Course information:

Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

College/School: New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Department: School of Humanities, Arts & Cultural Studies

Prefix: WST  Number: 469  Title: Trash, Freaks, and Scum  Units: 3

Is this a cross-listed course? No
If yes, please identify course(s) Pending crosslist requests in ChangeMaker: AMS 469, ETH 469

Is this a shared course? No
If so, list all academic units offering this course

Is this a permanent numbered course with topics? Yes
If yes, all topics under this permanent numbered course must be taught in a manner that Chair/Director Initials meets the criteria for the approved designation(s). It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines. (Required)

Course description:
This course includes a variety of concepts relating to trash, ranging from actual trash, that is, garbage, waste, toxic sludge, pollution, and dirt, just as we will be tackling more abstract notions of trash, that is, knowledge produced on the fringe in circuses, amusement parks, "trailer trash" zones, freak shows, and the bodies of those marked as "Other" or different.

Requested designation: Social-Behavioral Sciences-SB
Note: a separate proposal is required for each designation requested

Eligibility:
Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university's review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu or Lauren.Leo@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow:
For Fall 2016 Effective Date: October 6, 2015
For Spring 2017 Effective Date: March 15, 2016

Area(s) proposed course will serve:
A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study.

Checklists for general studies designations:
Complete and attach the appropriate checklist
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
- Mathematics core courses (MA)
- Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
- Humanities, Arts and Design core courses (HU)
- Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
- Natural Sciences core courses (SQ/SG)
- Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)
- Global Awareness courses (G)
- Historical Awareness courses (H)

A complete proposal should include:
- Signed course proposal cover form
- Criteria checklist for General Studies designation(s) being requested
- Course catalog description
- Sample syllabus for the course
- Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

It is respectfully requested that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF. If necessary, a hard copy of the proposal will be accepted.

Contact information:
Name: Dr. Breanne Fahs  E-mail: breanne.fahs@asu.edu  Phone: (602)543-3313

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)

Rev. 4/2015
Rationale and Objectives

The contemporary "culture" of the United States involves the complex interplay of many different cultures that exist side by side in various states of harmony and conflict. The history of the United States involves the experiences not only of different groups of European immigrants and their descendants but also of diverse groups, including, but not limited to, American Indians, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans—all of whom played significant roles in the development of contemporary culture and together shape the future of the United States. At the same time, the recognition that gender, class, and religious differences cut across all distinctions of race and ethnicity offers an even richer variety of perspectives from which to view ourselves. Awareness of our cultural diversity and its multiple sources can illuminate our collective past, present, and future and can help us to achieve greater mutual understanding and respect.

The objective of the Cultural Diversity requirement is to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States through the study of the cultural, social, or scientific contributions of women and minority groups, examination of their experiences in the U.S., or exploration of successful or unsuccessful interactions between and among cultural groups.

Revised April 2014
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU--[C] CRITERIA

#### CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A Cultural Diversity course must meet the following general criteria: syllabus</td>
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<td>The course must contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity in contemporary U.S. Society. syllabus</td>
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<td>A Cultural Diversity course must then meet at least one of the following specific criteria:</td>
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<td>a. The course is an in-depth study of culture-specific elements, cultural experiences, or cultural contributions (in areas such as education, history, language, literature, art, music, science, politics, work, religion, and philosophy) of gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States. syllabus</td>
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<td>b. The course is primarily a comparative study of the diverse cultural contributions, experiences, or world views of two or more gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States.</td>
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<td>c. The course is primarily a study of the social, economic, political, or psychological dimensions of relations between and among gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States. syllabus</td>
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*Gender groups would encompass categories such as the following: women, men, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender individuals, etc.

