

THE SYMPOSIUM

PREPARATION:

1. **Get into groups (in class) and choose your theme.** Based on your research topics, I've divided you into small groups (panels) (these are not written in stone, so see me if a switch is necessary). Though I did group you carefully, some of your topics align better than others; therefore do your best to negotiate a general, but unifying theme harmonious with each member's inquiry. Once you've decided upon this theme, write out a "program" for your panel that includes:
 - sexy **title** for your panel (i.e. "Getting' Groovy': Understanding the New Orleanian Musical Magic")
 - an **abstract**—that is, a very brief description of each member's narrowed paper/project topic (you can borrow sentences from your topic proposal!)

This program is due **FRIDAY**, via email to the professor—ONE EMAIL PER GROUP.

Individually, write your abstracts and email them to a group member so that he/she may compile them into one program, BEFORE FRIDAY. Abstracts should describe the main question you are trying to answer in your paper, a summary of the answers you have gathered so far, additional questions you are still hoping to answer, and your educated hypothesis based on the research you've done so far. Each abstract should only be about 200 words in length—keep it BRIEF. Everyone on your panel should email their abstracts to one designated group member, who will compile them and the rest of the program details into one document. Email this ONE DOCUMENT to me on FRIDAY. I will distribute copies of your program to the class, before your panel presents.

ON YOUR PANEL DAY:

2. **Present.** On the day of your panel discussion, the group will *elaborate* on the abstracts (each person can take no more than 5 minutes if you go separately), keeping in mind that the class has read your abstracts already. (Do not repeat what is in your abstract or simply read it to the class!) Students who have similar topics may combine their ideas when elaborating on their abstracts. The point will be for you to give your colleagues a peek into the work you are doing, to possibly discuss how it relates to or complicates the issues we've been discussing all semester, and to get some feedback on whether your work is making sense so far. The panel can have 20 minutes, maximum, to present information.
3. **Q and A.** After the entire panel is done talking, the class will have roughly twenty minutes to raise questions, concerns, or considerations for the panel. As with any courteous audience, the class is expected to participate in the Q and A and must come to class prepared with a list of at least two intelligent questions to pose after each panel. Students may also write additional questions down during the presentation, or on the program for each panel. Audience participation WILL be included in the evaluation (below), and audience questions will be collected after every panel.

PREPARATION FOR HEARING OTHER PEOPLE'S PANELS:

4. **Read the panel themes for that day and each member's abstract.** Come with two typed questions addressed to each panel (not each person); that is, two questions PER PANEL. Your questions should be thoughtful and genuine; should contribute to our semester-long discussion; should challenge or push the writers' ideas for complexity; could raise a new idea for contemplation that might help to contextualize their work; or could simply raise questions of curiosity or clarification. You will hand these in.

Grading for the panel discussion. This is part of your portfolio grade. Your participation on both the panel AND your Q & A after each panel will be considered as two separate assignments, equal to a homework assignment each.

Monday		Wednesday		Friday	
Panel 1	Panel 2	Panel 3	Panel 4	Panel 5	Panel 6

For directions on how to write an abstract, see:
<http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/abstracts.html>

The following example of an abstract is taken from the Ray Smith Symposium at Syracuse University, Fall 2005, "Seeking Gender Justice Beyond the Beijing Conference." For more examples of abstracts, see:

<http://www-hl.syr.edu/cas-pages/Announcements/RaySmith/Abstracts.htm>

Anna Agathangelou Political Science, York University, Canada *Perpetual Peace or Perpetual War: Transnational Feminist Knowledge Production, "Empire's Bodies", and the New World (Dis) Order.*

Dog leashes and collars around naked Iraqi men's necks, naked, hooded Iraqi men piled on top of one another, gloved U.S. servicemen and women smiling into the camera and giving "thumbs up" signs over iced prisoners who did not survive interrogation. While these images shocked the world, they were chalked up as the individual transgressions of a few "bad apples" by the very military elite who authored, and authorized, rules of engagement that knowingly skirted and violated Geneva conventions. But the human rights abuses perpetrated and recorded by the U.S. military in the prisons of Iraq were nothing new. This militant torture and terror (e.g., "shock and awe") is a fundamental practice of the restructuring neoliberal empire. This paper juxtaposes and examines the sexual and racial violence and humiliation against sex and domestic workers in the desire industrial complex and Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Graib prison. It shows that these spaces are sites of "compensatory drama" part and parcel of the production of the imperial privilege, power, and assertion of the agency of the empire's leadership at the precise moment of its cracking. I analyze how violence and torture is a tool that (1) constitutes the white body as a form of desire, (2) produces the black body as a form of pleasure which becomes flexibly subservient to the regime of profit, (3) maintains a fiction of U.S. absolute power (hegemonic heterosexual bourgeois and masculine) and dominance, and (4) objectifies and mystifies the many racial, sexual, class, and national relations as fundamentalist contestations between the Western civilization and the Rest. Drawing on different texts, I contest ontologically and methodologically the fundamental(ist) cultures of terror, security, and practices of the neoliberal imperium in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and argue for creating communities of empowerment beyond freedom from necessity and torture.

Example of a student's questions for panels from a previous class:

Questions for Panel 3

group - Are you going to look into what is comfortable living? What defines it?

group - Will the projects take a look at the difference in living standards and property value in different areas of the country, and how that effects the amount needed to get by? Especially the effect on a living wage from area to area.

Questions for Panel 4

Ryan - This is a pretty broad topic. Are you just going to look into women in the business field? Enrollment in colleges? Statistics of women who stay at home, compared to women whom work?

Emily - Is the stay at home mom disappearing from our society? What impact might the switch from moms to dads at home, or neither have on the coming generation?