

## WS 540

# Women of Color Writing Culture: Women's Stories of Interracialism

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Consultation hours: Tues and Thurs 4-5pm and Wednesday by appointment

In the American popular imagining, black and white interracial intimacy has long been viewed as a threat – it has been seen as a crossing of the ‘color line’ that imperils supposed racial purity. In the early colonial era, for instance, black and white sexual unions were considered to be an “abominable admixture,” and the offspring of these unions were viewed as “terrible issue”. In this course we will analyze the origins of these ideas and map various American attitudes toward interracial desire, sex, marriage, and families throughout different historical periods. In much of the rhetoric surrounding interracial intimacy, however, whether it be black or white political opinion, fictional accounts, legal pronouncements, or public opinion, women’s experiences and interpretations have been silenced. Our aim in this course, then, is to attend to this silence and focus on women’s accounts of interracial unions and interracialism. We will read autobiography, fiction, and black and white women’s non-fictional responses to anti-miscegenation law and rhetoric and the issue of racial ‘mixture’.

### Aims and Objectives:

- Students will gain a comprehensive knowledge of the genealogical regulation of interracial intimacy and how the rhetoric surrounding interracialism has been articulated in specific gendered terms.
- Students will have a cogent understanding of how law has participated in this regulation and how law has been instrumental in creating the categories of ‘black’ and ‘white’.
- A critical awareness of how race is constructed as a discursive reality and of the intersections between race, gender, class, power, and knowledge.

### Required Texts:

Course Packet (from Zip)

Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman's Narrative*

Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Danzy Senna, *Caucasia*

### Assessments:

- 10% Participation
- 10% 15-20 minute presentation on a given topic
- 20% Minor paper 1: 5-6 pages critical essay, due April 10th
- 20% Minor paper 2: 5-6 pages critical essay, due April 24th
- 40% Final paper: 8-10 pages. Sample questions are included in the syllabus, although you are welcome to propose your own project. The question must be submitted to me two weeks prior to the due date, if you decide to take this option. Due May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Breakdown for assessments:

1. Please come to each class with 2 COPIES of 2-3 questions or points for discussion on the topic for that class. You will retain 1 copy for in-class discussion and hand the other to me. These questions will be used as part of our class discussion. Attendance grade will be based on you handing these into me each and every class. They must be considered and substantive in order to count for grading. Failure to supply this component of the assessment will result in a grade of non-attendance for that day. You may miss only 1 class without penalty; after that, grades will be deducted. In addition to this component, each student is required to **ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE** to in-class discussion in order to gain the participation grade. To facilitate this, *I will call on each and every student to speak in each and every class.*
2. **Minor papers:** These papers are set as ways for you to begin and refine your thinking of how gender is integral to anti-miscegenation rhetoric. The first paper is meant to be quite concentrated on Getman. For the second paper, you must include further sources from our readings and extend / deepen your argument. These are meant to be exploratory pieces that can contribute to your thinking for the final paper. Due April 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.
3. **Presentation:** Each student is required to present on a given topic. Presentations will begin on April 3rd. You will be allocated a topic in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of class. Depending on the number of students, presentations will be done either in pairs or in groups of no more than 3. Grades will be allocated based on your ability to deliver an in-depth, comprehensive and rigorous presentation. Presentations should go for no more than twenty minutes, but you are required to **LEAD CLASS DISCUSSION** after the presentation. **THIS TASK REQUIRES YOU TO PRESENT OUTSIDE OF A SIMPLE SUMMARY OF THE READINGS.** Everyone will have read the readings; you need to take the readings, supplement them with other materials, and **DO SOMETHING WITH THEM.** Please supply a single-spaced 1 page handout for the class that includes:
  - a. The argument of the reading(s) that you are addressing, noting important quotes, passages, page numbers
  - b. Address why the text is important. What is problematic, omitted? What are the main debates / what is at stake?
  - c. Present 5 substantive questions on the topic/reading
  - d. Supplement with an additional handout that addresses another reading (that you will source and research) and link these to the readings that that class has done

Please give me 2 hard copies of the questions and an outline of the presentation.