**Cultural, racial, ethnic, and/or linguistic minority groups in the U.S. would include categories such as the following: Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans/First Peoples, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans, members of the deaf community, etc.
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<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example - See 2b. Compares 2 U.S. cultures</td>
<td>Example - Compares Latino &amp; African American Music</td>
<td>Example - See Syllabus Pg. 5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The course addresses the cultural components of contemporary life for women, people of color, and sexual minorities/LGBT groups.</td>
<td>See syllabus reading list</td>
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<td>2a</td>
<td>Students learn about the specific contributions of radical feminists, trans activists, fat activists, and activists of color and the ways that different oppressed groups get framed as &quot;freaks&quot; within historical and contemporary literatures.</td>
<td>See syllabus reading list</td>
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<td>2c</td>
<td>Students learn to &quot;put into conversation&quot; different racial, gender, and sexual groups, such as during the weeks sexualities, freak shows, dreamlands, and in the work on abjection.</td>
<td>See syllabus reading list</td>
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WST 469 Trash, Freaks, and SCUM
(this permanent course number has been requested in ChangeMaker and also crosslists AMS 469, ETH 469)

This course has as its primary objective the examination of the possibilities inherent in “theorizing from the gutter,” that is, looking at the world not from a lofty (“Ivory Tower”) sort of place, but rather, from the slime, the muck, the dumpster, the trash heap, the wasteland, the discarded, and the downtrodden. The course takes its theoretical framework from a radical 1960s manifesto called SCUM Manifesto (by Valerie Solanas) and from the French feminist philosophies of Julia Kristeva, who theorized the abject as a relationship with the grotesque that reveals the deep-seated fear of death. In short, we will be using these two theoretical positions—different from each other in tone, affect, and style, but similar in the central principles of the works—to examine trash both abstractly and literally. We will be working through a variety of concepts in this course, ranging from actual trash, that is, garbage, waste, toxic sludge, pollution, and dirt, just as we will be tackling more abstract notions of trash, that is, knowledge produced on the fringe in circuses, amusement parks, “trailer trash” zones, freak shows, and the bodies of those marked as “Other” or different.

Trash, freaks, and SCUM is a course with multiple goals, but the primary goal is to understand the sorts of knowledges (self-knowledge, knowledge of the world, philosophies, radical reimagining, affective connections, and so on) that can be produced from and within trash. This course asks: If, as Valerie Solanas suggests, SCUM is for “whores, dykes, criminals, and homicidal maniacs” and is largely aversive to polite society, what can be learned, seen, and experienced from that subjective position? Amidst trashy bodies, trashy words, trashy thoughts, and trashy sexualities, how are the self and the “Other” produced or demarcated? How is trash something that informs the core of race relations, gender relations, and the production of “freaky” bodies and “freaky” sexualities? How do we know something is of “trash,” and how are we made trashy as we occupy the fringe of society? What is at stake in examining trash from a “non-trashy” place such as academia? How might the homeless person, the downtrodden, the circus freak, the anorexic, or the white trash teenager teach us the truth about ourselves and our world, and why must we so often negate and ignore these truths? What sorts of energies do we expend avoiding the label of “trash” and how does this relate to our literal production of actual trash? What do the politics and modes of consumption that we enact reveal about our relationship to “reality”? What do the things we discard, and how we discard them, reveal about powerful institutions like capitalism, the government, education, religion, and the media? How might we reimagine our relationship to the trash we circulate within, the trash we avoid, and the trash we embody? Going beyond simplistic notions of “sustainability,” how might the project of
understanding trash undermine, reinforce, and resituate our self-understanding as students and scholars?

**Course requirements** include:

1. Midterm exam, due no later than 4:30 PM on **Friday, March 6th online**: 25%
2. Final exam, due no later than 4:30 PM on **Friday, May 1st online**: 25%
3. Trash bag paper (specific below), due no later than 4:30 PM **Thursday February 26th**: 20%
4. Redistribution of resources assignment (specifics below) due no later than 4:30 PM on **Monday, April 6th**: 10%
5. Quizzes and in-class assignments (specifics below): 20%

