TYLE 0805-008: Race, Identity, and Experience in American Art
Benjamin Tiven
Fall 2013
Tues/Thurs, 2:00-3:20 PM
Room B089
Contact: tiven@temple.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:00

Description / Goals
This course examines the construction and implications of race in American art. We will trace ideas and stereotypes about race, and examine how the idea of race has mitigated (and helped produce) a wide range of American artistic idioms. Our materials will be culled from cinema, photography, sculpture, painting, graphic design, and music. We are looking for responses to racial trauma; the imagining of alternate social relationships; and recognitions of the forces of capital and economics. Each week, we will examine works of art, analyze them, discuss them, and write about them. We are repeatedly asking: How do race, politics, or society effect the language of form? What is the relationship between an individual artist and the wider public?

Assignments / Grading
Class Participation: 15%
Readings are due for in-class discussion on the days listed.
Short Response Papers: 10% (each)
600-800 words, turned in through SafeAssign as an .rtf or .doc file. Comments will be made digitally and papers emailed back.
• Citation / Bibliography / Summary using a library source text
• Group Assignment: How to Write From the JPEG (formal analysis)
• Formal analysis of an object in the Blockson Collection, or the PMA
• Formal analysis of a work in the Fabric Workshop exhibition
Mid-Term exam: 15%
This will consist of image identifications.
An 8-10 page final research paper: 30%
This will be due on the penultimate class. One partial-letter grade will be deducted per every late day. This paper should be 8-10 pages. Use the skills you’ve practiced on the short assignments: formal analysis, research, citation, and analysis of previous scholarship. Each student will give an in-class presentation on their final topics, which will count as part of the final grade. I will hand out a list of possible paper topics, though students may propose their own (due to me by email, max 200 words, and I will send feedback and confirm). All papers must be formatted in 12 pt. type, 1.5 line spacing, set in Times or Helvetica, with 1 inch paper margins. No other formatting will be accepted.

On Writing
Your writing will be graded based upon the ideas you propose and support, and the sophistication with which you express them (that is: style, grammar, clarity). Let’s aim for complex thoughts, simply stated. An A
paper will excel in both concept and delivery. Papers with problems in content or form will fall in the B range. Papers with significant problems in both will receive a C. You’d have to work hard to get a lower grade than that, but it is indeed possible.

On Plagiarism
Theft of analytical ideas is a serious ethical failure, and, frankly, an abdication of one of the few things in this world that is truly your own: the ability to have an opinion, argument, or response to the world, and to shape that response for others. Discovery of even the slightest act of plagiarism will be grounds for a failing grade on the paper, and immediate reporting to Tyler’s Dean.

Attendance / Classroom Ethics
No computers, whatsoever. No, not even for taking notes. Absolutely no cell phones, iPhones, iPads, Droid phones, or any other kind of cellular or wireless computing machine can be used in class, ever. Seriously. Any texting, email, or use of cellphone/computer in class will be immediately marked as an absence. Attendance in every class is important. After three absences, a student will be removed from the class roster.

Further information
For any accommodations based on the impact of a disability, contact Laurie Duffy (215-777-9185) privately to discuss the situation. Disability Resources and Services (215-204-1280) can coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Inclement weather information: Radio stations KYW (1060-AM), WDAS (1480-AM), 105.3-FM, WIOQ (102.1-FM), WUSL (98.9-FM) and WPEN (950-AM) all broadcast code numbers indicating when classes are closed due to snow or inclement weather.

Before class:

August 27th / 29th
Introduction
Keywords & Propositions: What is race? What is art? What is American?
Screenings: Monodramas (Stan Douglas)
Readings: A Short Introduction to Racism (Ali Rattansi)

September 3rd / 5th
Screening: Funk Lessons (Adrian Piper)
Readings: A Short Introduction to Racism (Ali Rattansi); “Notes on Funk” (Adrian Piper)

August 27th / 29th
Introduction
Keywords & Propositions: What is race? What is art? What is American?
Screenings: Monodramas (Stan Douglas)
Readings: A Short Introduction to Racism (Ali Rattansi)

September 10th / 12th
Readings: selection from The Souls of Black Folk (W.E.B. Dubois); “The Legacy of Ancestral Arts” (Alain Locke); “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (Langston Hughes); “The Negro Artist and Modern
Art” (Romare Bearden); “Race, Nationality, and Art” (Meyer Schapiro). Thursday September 12th: Visit to the Blockson Collection
Thursday September 12th: Citation/Summary exercise due in

September 17th / 19th  Readings: “Whiteness” (Maurice Berger); “Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination” (bell hooks)
Thursday September 19th: Library information session

September 24th / 26th  Screening: Do The Right Thing (Spike Lee, 1989)
Reading: “America Through my Lens” (Spike Lee)

October 1st / 3rd  Screening: Zelig (dir. Woody Allen, 1983)
Reading: chapter from The Jewish Century (Yuri Slezkine)
Thursday October 3rd: Group work due in (writing from the JPEG)

October 8th / 10th  October 8th: Dread Scott visiting lecture
Close Look: Zoe Leonard & Cheryl Dunye: The Watermelon Woman

October 15th / 17th  Readings: “Why Have There Been no Great Women Artists?” (Linda Nochlin)
Thursday October 17th: Formal analysis short paper, Blockson or PMA
Thursday October 17th: Mid-Term exam

October 22nd / 24th  Close Look: David Hammons
Readings: “Black Light: David Hammons” (Glenn Ligon); 1986 interview with David Hammons

October 29th / 31st  Tuesday Oct 29th: Library information session
Thursday October 31st: Field Trip to Fabric Workshop/Museum: Mario Ybarra, Jr. exhibition (Make notes for your response paper!)

November 5th / 7th  Close Look: Jimmie Durham
Thursday November 7th: Library information session
Thursday November 7th: Ybarra formal analysis due in

November 12th / 14th  Close Listen: I Can’t Feel at Home in This World Anymore
Screening: Can I get an Amen (Nate Harrison)

November 19th / 21st  Readings: “The New Black Face” (Rob Giampetro); Interview with Gran Fury and Douglas Crimp
On the AIDS crisis and graphic design

November 26th / 28th  In-Class Presentations of final projects (both days)

December 3rd  Final papers due in; final presentation.