the penalty is half a grade drop per class. If you are chronically late, consult me. Two latenesses constitute an absence and if you incur more than 4 absences, you should meet me regarding how this impacts your overall grade and progress.

Course Website: All materials will be available through Blackboard. Students can keep abreast of the syllabus, powerpoints, course assignments, class progress, announcements, etc. online. Students should continue in-class discussions virtually via Blackboard. I will monitor but rarely intervene since the idea is for you to have a chance to engage in a free intellectual forum. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly for correspondence from the class and me.

Attendance Policy: It is critical to attend and be on time for this course. Punctuality and preparedness are one sure way to impress me! Since lectures/discussions are central to carrying out the objectives of this course, attendance is key to successful participation. No laptops necessary in class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to attain the missed notes from a friend and ask me questions regarding material that you do not understand.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are required to do their own work on exams and papers. All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty (consult UHCL Student Life Handbook). Plagiarism, using research without citations, or using a created product without crediting the source, is forbidden and will result in a range of penalties from a grade of "F" for the assignment to expulsion from the course, along with formal documentation of the violation.

Online Caution: Since I require no secondary research for this course, there is little need to do any online surfing for any papers that you are writing. Since "Internet Ethics" is a whole new discipline for us to consider, it would be best to be wary when reading (or borrowing or citing) from the internet.

Disabilities: If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact Disability Services at 281-283-2648 or disability@uhcl.edu as soon as possible and complete the registration process. To ensure your accommodations are in place for the entire semester, please request your accommodation letters from Disability Services and provide them to me at the beginning of the semester. The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them.

Incompletes: A student can be given an "I" only in cases of documented emergency that occurs late in the semester, provided that they have been consistent and sincere in their work ethic throughout the semester. To receive an "I," the student will have to adhere to stipulated criteria and complete a grade contract.

A grade of Incomplete ('I') may be given at the discretion of the instructor to students who are making satisfactory progress in a course. Incompletes are typically given for emergency situations which occur after the withdrawal date but prior to the end of the semester, and which prevent the student from completing course requirements. When assigning the grade of 'I,' instructors provide students with an Incomplete Grade Contract that outlines the work to be accomplished before the 'I' can be converted to a final grade and specifies a deadline date.

Withdrawal: The final drop date is Nov. 7th, which is the last day to withdraw or drop without grade penalty.

Six Drop Rule: Texas State's New Six drop rule: Any undergraduate student who enrolls in a Texas college or university will be limited to a total of six dropped courses during his/her entire undergraduate career. Once these six drops have been used, the student must remain enrolled in his/her classes unless h/she withdraws from all classes. A student may drop one or more classes during the drop/add period without it counting towards the student's six drops. The drop/add period ends on Aug. 30.

Changes in Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make appropriate changes in the syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep updated on course information if he or she is absent.

University Resources

(underutilized treasures which will help enhance your overall university experience. If interested in any of the items listed below, go to our university website and find these services because most of them are listed through Campus Life. You can certainly familiarize yourself with this website so that you can learn all that the university provides for you)

Humanities Capstone If you are a humanities student, choose to enroll in the humanities capstone course before you graduate during the spring semester.

Women's Studies If you choose to enroll in any course that is offered through WMST or cross-listed with WMST, you should seriously think about graduating with a WMST certificate. For this certificate, you have to enroll in three WMST courses before you graduate and some of these courses can be "Introduction to WMST," "WMST Seminar," "Women of Color," "Violence against Women," "Women in Literature," etc.

Library Take a walk to our Alfred R. Neumann library located at the second floor of the Bayou Building. We have quite a strong catalogue of texts and journals, as well as an online collection of databases to boast. Walk through the library, find good spaces to study and work, and always feel free to ask a reference librarian for help if you feel lost in the library. Casey Roberson, in particular, is a brilliant librarian and you should make his acquaintance if you would like to prosper at your academics in UHCL.

Writing Center This center boasts of multiple ways of helping our students – face to face, phone, chatting, and virtual sessions. You are not a poor writer to avail of this resource. You are a smart and savvy writer who knows that all writers need peer-review to improve their written work. Go visit this center, learn how it works, and who knows – you might be one of the writing center tutors on a future date.

Student Success Center Contact Timothy Richardson at *Student Success Center*. They are ready and available to help students meet the academic challenges of university education. They have tutors available for Basic Texts courses as well and many programs for academic skills development. All services are provided for the benefit of our students and are free of charge.