**Trash bag assignment**

As this course addresses issues related to metaphorical and literal trash, this assignment is designed to get you thinking about the more literal side of trash. There are three parts to this assignment. For the first part, you will collect the trash that you personally produce for two days and you should carry the bag of trash with you at all times for this 48-hour period. **(We will all do this at the same time, from 4:30 PM on Saturday, February 14th to 4:30 PM on Monday, February 16th).** This means that you will carry around every piece of trash you personally produce with the exception of used toilet paper. Product wrappers (e.g., tampon wrappers, granola bar wrappers), anything produced as a result of the food you eat in or out of the home, and all personal trash items—-cups, lids, straws, plastic bags, containers, cans, bottles, gum wrappers, Ziploc bags, magazines, tissues, napkins, paper towels, and any and all other trash items you produce must be carried by you for this 48 hour period and then brought to class on the designated day. You should be careful to produce the “normal” trash you typically produce for this period of time. You are also REQUIRED to carry your trash to social events, work, other classes you may attend, and throughout your house as you move from room to room (as needed). You should not leave the house without your bag of trash for this 48-hour period. You will then bring this bag of trash to class and present it, somewhat formally, in our collective “display of trash.” This presentation will require you to assess what your trash production reveals about your habits, needs, lifestyle, and consumption habits.

Part two of this assignment will be a 48-hour period of time where you consciously attempt to produce **as little trash as possible**. During these two days, you will try earnestly to use as little as possible and to produce trash minimally. This may take some preparation ahead of time so that you have reusable items on hand. **We will all do this at the same time, from 4:30 PM on Saturday, February 21st to 4:30 PM on Monday, February 23rd.** Please bring your bag of trash to class again to class on 2/23 and present it to the class, assessing the difficulty/ease of limiting your consumption and trash production habits.

After showing the class your trash on these two occasions and “excavating” what you produce, your next task will be to write a 3-4 page single-spaced paper analyzing the predictable, surprising, and challenging aspects of this assignment. What sorts of trash were you conscious of producing and what sorts of trash were hidden or obscured? What trash did you feel the most shame or embarrassment about? What trash did you expect to produce more of? Less of? How does your production of trash map onto others’ production of trash? And, finally, identify at least **three lifestyle changes** you would like to make to produce less trash in your life? As sustainable living will become more and more important and necessary over time, what specific changes do you anticipate making? What could you reuse or make nondisposable? What could
you consume less of? What could you imagine going without? How could you rearrange your habits or sense of your own needs (or your family’s needs)? This paper is due to the SafeAssign link on Blackboard no later than Thursday, February 26th at 4:30 PM.

Redistribution of resources assignment

This assignment has as its central goal the redistribution of resources, specifically the redistribution of resources from “those who have too much” to “those who have too little.” One could, I suppose, nickname this assignment the “Robin Hood” assignment. Your task is not to merely academically analyze such practices, but to enact such practices directly in your community. You will be given a group of 3-4 students within which you will work and collaborate. Your task is to design a socioeconomic class based intervention where you purposefully redistribute resources. This could be a project where you contact grocery stores about their expired food policies and make sure that the food goes somewhere other than the dumpster. It could mean that you repurpose used clothing into reusable menstrual pads. It could mean that you redirect resources from your work (supplies, “excess” funds, and so on, depending on what your work place has too much of) and redistribute it to those who need it more. This should go far beyond simply giving money to those who need it (though that could be a part of it), and should instead show a social justice sentiment about the importance of equality about resources. Money is insufficient. The ideal intervention would require those with “too much” to go with less.

Please note that you should not engage in anything illegal or in anything that would jeopardize your health and safety in any way. Your task is to think about how to work on redistribution of resources on a number of fronts: policy changes, guerilla tactics, disguise, petitions, and so on. There are many ways to make resources more equitable and to deal with the notion of excess and imbalance. I want to see you get creative and to have a clear strategy about the political intervention you are doing.

You will write up this project as a group in the form of a 4-6 page single-spaced paper detailing: 1) the academic articles and scholarly texts that inspired your work; 2) the journalistic and newspaper/blog/online texts that inspired your work; 3) what your goal and motives were for your project; 4) what tactics you employed; 5) the setbacks and successes of the project (all should be documented as much as possible with photos and videos!!!), and 6) what you learned from this project. You will present to the class your work as well in the form of a 10 minute presentation that should involve photos, PowerPoints, and videos. It should be stylish, interesting, succinct, and clearly show your goals, tactics, and outcomes of the project. The presentations will take place on Monday, April 6th in class, and the paper will be due the same date as the presentation, to be submitted online to the Blackboard SafeAssign link.

