



**Women and Visual Culture: Motherhood and Maternal Bodies**  
**Women's Studies 375**  
**Winter 2004**  
**T/R 10:30-12:18**  
**University Hall 36**

**Dr. Ruby C. Tapia**  
**286-G University Hall**  
**292.9939**  
**Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-4:00 pm**



## Course Description:

At the end of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, a fleshed-out girl ghost articulates a profound struggle by posing the question "How can I say things that are pictures?" This course on Women and Visual Culture will ponder the implications and insights of this question: it will examine visual culture as a site within which the relationship between (women) speaking and pictures (speaking women) is a process of complex negotiation across time and texts, a process shaped and inflected by the technologies of race, class, and sexuality, *as well as* gender. While this relationship between language and images can be analyzed through an engagement with a variety of themes, the course will focus specifically on the textual and visual language that produces motherhood and maternal "bodies," both physical/material bodies and ideological bodies. By reading critically the ways that motherhood is treated in a range of theoretical and cultural texts, students will analyze the complex meanings and experiences of motherhood in our current historical moment, as well as establish an understanding of how theoretical discourse, institutional practices, and popular cultural representations work together to construct the visualities used to fix, interrogate, transform, and/or resist women's "natural" relationship to motherhood.

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## Required Texts

**Print:** All available at SBX.

- Women and Visual Culture Course Reader, Edited by Dr. Ruby C. Tapia
- Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey. Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Gayl Jones. Corregidora. Beacon Press, 1990.
- Toni Morrison. Beloved. New York: Plume, 1987.
- Cherrie Moraga. Waiting in the Wings. LPC Group, 1997.

## **Films:**

*Ethnic Notions*  
*Losing Isaiah*  
*The Murder of Emmett Till*  
*The Cell*  
*Beloved*

## **Course Website:**

Women's Studies 375 has its own WebCT website, which students can access by opening their web browser (such as Netscape Navigator or Explorer), going to <http://class.osu.edu>, and clicking on the course name: WOMST 375: Women and Visual Culture. The course syllabus, requirements, assignments, and announcements can be found on the web site. Note that students must send all email communications to the instructor through this web site. Some colleges have their own WebCT servers; you may, therefore, have several WebCT accounts. Please call 688-HELP if you have trouble accessing the site for this course. To learn more about using WebCT and setting up your home computer, go to <http://telr.osu.edu/webct/overview/sovervw.cfm>, especially the section on "browsers."

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### **Course Requirements and Grading System:**

The success of students' performance in this course depends on their fulfillment of all requirements stipulated in this syllabus. Students must

- attend all class meetings
- arrive on time and stay for the full class period
- prepare for classes by completing all reading assignments by their due dates
- contribute to a productive learning environment by participating appropriately and respectfully in class discussions
- complete every assignment by its due date

Students will earn their grade based on the following grading system and breakdown of assignments and percentages:

		<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89%</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79%</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>67-69%</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>93-100%</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>83-86%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73-76%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>63-66%</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-92%</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>80-82%</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70-72%</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>60-62%</b>

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Midterm</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Group Presentation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Reading Response Journal</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>25%</b>

#### **Attendance (10%) and Participation (15%)**

The seminar format of the class is designed to accommodate and to promote substantive analyses and discussions of the assigned readings and visual material. While these texts will be supplemented by periodic mini-lectures, the intention of the course is to establish a temporary formal work group,

every member of which will contribute constructively to the *collective* project of exploring the course themes. It will be impossible for students to have an optimal learning experience if they do not attend every class meeting, having read every assigned text carefully and well enough in advance to allow themselves time to absorb the material. Attendance will be taken during every class meeting. Students should be certain to sign the roll sheet. Examination and quiz make-ups will only be offered in cases of extreme emergency. In this case, students must contact the professor with written documentation of the emergency and obtain explicit consent to make up the assignment.

### **Midterm (15%)**

Students will take a midterm that assesses their engagement with and understanding of important course concepts. The format will consist of identifications and short answers.

### **Group Presentation (15%)**

Students will complete one small-group oral presentation on an assigned text. The professor will make the group assignments at the beginning of the quarter and distribute details about each group's responsibilities one week in advance of their presentation.

### **Reading Response Journal (20%)**

Each student is required to keep a journal of responses to the assigned texts. Each weekly response should total 350-400 words, and should briefly address the following questions with regard to one of the assigned texts for that week. (Consult assignment schedule to determine which text).

1. What is the author's main argument/s? (If the text is a work of literary or filmic "fiction," what were the themes addressed?)
2. What ideas or discussions about motherhood is the author building upon and/or critiquing?
3. What did you find most compelling about the work? What new experience/notion/image of motherhood did it present for you?