Mentorship Program We have launched a *Total Success Plus Mentorship* program, offered through Intercultural and International Student Services Office. It is a great program in which you are paired with a faculty in your school with whom you can meet, ask questions, and have a sense of comfort in learning how to navigate through the university life. I happen to be one of the mentor volunteers. Contact Susana Hernandez at IISS office if you are interested in participating in this program.

Career Office Do know that there are experts on campus who host job fairs and help you navigate through the steps as you approach graduation and think of ways of translating your well-earned degree into valuable job prospects. On their website, they post ads from employers and tips on searching for the right career for you.

Counseling Center If you feel lost, overwhelmed, depressed, or isolated, please realize that you are not alone. Much of our lives intersect across our many functions as members of family, communities, and the larger society that place a great number of duties upon our shoulders. All of this might result in a sense of anxiety or alienation at some point or the other in our lives. Just know that you are not alone and that the counseling center on our campus offers individual and group sessions for people seeking a sense of stability and self-affirmation. Again, just pick up the phone and call!

Overall Participation:

It is a great idea to start attending the many events or free fairs that take place on our campus. It is a good way to learn about the university, the larger world, and meet your peers who are struggling and surviving in similar ways. While I know many of you are busy with full-time careers and families and many other responsibilities, do think of coming by to have a cup of coffee on second Wed evenings at the Hawk's Overlook in the Library and attend the poetry readings that I run. Also, I encourage you to catch a film through our own in-house film series run by Sonia Hernandez and also, the Foreign Language Studies Program. Both series offer award-winning commercial films at a very subsidized rate for your viewing pleasure. All this is a way to participate and animate the university's own cultural and intellectual environment and get a sense of all the dimensions of a baccalaureate.

Schedule of Readings

The readings are subject to change depending on the needs of the class and professor.

		READINGS
1.	August 22	INTRODUCTIONS – “I, Destini” Dialogue, Vanzetti speech, poetry, and music
2.	August 29	Cristina Enriquez, <i>The Book of Unknown Americans</i> (BB) Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter (BB)
3.	September 5	
4.	September 12	Systems of Power and Inequality (BB) Linda Alcoff, “Racialized Identities and Racist Subjects” and “Latino/a Particularity” (BB)
5.	September 19	Ethnicity, Immigration, and Nationality (BB) Class and Inequality (BB)
6.	September 26	SPECIAL EVENT: GUEST LECTURER, DR. ANITA WADHWANI (BB) RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN URBAN SCHOOLS FOREST ROOM
7.	October 3	José Medina, “Resistance, Democratic Sensibilities, and the Cultivation of Perplexity” and “Meta-Lucidity, “Epistemic Heroes,” and the Everyday Struggle Toward Epistemic Justice” (BB)
8.	October 10	Film, “Delhi in a Day” (Prashant Nair, 2011)
9.	October 17	Valeria Luiselli, <i>The Story of My Teeth</i>
10.	October 24	Critical Race Studies/Civil Rights Discourse Jesmyn Ward, <i>The Fire this Time</i> (BB) Michael Eric Dyson – Critical Race Studies (BB)
11.	October 31	Congressman John Lewis, <i>March: Book II</i>
12.	November 7	Film, “12 Years a Slave” (Steve McQueen, 2015)
13.	November 14	Indigeneity Studies

		Andrea Smith, <i>Conquest</i> (BB) Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (BB)
14.	November 21	Louise Erdrich, <i>The Round House</i> , p. 1-148
15.	November 28	Louise Erdrich, <i>The Round House</i> , p. 149-317
16.	December 5	CLOSING: PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