4. **Final paper DUE MAY 31st:** A list of suggested questions are included in this syllabus. You may, however, propose your own question. If you choose this option, you must meet with me in order to have your question approved. I will also expect to see a rough outline and a bibliography for the paper. This needs to be done by May 15<sup>th</sup>. You are strongly encouraged to begin this paper well in advance of the due date.

**Please note that a 5% grade reduction will apply for each day of late assignments without appropriate documentation (eg doctors certificate).**

**A note on plagiarism:** as defined by the University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s ideas”. This is a serious offense and will be reported, with further action taken: **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!**

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform me as soon as possible of their

needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Ave; Ph. 292-3307 or <http://www.ods.hio-state.edu/>.

**AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON STRUCTURE OF CLASS-TIME:**

Some class periods will be divided into 2 sections. In the first section we will attend to that class's topic. In the second section, I will provide either a lecture or background information on the following class. Thus, each class will address the current topic, but also be a preliminary for the following topic. This is so that when you read the readings you have a framework through which to view them.

**A DISCLOSURE / CAVEAT: I may, at various points, revise the readings that have been set.**

**OUTLINE**

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**March 27**

**Introduction: what are we doing here? – START READING *Bondswoman's Narrative*** (you have 2.5 weeks to read this)

**March 29**

**Interracial Intimacy: What's the Problem?**

Kennedy, R. 2000. 'The Enforcement of Anti-Miscegenation Laws'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 140-162.

Zabel, W. 2000. 'Interracial Marriage and the Law'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 54-61.

**April 3**

**'Abominable Mixture and Spurious Issue': The Early Colonial fight Against Amalgamation**

Saks, E. 2000. 'Representing Miscegenation Law'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 61-81.

Getman, K. A. 1984. 'Sexual Control in the Slaveholding South: The Implementation and Maintenance of a Racial Caste System'. In *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, 7: 115.

**April 5**

**Approaching the Civil War and the Advancing Threat to 'White Purity'**

Kaplan, S. 2000. 'The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 219-265.

**April 10**

**Discourse and Miscegenation**

Foucault, M. 1998. *The History of Sexuality 1: The Will to Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books, 92-102.

Extra readings to be advised

**1<sup>st</sup> PAPER DUE:** Using Getman as your central source, pose an argument as to how gender is central to anti-miscegenation discourse.

**April 12**

**Discussion of *Bondwoman's Narrative* – START READING *Passing* (2.5 weeks to read)**

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**April 17**

**Reconstruction and Jim Crow Attitudes to Interracial Marriage and Sex**

Hodes, M. 1993. 'The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War'. In J. C. Fout and M. S. Tantillo (eds), *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race Since the Civil War*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 59 - 74.

Williamson, J. 1995. *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, page selection to come (around 90).

**April 19**

**Women's Stories 1: Child and Browning**

**April 24**

**Film viewing: *Birth of a Nation***

**2<sup>nd</sup> PAPER DUE:** Using other sources that we have read, refine your argument as to how gender is central to anti-miscegenation discourse.

**April 26**

**Discussion of *Birth of a Nation***

Courtney, S. 2005. *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race, 1903-1967*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 61-99.

**May 1**

**Black / White Love in the 1920s: *Rhineland v. Rhineland***

Wacks, Jamie. 2000. 'Reading Race, Rhetoric, and the Female Body in the *Rhineland Case*.' In Sollors, W. (ed) 2000. *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pascoe, P. 1996. 'Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of "Race" in Twentieth Century America'. In *The Journal of American History*, 83: 1, 44-69.

Excerpts from *Rhineland* provided for analysis.

**May 3**

**Discussion of *Passing* - START READING *Caucasia* (3 weeks to read)**

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**May 8**

**Women's Stories 2: Johnson, Day, Brooks**

**May 10**

**Contesting Anti-Miscegenation Laws: The Lead-Up to *Loving***

Lubin, A. 2005 *Romance and Rights: The Politics of Interracial Intimacy 1945-54*. University of Mississippi Press (excerpts to be announced).

Romano, R. 2003. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Harvard University Press excerpts to be announced).

**May 15**

***Loving v. Virginia***

Lombardo, P. 1988. 'Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism: Historical Footnotes to *Loving v. Virginia*'. In *U.C. Davis Law Review*, 21: Winter, 421 - 452.