Masters degree students (additional assignment)

As this course combines upper-division undergraduate students with master’s students, all master’s students are expected to complete additional work that the undergraduates do not complete. For this course, each master’s student will select one day’s readings and will do the following:

1) Carefully read that day’s assigned material.

2) Create a 20-25 minute close reading presentation that will help the class better understand this material and the key points raised in the reading. You may use PowerPoint or work with students to understand, process, and analyze that day’s readings. Please keep your
time within the set 20-25 minute boundary, and turn in your notes, PowerPoints, and
close reading plans to me no later than 10:00 PM the previous night before the class.
Ideally, your presentation/notes should: a) provide the class with relevant information
about the author and claims of the readings; b) define the key terms, ideas, and key points
of the readings; c) clarify how the readings build upon, reject, or shift arguments made by
others we have read; d) provide a jumping off point for class discussions that day.
3) Select a series of additional resources for students, including a list of additional readings,
possible films on the topic, and appropriate points for discussion and further analysis that
students can engage with on their own. Print this out and distribute it to the class on your
assigned day.

All masters degree students will select their assigned day on the first day of class.

Course policies:
At the beginning of each class session you will be asked to participate in a course
exercise, most often involving a brief in-class reading quiz, but occasionally involving a short
writing assignment or reflection on the readings. Occasionally, I will ask you to complete a
writing exercise at home, to be due at the beginning of the class the following session (no late
papers will be accepted). These are meant to keep you engaged with the readings, and they will
help me to gauge your comprehension of different topic areas. It is essential that you read the
assigned readings in order to succeed in this course, as these quizzes will be worth a significant
portion of your grade. This class has a fairly heavy reading load, so if this is not something you
feel you can keep up with, please don’t attempt to take this class! Please note that you cannot
make these quizzes up if you are absent, so please come to class. These quizzes will be graded
with √-, √, √+ corresponding to 0, 1, and 2 points respectively. You will be allowed to drop your
lowest score at the end of the term.

The two exams for the course will each be take-home exams. As such, a high level of
comprehension and thoughtfulness is expected from each exam, as you will have a substantial
amount of time to construct your answers and carefully consider course material. Late exams
will never be accepted. Please arrange your schedules accordingly and plan enough time to
successfully perform at these exams. All exams will be essay exams with several “applied
scenario” essay questions (e.g., using course concepts and feminist theory to analyze a “real
world scenario” such as, for example, the construction of Nikki Minaj as “trashy” or the
invisibility of fast food trash, etc.). No multiple choice, true/false, or short answer questions will
be asked.

Thoughtful participation and attendance are crucial to your success in this course. As this
course will frequently combine lecture and discussion, it is expected that you will contribute to a
climate of engaged, lively participation. Remember that participation does not necessarily mean
talking a lot. The ability to listen, respond to others’ comments, and ask questions are all crucial
aspects of class participation. Also, please bring your readings (and notes on readings) to class
as this is crucial to having the ability to do a close reading. As a general rule, I expect that you
will come to class prepared and that you will contribute to the class process. When making final
decisions about grades for this course, I will take into account your level of participation if you
are on the cusp between two grades! Note that all PowerPoint lectures will be posted on
Blackboard after the lecture has been given.

In terms of attendance, it is expected, as this course meets once weekly for three hours,
that you will not miss more than ONE class meeting during the semester. Any absence beyond
this absence must be documented (e.g., signed doctor’s note) and given to me no later than one week after the missed class. If you know you must miss a class, please email me ahead of time (breanne.fahs@asu.edu). In the event that no in-class reading quiz is assigned, a sign-in sheet will be circulated to monitor your attendance, so please remember to write your name on your quiz and/or sign in each week, as this is your responsibility! Frequent tardiness and/or more than one absence will negatively affect your final grade by at least a third of a grade (A to A-) per missed class. Also, please note that, unless pre-arranged with me, you will not receive credit for attendance if you do not attend the entire class (4:30-7:15 PM). Leaving early is strongly discouraged; also, please wait to take a break during our designated break period in order to minimize class disruption.