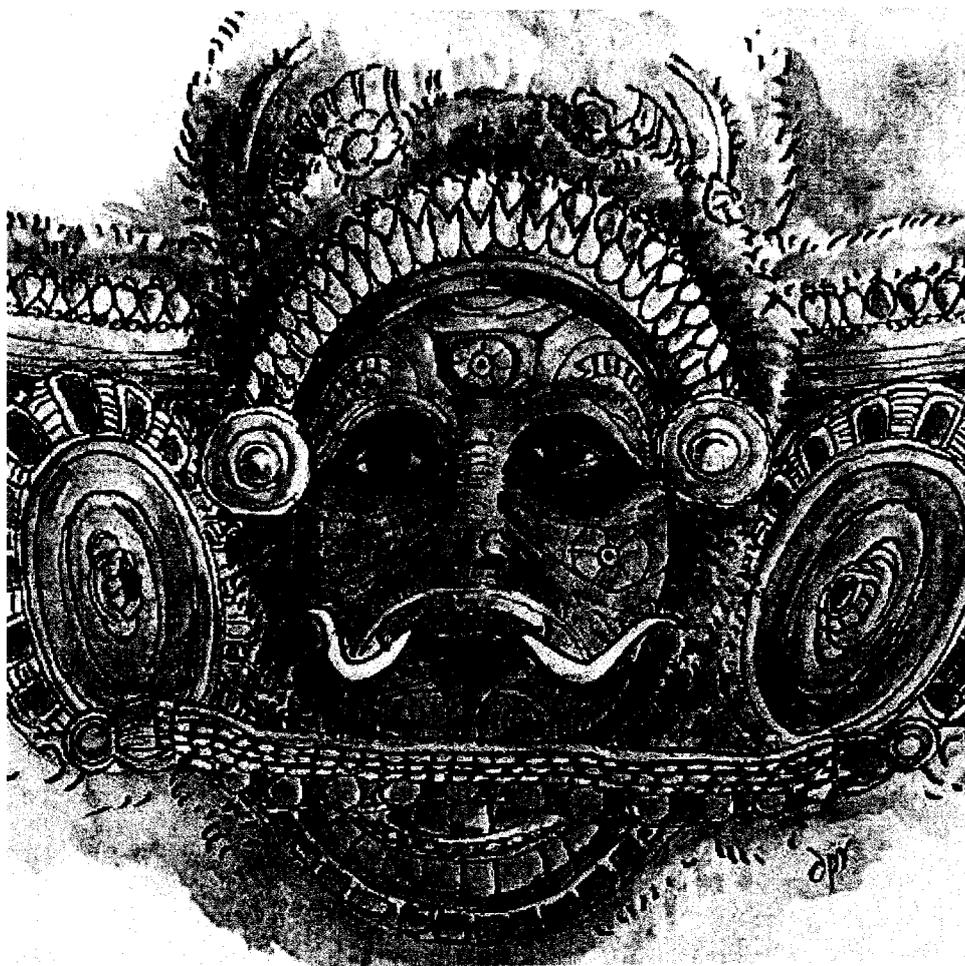
Detailed List of Readings for Critical Inquiry:

- Enriquez, Cristina. *The Book of Unknown Americans*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.
- WHY RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER STILL MATTER?
Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference"
Ronald Takaki, "A Different Mirror"
C. Matthew Snipp, "The First Americans: American Indians"
Huanani-Kay Trask, "From a Native Daughter"
Jeremiah Torres, "Label Us Angry"
- SYSTEMS OF POWER AND INEQUALITY
Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
Charles A. Gallagher, "Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post-Race America"
Abby L. Ferber, "What White Supremacists Taught a Jewish Scholar about Identity"
Min Zhou, "Are Asian Americans becoming "White"?"
Herbert J. Gans, "Race as Class"
- ETHNICITY, IMMIGRATION, AND NATIONALITY
Lillian B. Rubin, "Is this a White Country, or What?"
Bhoomi K. Thakore, "Must-See TV: South Asian Characterizations in American Popular Media"
Mary C. Waters, "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?"
Marie Friedmann Marquardt, Timothy J. Steigenga, Phillip J. Williams, and Manuel A. Vásquez, "Living "Illegal": The Human Face of Unauthorized Immigration"
Carolina Bank Muñoz, "A Dream Deferred: Undocumented Students at CUNY"
- CLASS AND INEQUALITY
Joan Acker, "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?"
Timothy Noah, "The Great Divergence: Growing Income Inequality Destabilize the U.S. So Why Isn't Anyone Talking about It?"
Meghan Kuebler, "Closing the Wealth Gap: A Review of Racial and Ethnic Inequalities in Homeownership"
Debra Henderson and Ann Tickamyer, "The Intersection of Poverty Discourses: Race, Class, Culture, and Gender"

Lawrence R. Jacobs and James A. Morone, "Health and Wealth: Our Appalling Health Inequality Reflects and Reinforces Society's Other Gaps"

- CRITICAL RACE THEORY – Details on select readings to be provided
- INDIGENEITY STUDIES – Details on select readings to be provided

***READ WIDELY! THINK DEEPLY! QUESTION INSIGHTFULLY!
ENJOY THE COURSE!***



Dileep R., "Theyyam: Traditional Art from Kerala" (2016)