*Loving v. Virginia* <http://wings.buffalo.edu/law/bclc/web/loving.htm>

**May 17**

**Review class**

BRING COMPLETED REVIEW QUESTIONS TO CLASS

**May 22**

**Interracial Intimacy After *Loving***

Kennedy, R. 2003. 'How Are We Doing With *Loving*: Race, Law and Inter-marriage' in Kevin R. Johnson (ed) *Mixed Race America and the Law: A Reader*, 64-67.

Moran, R. 2003. 'Race and Romanticism: The Persistence of Same-Race Marriage after *Loving*' in *Interracial Intimacy and the Regulation of Race and Romance*. University of Chicago Press (Chapter 6).

Romano, R. 2003. 'Talking Black and Sleeping White' in *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Harvard University Press (Chapter 7).

**May 24**

**New People: 'Mixed Race-ness'**

Nakashima, C. L. 1992 "An Invisible Monster: The Creation and Denial of Mixed-Race People in America", in M.P.P.Root (ed.) *Racially Mixed People in America*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp.162-181.

Zack, N. 1993. 'Genocidal Images of Mixed Race' in *Race and Mixed Race*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press

**May 29**

**Discussion of *Caucasia***

**May 31**

**The Continuing Legacy of Anti-Miscegenation Rhetoric**

Perlman, J. 2000. 'Reflecting the Changing Face of America: Multiracials, Racial Classification, and American Inter-marriage'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Inter-marriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 506-533.

Romano, R. 2003. 'Eroded But Not Erased' in *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Harvard University Press (Chapter 8).

# REVIEW QUESTIONS

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1. How did anti-miscegenation laws evolve in U.S. history in regards to changing notions of
  - a. race
  - b. class
  - c. gender

You might like to consider this question in terms of either broad historical trajectories of thought or specific cultural shifts within a particular time period (or both)

2. What are some of the primary discourses that have surrounded the cultural understandings of interracial intimacy? Please concentrate on three discourses and map the complexity of their workings.
3. In the discourses that you analyze, please mark the operations of power or the power relations that are highlighted. Use Foucault's 'Method' to guide your response. Consider ways in which:
  - a. the formation of discourse is always marked by the inextricable workings of power and knowledge;
  - b. power, in this operation is always mutating or shifting;
  - c. power works at both local and broader levels in a system of double conditioning and;
  - d. contradictory discourses exist simultaneously.

# FINAL ESSAY SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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## Sample Questions:

1. From the early colonial period, anti-miscegenation law was implemented in order to 'preserve' 'white racial purity'. Yet, whiteness itself was created, both as a concept and a racial category through these laws.

Explain and discuss these statements and their significance with reference to specific cases. You should include a consideration of gender and class, alongside race.

2. Anti-miscegenation law has always been premised on the regulation of gender and sexuality via the prism of race. Explain and discuss in regard to specific racialized subject positions (eg, black femininity, black masculinity, white femininity, white masculinity – you may choose to look at ONE OR MORE of these subject positions).
3. While anti-miscegenation laws were finally found to be unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), the cultural currency of this rhetoric continues in the popular imaginary. Discuss in relation to one specific example.
4. 'Mixed-raceness' is a culturally constructed concept with an intricate history. Discuss this history (and its current manifestations) in regard to the *regulation* of interracial intimacy and the *power relations* that have marked this regulation.
5. Literary representations of interracial intimacy often work to simultaneously construct and contest anti-miscegenation rhetoric. Discuss in relation to one or two specific texts.
6. Anti-miscegenation law and rhetoric has often been described as a masculine discourse. Explain and discuss the significance of this statement.
7. Within anti-miscegenation law and rhetoric, 'blackness' has been imagined and produced as *sexual difference*. Explain and discuss in relation to the *significance* of this production.