On days when reading responses are due, ten to fifteen minutes will be devoted to a reading response exchange, in which students will pair up and share with one another their responses for that week. This exercise is meant to encourage diligent reading habits, to facilitate critical thinking, and to provide an alternative to more traditional modes of sharing knowledge and ideas in the classroom. The instructor will collect the responses at the end of the class period and return them to students with a grade based on evidence of careful reading, effective writing, and the level of engagement with the

assigned questions. Each reading response is worth 10 points total. Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria.

1. Careful reading: Worth 2 points. Considerations: whether or not the student read the text completely and carefully. If it is clear from their response that they did not, I will deduct points.
2. Clear, careful, grammatically correct writing: Worth 2 points. Considerations: whether or not the student took time to convey her/his ideas carefully and with attention to her/his writing.
3. Thoughtful answer to question 1, reflective of clarity on the text's arguments/purpose: Worth 2 points.
4. Thoughtful answer to question 2, reflective of an effort to situate the text within/in reference to broader discussions/ideas about "The Latina Experience" and within/in reference to specific discussions raised in other texts or in lecture. Worth 2 points.
5. Thoughtful answer to question 3, reflective of sincere engagement with texts and ideas presented within them: Worth 2 points.

### **Final Exam (25%)**

The final exam will be an in-class exam, consisting of identifications and essay questions.

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### **Statement on Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

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### **Statement on Plagiarism**

As defined by 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 work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

- Always cite your sources
- Always ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism.
- Always see your professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment.

To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!

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### **Accommodation of students with disabilities**

Students who wish to have an accommodation for disability are responsible for contacting the professor as soon as possible. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307; 292-0901 TDD) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

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### **Resources**

Professor: Please make use of the professor's office hours to discuss the course material and assignments, and/or any questions or concerns you may have.

The OSU Writing Center: The OSU Writing Center offers free individual tutoring with writing consultants who can help writers working at any level. While I encourage you to take advantage of this resource, you are not required to do so, and any/all of your visits to the Center can remain confidential. The Center is located in room 485, Mendenhall Lab, on the south side of the Oval. Phone: 688-5865. Website: <http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/cstw/writingcenter.html>.

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*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus if the need arises.*

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### **Schedule of Readings, Discussions, and Assignments**

## Unit 1: Conceiving Mothers, Writing Bodies: The Gender, Racial, and Sexual Politics of Nation-Building

### Week One:

Tuesday 1/6: Administrative Issues and Course Goals

Thursday 1/8:

- Readings:
  - Evelyn Nakano Glenn. "The Social Construction of Mothering." Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency. 1-32.
  - Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation." Course Reader.
- Lecture and Discussion: *The Work of Representation and the Role of (Visual) Discourse in the Social Construction of Mothering*

### Week Two:

Tuesday 1/13:

- Readings:
  - Hazel V. Carby. "Slave and Mistress: Ideologies of Womanhood Under Slavery." Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Course Reader
  - **Reading Response Due** on Hazel Carby, "Slave and Mistress."
- Lecture and Discussion: *The Cult of True Womanhood and Its (Other) Discontents*;
- Film: *Ethnic Notions*, Part I

Thursday 1/15:

- Readings:
  - Laura Wexler, "Seeing Sentiment: Photography, Race, and the Innocent Eye." Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 52-93. Course Reader
- Lecture and Discussion: *Seeing Sentiment: Racialized Visions of the Maternal*, Part I
- Film: *Ethnic Notions*, Part II

### Week Three:

Tuesday, 1/20:

- Readings: Gayl Jones, Corregidora.
  - Group 1 Presentation on Corregidora
  - **Reading Response Due** on Gayl Jones, Corregidora.

Thursday, 1/22:

- Readings: Catherine Clinton, "With a Whip in His Hand."
  - Lecture and Discussion: *Race, Memory, and Motherhood*

### Week Four:

Tuesday 1/27:

- Readings:
  - Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence: Domestic Photographs, Domestic Fictions, and Educational Reform." Tender Violence: Photography, Race, and the Innocent Eye. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 94-125.
  - Emmerich, Lisa E. "'Save the Babies!': American Indian Women, Assimilation Policy, and Scientific Motherhood, 1912-1918." Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West. Ed. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Course Reader.
  - Extra Credit: Read and write a reading response on Ruby C. Tapia's "Un(di)ing Legacies: White Matters of Memory in Portraits of 'Our Princess.'" Due: Tuesday, 1/27.
  - **Group 2 Presentation** on Wexler, "Tender Violence."
  - **Reading Response Due** on Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence: Domestic Photographs, Domestic Fictions, and Educational Reform."
- Lecture and Discussion: *Seeing Sentiment: Racialized Visions of the Maternal*, Part II

Thursday 1/29:

