

Center for the Humanities 2005-2006 Short Courses on The New World Order

The Center for the Humanities will host three Distinguished Visiting Professors in the Humanities for the 2005-2006 academic year. Each will offer a 3-week, two-credit upper-level interdisciplinary short course seminar.

Coco Fusco is an Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Division of Columbia University's School of the Arts. In addition to her work as a performance artist, Fusco is the author of *English is Broken Here* (The New Press, 1995), *The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings* (Routledge/Iniva, 2001) and the editor of *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (Routledge, 1999). Fusco is a recipient of a 2003 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts. Her writings have appeared in a wide variety of publications, including *The Village Voice*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Art in America*, *The Nation*, *Ms.*, *Frieze*, *Third Text*, and *Nka: Journal of African Art*, as well as a number of anthologies. She is the co-founder and co-moderator of *Undercurrents*, an on-line discussion about feminism, new technologies and globalization. For further information, see <http://www.thing.net/~cocofusco/>

Veena Das is Krieger-Eisenhower Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. She has researched extensively on questions of violence, social suffering, and subjectivity, and is currently working on a project on the burden of disease and health-seeking behavior among the urban poor in Delhi. Her first book, *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual* (Oxford University Press, 1977), examined texts produced in local communities in which myth and history were embedded in each other in an effort to understand the effects of longstanding cultural logics on contemporary events. Recent books include *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (Oxford University Press, 1995) and several edited volumes. Before coming to Johns Hopkins, she taught at the University of Delhi for thirty-three years. Das serves on the executive board of the Institute for Social and Economic Research in Development and Democracy in Delhi and the International Center for Ethnic Studies, and is a foreign honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Sander L. Gilman is currently Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with an appointment in the Department of German. Before coming to Illinois, Gilman spent 25 years as a member of the humanities and medical faculties at Cornell University, where he held the Goldwin Smith Professorship of Humane Studies, and for six years held the Henry R. Luce Distinguished Service Professorship of the Liberal Arts in Human Biology at the University of Chicago. He is moving next year to Emory University as Distinguished Professor of the Arts and Sciences. A prolific scholar, Gilman is the author or editor of more than 70 books on a wide array of topics, including monographs on Kafka, Goethe, Brecht, Nietzsche, Wilde, Freud, sexuality, aesthetic surgery, hysteria, race in Germany, and Judaism and Jewish identity, among others. His most recent edited volume, *SMOKE: A Global History of Smoking*, along with a widely reviewed monograph, *Fat Boys: A Slim Book*, were published in 2004. Gilman is also the author of the basic study of the visual stereotyping of the mentally ill, *Seeing the Insane* (1982, reprinted 1996), as well as the standard study of *Jewish Self-Hatred* (Johns Hopkins, 1986).

A brief description of each of the 2-credit short courses follows. Prerequisite for each will be third or fourth year standing.

Oct. 24 - Nov. 11 – Professor Coco Fusco: HUM 395.01: “Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self.”

This course will survey the many ways in which photography in America has shaped notions of racial and national identity. We will explore how assumptions about what Americans look like and what they should look like are communicated through photography and reinforced by notions of photographic truth. Some of our discussions will focus on the strategies that photographers use to support or debunk scientific racism. We will also concentrate on how market demands and popular cultural trends as well as government agendas affect the kind of racial imagery that prevails at different historical junctures. We will look at documentary photography, photojournalism and art photography in many photographic formats, from daguerreotypes and stereoviews to recently produced digital images.

Feb. 13 - Mar. 3 – Professor Veena Das: HUM 395.01: “Religion and Violence.” Instead of taking religion and violence as pre-constituted categories, we will examine the ways in which religion and violence might constitute each other. We will read certain classic texts on practices of initiation, sacrifice and martyrdom and ask how violence creates boundaries of community. What is the relation between violence and non-violence as categories of thought and action? How have concepts drawn from religion migrated to modern politics? We will read selected texts from anthropology, philosophy, and theology.

Apr. 3 - Apr. 21 – Professor Sander L. Gilman: HUM 395.02: “The New Anti-Semitism and the Old.” The course traces the construction of the specific targeting of the Jews as different and dangerous from the early Christian Church to the present. The historical changes that altered the appearance of Jew-hatred will be explored and the presence of anti-Semitism in our contemporary world analyzed. Readings will be from religious, historical, and literary texts, including films.

Questions should be directed to Alan Schrift, Director, Center for the Humanities, schrift@grinnell.edu.