## **LIST OF INCLUDED AND ADDITIONAL TEXTS**

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### **Primary texts:**

- Courtney, S. 2004. *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race*. Princeton University Press.
- Johnson, K. 2003 *Mixed Race America and the Law: A Reader*. New York University Press.
- Kennedy, R. 2003 *Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption*. Pantheon Books.
- Lemire, E. 2002. *Miscegenation: Making Race in America*. University of Penn Press.
- Lubin, A. 2005 *Romance and Rights: The Politics of Interracial Intimacy 1945-54*. University of Mississippi Press.
- Moran, R. 2003. *Interracial Intimacy and the Regulation of Race and Romance*. University of Chicago Press.
- Romano, R. 2003. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Harvard University Press.
- Sollors, W. (ed) 2000. *Interracialism: Black-White Inter marriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Talty, S. 2003. *Mulatto America: At the Crossroads of Black and White Culture – A Social History*. Harper Collins.

### **Additional texts:**

- Apel, D. 2004. *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Bardaglio, P. W. 1999. 'Shameful Matches: The Regulation of Interracial Sex and Marriage in the South Before 1900'. In M. Hodes (eds), *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Berzon, J. 1978. *Neither White Nor Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bradshaw, C. 1992. 'Beauty and the Beast: On Racial Ambiguity'. In M. P. P. Root (eds), *Racially Mixed People in America*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 77 - 91.
- Carson, C. 1999. "'You Know It When You See It": The Rhetorical Hierarchy of Race and Gender in *Rhinelander v. Rhinelander*'. In *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 85: 2, 111-128.
- Davenport, C. 1913. *State Laws Limiting Marriage Selection: Examined in the Light of Eugenics*. Cold Spring Harbor.
- Davis, F. J. 1998. *Who Is Black: One Nation's Definition*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Fogg-Davis, H. 2002. *The Ethics of Transnational Adoption*. Cornell University Press.
- Getman, K. A. 1984. 'Sexual Control in the Slaveholding South: The Implementation and Maintenance of a Racial Caste System'. In *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, 7: 115.
- Gilman, S. 1985. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Ginsberg, E. K. 1996. 'Introduction: The Politics of Passing'. In E. K. Ginsberg (eds), *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1 - 18.
- Gross, A. 1998. 'Litigating Whiteness: Trials of Racial Determination in the Nineteenth-Century South'. In *Yale Law Journal*, Oct.
- Grossberg, M. 1982. 'Guarding the Alter: Physiological Restrictions and the Rise of State Intervention in Matrimony'. In *American Journal of Legal History*, XXVI: 3, 197-226.



- Haizlip, S. T. 1994. *The Sweeter the Juice: A Family Memoir in Black and White*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Haney López, I. F. 1996. *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Hickman, C. B. 1997. 'The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census'. In *Michigan Law Review*, 95: March, 1161-1265.
- Higginbotham, L. and Kopytoff, B. 1989. 'Racial Purity and Interracial Sex in the Law of Colonial and Antebellum Virginia'. In *Georgetown Law Journal*, 77: August, 1967-2028.
- Hodes, M. 1993. 'The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War'. In J. C. Fout and M. S. Tantillo (eds), *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race Since the Civil War*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 59 - 74.
- Johnson, W. 2000. 'The Slave Trade, the White Slave, and the Politics of Determination in the 1850s'. In *The Journal of American History*, 87: 1, 52 pars.
- Jones, T. 2000. 'Shades of Brown: The Law of Skin Color'. In *Duke Law Journal*, 49: 1487.
- Kaplan, S. 2000. 'The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 219-265.
- Kennedy, R. 2000. 'The Enforcement of Anti-Miscegenation Laws'. In W. Sollors (eds), *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 140-162.
- Lombardo, P. 1988. 'Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism: Historical Footnotes to *Loving v. Virginia*'. In *U.C. Davis Law Review*, 21: Winter, 421 - 452.
- Pascoe, P. 1996. 'Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of "Race" in Twentieth Century America'. In *The Journal of American History*, 83: 1, 44-69.
- Paulin, D. 1997. 'Representing Forbidden Desire: Interracial Unions, Surrogacy, and Performance'. In *Theatre Journal*, 49: 4, 417 - 439.
- Reuter, E. B. 1931. *Race Mixture: Studies in Intermarriage and Miscegenation*. New York: Whittlesey Press.
- Sollors, W. 1997. *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wald, G. 2000. *Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Williamson, J. 1995. *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press.