### Midterm



## Week Five:

Tuesday 2/3:

- Readings:
  - Paz, Octavio. "The Sons of La Malinche." Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe. Ed. Ana Castillo. New York: Riverhead Books. Course Reader.
  - Gonzalez-Crussi F. "The Anatomy of a Virgin." Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe. Ed. Ana Castillo. New York: Riverhead Books. Course Reader.
  - Anzaldua, Gloria. "Coatloapeuh: She Who Has Dominion Over Serpents." Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe. Ed. Ana Castillo. New York: Riverhead Books. Course Reader.
  - Martinez, Ruben. "The Undocumented Virgin." Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe. Ed. Ana Castillo.
  - **Reading Response Due** on Ruben Martinez, "The Undocumented Virgin."
- Lecture and Discussion: *Virginal Mothers and Holy Resistance: Anatomies of Cultural Dislocation and Struggle*, Part I;

Thursday 2/5:

- **Group 3 Presentation** on Alma Lopez website
- Lecture and Discussion: *Virginal Mothers and Holy Resistance: Anatomies of Cultural Dislocation and Struggle*, Part II;

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## Unit 2: (Un)Maternal Visions: Seeing, Believing, and Resisting Myths about (Other) Mothers

## Week Six:

Tuesday 2/10:

- Readings:
  - Coontz, Stephanie, "'Leave It to Beaver' and 'Ozzie and Harriet': American Families in the 1950s" and "'My Mother Was a Saint' Individualism, Gender Myths, and the Problem of Love" in The Way We Never Were.
  - Feldstein, Ruth. "'I Wanted the Whole World to See': Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till."

Motherhood in Black and White: Race and Sex in American Liberalism, 1930-1965. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.

- **Reading Response Due** on Ruth Feldstein, "'I Wanted the Whole World to See.'"
- Film: *The Murder of Emmett Till*

Thursday 2/12:

- Lecture and Discussion: *Saintly Mothers and (Un)Forgettable Sons: Revisiting the Relationship Between Domesticity and Violence*;

### Week Seven:

Tuesday 2/17:

- Readings:
  - Roberts, Dorothy. "The Dark Side of Birth Control" and "Making Reproduction a Crime." Killing the Black Body. Course Reader.
  - **Reading Response Due** on Roberts, "Making Reproduction a Crime"
  - **Group 4 Presentation** on "The Dark Side of Birth Control."
- Film: *Losing Isaiah*

Thursday 2/19:

- Readings:
  - Rickie Solinger, "'Race and Value': Black and White Illegitimate Babies, 1945-1965." Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency. 287-310. Course Reader
  - Anna Tsing, "Monster Stories: Women Charged with Perinatal Endangerment." Course Reader
- Film: *Losing Isaiah* (cont.)

### Week Eight:

Tuesday 2/24:

- Readings:

- E. Ann Kaplan “Look Who’s Talking, Indeed: Fetal Images in Recent North American Culture.” Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency. 121-138.
- **Reading Response Due** on Ellen Lewin, “Negotiating Lesbian Motherhood.”
- Lecture and Discussion: *Fetal Positions and Baby “Pictures”:* *Reproducing and Resisting the Gender, Racial, and Sexual Politics of Nation-Building*

Thursday 2/26 :

- Readings:
  - Cherrie Moraga, *Waiting in the Wings*
  - Ellen Lewin. “Negotiating Lesbian Motherhood: The Dialectics of Resistance and Accommodation.” Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency. 333-354.
  - **Group 5 Presentation** on Moraga, *Waiting in the Wings*
  - Film: *If These Walls Could Talk 2*

### Week Nine:

Tuesday 3/2:

- Readings:
  - Sau-ling Wong, “Diverted Mothering: Representations of Caregivers of Color in the Age of ‘Multiculturalism.’” Mothering: Ideology, Agency, Experience. 67-91
  - Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor.” Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women’s History. Third Edition. Ed. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois. New York and London: Routledge, 2000. Course Reader.
  - **Reading Response Due** on Sau-ling Wong, “Diverted Mothering.”
  - Lecture and Discussion: *Caregivers of Color in the Age of Multiculturalism*
  - Film (students responsible for viewing on their own by Thursday 3/4): *The Cell*, Tarsem Singh

Thursday 3/4:

- Lecture and Discussion: *Jennifer’s Butt, the Holy Virgin, and The Cell That Holds Them Both*

## Week Ten

Tuesday 3/9

- Readings:
  - Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
  - Film: *Beloved*

Thursday 3/11:

- Film: *Beloved* (cont.)
- Final Lecture: "'From Mammy [to Medea] to Miss America' and Beyond": *Racialized Therapies of the Maternal and the Historical*

## Finals Week:

- **Final Exam:** Date and Location TBA