As a general expectation, I reiterate the university’s policy that you adhere to the principles of academic honesty by not plagiarizing or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course, as well as referral to the department for further penalties. I also ask that you respect the atmosphere of the classroom by turning off cell phones and other devices (this includes no text messaging and/or unnecessary laptop browsing), coming to class on time, and helping to create an environment in which everyone can safely participate in discussion, despite likely differences in opinions and beliefs. This course will address many sensitive and emotionally-charged issues, so it is of the utmost importance that all classmates are treated with respect. I truly look forward to a wonderful semester with you all.

**Required readings:**
Books to be purchased (available at ASU West bookstore, or on Amazon for far less money):

You will also need to acquire:
- Digital reserve readings (must be printed out from “course information” section of blackboard)

**Note:** Rachel Adams’ book will be labeled as SSU throughout the syllabus.
Dorothy Alison’s book will be labeled as TRA throughout the syllabus.
James Baldwin’s book will be labeled as FNT throughout the syllabus.
Edward Humes’ book will be labeled as GAR throughout the syllabus.
Julia Kristeva’s book will be labeled as POH throughout the syllabus.
Andrew Ross’s book will be labeled as BOF throughout the syllabus.
Valerie Solanas’s book will be labeled as SCUM throughout the syllabus.
Digital reserve readings will be labeled as DR throughout the syllabus.

NOTE: Though there are several books in this course, you should be able to get ALL of them for fairly cheap. Many are less than $10.00 and all are less than $25.00. You can get used copies for a few bucks for many of these. Try Powells Books, Better World Books, or Changing Hands for some of these titles. Amazon sells new copies of all of these books for a total of $105.00.

*To access the digital reserve readings, you should look under “course information” on blackboard for the scanned articles. Please note that a few additional readings may be added as the semester progresses to ensure that we are dealing with the most timely and relevant literatures!

Schedule of Topics

Jan 12: Introductions and welcome to WST 494/SJHR 598/MAIS 598

Jan 19: No class—MLK day! (spend this time reading ahead!) Required film assignment: You are REQUIRED to see the film “Selma” out in theaters right now. We’ll be using this to discuss tactics of resistance, respectability, and racism later this semester. The film must be viewed before January 26th.

Jan 26: Theorizing from the gutter
   Valerie Solanas, SCUM Manifesto (SCUM)
   Avital Ronell, “Valerie Solanas: For a radical, politically incorrect, and morally indefensible feminism” (DR)
   Breanne Fahs, Chapter 2: Shooting, from Valerie Solanas (DR)

Feb 2: The powers of horror
   Julia Kristeva, Chapter 1: Approaching abjection, Chapter 2: Something to be scared of, and Chapter 3: From filth to defilement (POH)
   Sueellen Hoy, “Whiter than white—and a glimmer of green” (DR)

Feb 9: Abjection, suffering, and profanity
   Julia Kristeva, Chapter 7: Suffering and horror, Chapter 8: Those females who can wreck the infinite, and Chapter 11: Powers of horror (POH)
   Melissa Mohr, “Fuck ‘em all: Swearing in the twentieth century and beyond” (DR)

Part 1 of trash bag assignment starts Saturday, Feb 14th and ends Monday, Feb 16th at 4:30 PM

Feb 16: Garbology, part 1
   Edward Humes, Garbology, Part 1: The biggest thing we make (p.1-141) (GAR)

Part 2 of trash bag assignment starts Saturday, Feb 21st and ends Monday, Feb 23 at 4:30 PM
Feb 23: Garbology, part 2

**Paper for trash bag assignment due Thursday, Feb 26th at 4:30 PM to Blackboard**

Mar 2: Toxins, carcinogens, and corporate greed
Marie-Monique Robin, “Dioxin: A polluter working with the Pentagon” (DR)
Marie-Monique Robin, “The bovine growth hormone affair, part one: The Food and Drug Administration under the influence” (DR)
Elizabeth Royte, “Coming on Christmas” (DR)

