

INTERCULTURALITY, DECOLONIALITY, AGENCY, AND ACTIVISM: FICTION BY CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN WOMEN OF COLOR

Since the 1980s fiction written by American women of color has been openly engaged in constructing politics alternative to the capitalist/consumerist version of the American Dream, a dream from which minorities have long been excluded. Reclaiming their non-western roots and hybrid/mestizo identities, women of color draw inspiration from tribal cultures and traditional spiritual practices to construct radically distinct social imaginaries. Emerging from difference established by slavery and/or colonization, decolonial epistemologies (Chela Sandoval's "epistemology of decoloial love") re-imagine communities as founded on intercultural harmony, social/ environmental justice, and respect for the land. The seminar will address the relationship between writing and agency to demonstrate how American women of color use storytelling as a form of activism and a means to engage politically-conscious readers in constructing alternative, decolonizing worldviews. The seminar will foreground Chicana, Native American, and Black women writers, but other minorities will also be included.

Areas of research may include but are not limited to:

- revisionist slave narratives
- alternative storytelling traditions and narrative strategies of resistance
- feminist utopias and alternative communities
- border identities
- resurfacing histories, reclaimed knowledges
- decolonial epistemologies
- the colonial wound and alternative cosmologies
- empowering spiritualities, syncretic religions, mother goddess figures
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