

DRAFT

Decolonizing the 'Human'

Spring 2022

Instructor: Anne Joh, Ph.D.

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Fall 2021

Tuesdays 2:30-5:00 pm, CST

Synchronous Zoom with second half of the semester (hopefully) in-person

Zoom link will be on Moodle

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Office Hours: By appt.

(Syllabus subject to revision/changes/modifications by the instructor anytime)

Course description

This seminar presumes students' prior familiarity with postcolonial/decolonial studies and preparedness for deepening the question of 'human' in relation to coloniality. The seminar proposes to engage in the practice of careful, attentive, and a close reading of key essays and chapters to further understanding how theological anthropology might deconstruct how we have known, understood and interpreted the 'human' and to further interrogate as well as reimagine the in/significance of the 'human.'

Seminar Procedure

The seminar meets once a week with emphasis each week on every member completing the assigned reading and submitting questions for discussion and reflection.

Each seminar day will be planned by a CONVERSANT. Conversants have the primary responsibility of planning discussion for the seminar. They will formulate these plans on the basis of their own reading of the material and after studying questions submitted that week by all the other seminar members. Conversants will study these questions, looking for ways to include them in the seminar by ordering and combining them in various relations and provide the introduction and structure of our discussion during the session. In other words, the seminar discussion is to be constructed out of materials provided by seminar members' questions.

At the seminar itself, conversants may make brief introductory remarks to set the stage for our conversation. In fact, I encourage conversant to offer, in these introductory remarks, some brief orienting thoughts about how seminar members interrogated and assessed the week's readings. Nevertheless, long discourses or summaries by conversant should be avoided. The aim at each seminar is well-orchestrated conversation, deliberately exploring key questions and issues. Always presume that seminar members have done the readings and hence do not need summaries. I will serve as moderator for each seminar, and periodically provide short lectures.

All seminar members will email their QUESTIONS to the conversants and to the professor, by noon, the day before the seminar. Conversant will, then, gather these questions the day before the seminar, study them carefully, then sometime before the seminar create an agenda for our seminar discussion. It is usually helpful for the conversant to bring a one page outline of the discussion as they envision it. Usually it is helpful to include your seminar members' questions within the outlined agenda you have constructed.

The questions submitted by each seminar member, however many in number, should take up no more than one page in length. Aim for brief, crisp, clearly articulated questions. If you develop your question in paragraph form, make sure your question has a clear, crisp, “sharp” edge to it. Ideally, your set of questions will be about 3 or 4 in number.

You may formulate your questions out of your sense that the author is unclear on a matter, because of your bafflement concerning an issue, or simply because you want to hear the seminar examine a particular theme or topic related to the reading.

Here are further examples of the kinds of questions seminar members may ask:

- 1) Clarification - seeking greater clarity about the nature of a given writer's position, about connections between readings, or about issues that continue from seminar to seminar.
- 2) Critique - identifying and briefly developing weaknesses you perceive in an assigned text.
- 3) Implication - exploring the implications for cultural critique, theology or something else, which you see generated by the assigned reading of the week.

SPECIAL ADMONITION: 1) Your questions are the material from which the conversant will shape the seminar dialogue of the week. 2) This is not the class for you to “wing it” or to not do the readings but come and preach. This course will stick very closely to the assigned readings and so should your remarks and engagement in the class. Complete your reading promptly, and please submit questions and on time by noon, the day before our seminar.

Evaluation

Conversant/questions responsibility during the semester: $2 \times 30\% = 60\%$ for doctoral students:
 $3 \times 20\% = 60\%$

Final Paper: 40%. No longer than 20 pages PLUS bibliography with citational style that is appropriate to your field. Consult with the instructor for final paper topic approval.

Office Hours and other Protocols

Office Hours:

Part of my job is to offer office hours to advisees and students enrolled in my courses. Appoints are scheduled individually as I do not hold set office hours. Do not be shy about requesting office hours. You can do so by sending me an email request. I prefer phone conversation rather than video meetings. We want to be sure that our time is used fruitful. Meetings should have a clear so think about what you want to discuss/accomplish during the meeting. Learning to set clear agenda for a meeting is part of professionalization. When you request a meeting let me know in few words what the purpose of the meeting is. Do not beat around the bush. Be clear and transparent.

The day before our scheduled meeting, send me another email with no more than a one page of clear purpose and content of what you want to discuss. You do not have to craft a perfect email to me. It does not have to have the perfect narrative. Even bullet-point agenda of issues/topics to discuss is fine. This will help orient our meeting and gives me a heads-up. This also helps to take the pressure off having to feel you must perform during our meeting of your brilliance. If you need to cancel, I need an email from you that you need to reschedule or cancel.

*Shame spiral: If you are having difficulty with the course it's a good idea to reach out sooner than later. Many of us grapple with shame and fall into the trap of, "I'll get in touch when I have everything together." Please avoid this and just reach out and not wait.

Post Meeting follow-up: I highly recommend you send me a follow-up email highlighting our conversation's important points and resolutions, and especially important decisions or agreements that both of us have made. E.g., deadlines. If we continue with conversations and emails, keep everything in one single thread of emails so I can keep a track of our conversations' evolution.

Drafts/Papers: If you want feedback at the meeting a good rule of thumb is the number of pages to be read divided by 2 is the number of days in advance it should be sent to me.

Letter of Recommendation: It's fine to request LORs via email. Include all information as necessary for me to write a specific and helpful letter on your behalf. This may include any paper you wrote for me, your CV, and any statement, letter or essay you will submit with your application. I do not take LORs lightly and need all relevant information 4 weeks in advance to craft a letter I am willing to sign off on.

Readings: Mostly on Moodle as PDFs

An, Yountae, and Eleanor Craig. *Beyond Man : Race, Coloniality, and Philosophy of Religion*. Durham: Duke University Press,, 2021.

Drexler-Dreis, Joseph. *Beyond the Doctrine of Man : Decolonial Visions of the Human*. First edition. ed. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2020.

Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. *Becoming Human : Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World*. Sexual Cultures. New York: New York University Press, 2020.

McKittrick, Katherine. *Sylvia Wynter : On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Sessions

Feb. 1

Orientation

Feb. 8

Kumar, "(An)other Way of Being Human" on Moodle

Feb. 15

Jackson, "Becoming Human" p. 1-44, PDF on Moodle

Feb. 22

Wynter, "Toward the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon...". On Moodle
"No Humans Involved" On Moodle

March 1

Wynter, "Rethinking "aesthetics": Notes Towards..." On Moodle
Scott, "The Re-enchantment of Humanism: An Interview..." On Moodle

March 8

Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom:...”

March 15

Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis, Chapters 1 and 2

March 22

On Being Human as Praxis, Chapters 3 and 4

March 29

On Being Human, Chapters 7 and 10

April 5

Beyond the Doctrine of Man, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

April 12

Beyond the Doctrine of Man, Chapters 3 and 8

April 19

Beyond the Doctrine of Man, Chapters 9 and 10

April 26

Beyond Man: Race, Coloniality and Philosophy of Religion, Chapters Introduction, 2, 3

May 3

Beyond Man, Chapter 6, 7 and 9