**Friday, March 6: MIDTERM EXAM DUE TO BLACKBOARD BY 4:30 PM**

Mar 16: Circuses and dreamlands
Lauren Rabinovitz, “Artificial distractions” (DR)
Lauren Rabinovitz, “Urban wonderlands: The ‘cracked mirror’ of turn-of-the-century amusement parks” (DR)
Rachel Adams, Chapter 2: Freaks of culture: Institutions, publics, and subjects of ethnographic knowledge, and Chapter 3: Sideshow cinema (SSU)
Bruce Bégout, *Zeropolis: The experience of Las Vegas* (selections) (DR)

Mar 23: Phoenix: A self-portrait of unsustainability
Andrew Ross, *Bird on Fire*, Introduction: By the time I got to Phoenix (p.3-20), Chapter 1: Gambling at the water table (p.21-50), Chapter 3 part one: The battle for downtown (p.75-103), and Chapter 4: Living downstream (p.116-147) (BOF)

Mar 30: Sideshow, fatness, and freaks
Rachel Adams, Chapter 5: Freak photography, Chapter 6: From sideshow to the streets: Performing the ‘secret self’ (SSU)
JuliaGrace Jester, “Placing fat women on center stage” (DR)
Amy Farrell, “‘The white man’s burden’: Female sexuality, tourist postcards, and the place of the fat woman in early 20th-century U.S. culture” (DR)

Apr 6: Wasting away: Anorexia, drugs, and homelessness
Megan Warin, “Abject relations with food” (DR)
Avital Ronell, “On drugs, polydependencies, and the drama of immunodeficiency” (DR)
David A. Snow and Leon Anderson, “Street people” (DR)
Juliet Watson, “Understanding survival sex: Young women, homelessness, and intimate relationships” (DR)

**Redistribution of resources presentations and papers due today by 4:30 PM to Blackboard**
Apr 13: Trash, social class, race, and trauma
Dorothy Alison, *Trash* p. 1-92 (TRA)
Julie Bettie, “Women without class: Chicas, cholos, trash, and the presence/absence of class identity” (DR)
Jennifer Nash. “Black anality.” (DR)

Apr 20: Trashy sexualities and trans realities
Dorothy Alison, *Trash* 92-219 (TRA)
Elizabeth Bucar and Anne Enke, “Unlikely sex change capitals of the world: Trinidad, United States, and Tehran, Iran, as twin yardsticks of homonormative liberalism.” (DR)
Susan Stryker, “My words to Victor Frankenstein above the village of Chamounix” (DR)
Jennifer Nash. “Reading race, reading pornography.” (DR)

Final exam handed out today in class

Apr 27: White trash and black rebellion
Matt Wray, “White trash as social difference” (DR)

Final exam due no later than 4:30 PM on Friday, May 1st to Blackboard.

THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL SEMESTER!
EXPECT RESISTANCE

a field manual
I. THE FANTASY REBELS...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It Begins</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secret World</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Wings for Flighty Youth</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Invitation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rebellion of the Dead</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Threshold</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stillest Hour</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fault Line</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulge and Undermine</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Sea</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Can Make Our Own</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Map</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alchemy</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Democracy</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Councils</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided and Conquered</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eviction</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Dynamics and the Mass Psychology of Possibility</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the Crowd Goes Wild</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Dimensional Man in the Three-Dimensional World</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Encampments</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can Run but You Can’t Hide</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Roads Lead to Roam</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infighting the Good Fight</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitting the Wall</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Battlefield</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. BECOMES REALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The End of the World</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Run for Cover—We Rush to Bear Witness</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off the Cliff</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crash and Burn</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adultery</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayed and Betrayed</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abomination</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform and Revolution</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing in Miracles</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosions</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History as We Live It</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extinction</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkness</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countdown to Civil War</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving the 21st Century</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Reader</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where We’re Going</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. AFTERWARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflamed Appendix</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnecting the Power</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Authors</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijack the Moon</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Explosion of Stars</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future is Unwritten</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FIRE
NEXT TIME

JAMES BALDWIN
CONTENTS

MY DUNGEON SHOOK: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation 1

DOWN AT THE CROSS: Letter from a Region in My Mind 11
Sideshow U.S.A.

Fraedo and the American Cultural Imagination
Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS i-vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vi-x

ACT ONE

1 Overture: Recovering DTIS ix

ACT TWO

2 Freaks of Culture: Institutions, Publics, and the Subjects of Ethnographic Knowledge 1-25

3 Sideshow Cinema 26-80

ACT THREE

4 "A mixture of delicious and freak": The Queer Fiction of Carson McCullers 81-89

5 Freak Photography 90-112

6 From Sideshow to the Streets: Performing the "Secret Self" 113-138

ACT THREE

7 The Black Look and the "spectacle of whitefolks": Wildness in Toni Morrison's Beloved 139-161

8 Maternal Impressions 162-186

EPILOGUE: Live from New York 187-210

NOTES 211-229

BIBLIOGRAPHY 229-259

INDEX 277
“Garbology is [Humes's] attempt to make sense of our historically unprecedented readiness to throw things away. . . .
Food for thought, and more.” —THE ECONOMIST

GARBOLGY
Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash

WITH A NEW AFTERWORD

EDWARD HUMES
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING
author of Monkey Girl and Eco Barons
CONTENTS

Introduction: 102 Tons  
(or: Becoming China's Trash Compactor)  1

PART 1. THE BIGGEST THING WE MAKE
1. Ain't No Mountain High Enough  19
2. Piggeries and Burn Piles: An American Trash Genesis  39
3. From Trash TV to Landfill Rodeos  59
4. The Last and Future Kingdom  83
5. Down to the Sea in Chips  107
6. Nerds vs. Nurdles  127

PART 2. THE TRASH DETECTIVES
7. The Trash Trackers  145
8. Decadence Now  158
PART 3. THE WAY BACK

9. Pick of the Litter 187
10. Chico and the Man 208
11. Green Cities and Garbage Death Rays 247
12. Put-Downs, Pickups and the Power of No 268

Epilogue: Garbage In, Garbage Out 287
Afterword 297
Endnotes 307
Index 315
Trash

Dorothy Allison

Including a new introduction, "STUBBORN GIRLS AND MEAN STORIES," and "COMPASSION"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Stubborn Girls and Mean Stories</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding to Live (Preface to the First Edition)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River of Names</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanest Woman Ever Left Tennessee</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel Song</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm Working on My Charm</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal Away</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkeybites</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Tell Me You Don't Know</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demon Lover</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her Thighs</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscles of the Mind</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Against Women Begins at Home</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Lesbian Appetite</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupus</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIFE IN THIS SOCIETY BEING. AT BEST, ALL UTERI BORE AND NO ASPECT OF SOCIETY BEING AT ALL RELEVANT TO WOMEN. THERE REMAINS TO CIVIC-MINDED, RESPONSIBLE, THRILL-SEEKING FEMALES ONLY TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT, ELIMINATE THE MONEY SYSTEM, INSTITUTE COMPLETE AUTOMATION, AND DESTROY THE MALE SEX.

SCUM MANIFESTO
CONTENTS

THE DEVIANT PAYBACK: The Aims of Valerie Solanas
Avital Ronell 1

SCUM MANIFESTO
Valerie Solanas 35
BIRD ON FIRE

LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S LEAST SUSTAINABLE CITY
CONTENTS

Acronyms ix
Reader’s Note xi

Introduction: By the Time I Got to Phoenix 3
1. Gambling at the Water Table 21
2. The Road Runner’s Appetite 51
3. The Battle for Downtown 75
   Part One: Artists Step Up 75
   Part Two: Who Can Afford the Green City? 104
4. Living Downstream 116
5. The Sun Always Rises 148
6. Viva Los Suns 185
7. Land for the Free 212
8. Delivering the Good 239

Notes 251
Index 281