English 444: Masochisms

In Masochisms we will examine “negative” affects (sadness, depression, humiliation) and their relationship to gender, race constructions and sexuality as well as formal structures of films, poems, plays, and manifestos. What makes up our fascination with certain forms of negativity, particularly when it is ritualized through narrative and performance? How do we consume such emotion? We will look at plays, performances, and artworks such as Venus in Furs, and artist Kara Walker's silhouettes that disrupt the dynamics of gendered and racialized self-abnegation. We will also examine recent films such as Black Swan and Melancholia. We will ask ourselves how certain types of “negative” emotions are privileged in our art and media. Are these expressions of self-oppressive, self-indulgent, cathartic, consoling, liberatory and/or all of the above?

Readings:

White Girls, Hilton Als
Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl, Tiqqun, trans. Ariana Reines
Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs, Gilles Deleuze, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch
Humiliation, Wayne Koestenbaum

Additional readings will be available online or on blackboard! You are responsible for printing them out and bringing them to class.

Journal: A multi-format, multi-media response to questions raised by class discussion. Approximately 500 words a week. Have fun.

Midterm: An exam with short essays about initial concepts from the class: approx. 5 double-spaced typed pages.

Critical Essay: Your essay will be a 15-page critical analysis with bibliography focusing on texts or theoretical concepts from the class. You may do an analysis of more than one cultural text (film, video, manifesto, cultural object) but make sure you have a larger map/thesis to ground your ideas. You are allowed to mimic the experimental styles of the theoretical works that you read (should you produce a long manifesto such as the Parapornographic Manifesto). Your papers should have 4-7 outside sources. Late papers will be penalized. You will turn in a rough draft and a bibliography as you proceed. You should come talk to me about the paper individually in my office. The paper can include another component (creative writing, multimedia) but you must talk to me ahead of time about this possibility.

Rough draft Workshop: 5% of your grade will be commenting on your peer’s rough drafts!
**Final project:**

Presentation on Final Project—film, artwork, creative writing that interacts with texts in different media from your final paper.

**Presentation:** 20 minutes on one of the readings/texts

**Policy on Plagiarism:**

All outside sources must be cited. Rollins has a strict policy against plagiarism; any attempt will result in a failing grade, failure of the course, and a report to the dean.

**Reading Schedule:**

You may receive additional handouts of critical material and interviews!

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

Last Day to Drop a Class without Notation ('W' Deadline) Monday, January 26
Last Day to Drop a Class without Penalty ('WF' Deadline) Friday, March 20

**WEEK 1:**
1/13 INTRO:

**WEEK 2:**
1/20 *Black Swan* (Darren Aronofsky 2010) in Olin Reserve or rent on Amazon video
Sedgewick, “A Poem is Being Beaten” (blackboard)
optional: Fisher and Jacobs “Debating *Black Swan*: Gender and Horror” (blackboard)

**WEEK 3**
1/27 *Venus in Furs* and Deleuze’s *Coldness and Cruelty*
excerpt from Anita Phillips *A Defense of Masochism* (blackboard)

**WEEK 4**
2/3 “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud (blackboard)
*Melancholia* (Lars von Trier 2012) Available on instant Netflix, Amazon video
Sontag, “Fascinating Fascisms” (blackboard)
optional: Rey Chow “Fascist Longings in our Midst” (blackboard)
WEEK 5:
2/10 Kostenbaum, *Humiliation*
Kaja Silverman excerpt from *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (blackboard)

WEEK 6:
2/17
Tyrone Williams, *Pink Tie* (blackboard)
Bersani “Is the Rectum a Grave?” (blackboard)
first section of Berlant’s “Cruel Optimism” (20-23) (blackboard)

WEEK 7
2/24: MIDTERM

WEEK 8
3/2 SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS

WEEK 9:
3/10
Hilton Als *White Girls*
Muser excerpt from *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism* (blackboard) Intro

WEEK 10
3/27
Kara Walker [http://learn.walkerart.org/karawalker](http://learn.walkerart.org/karawalker)
Walker documentary: [https://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/](https://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/)
Muser excerpt from *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism*: Conclusion (blackboard)
Munoz “Disidentifications” (blackboard).
optional: Amy Tang, “Postmodern Repetitions: Parody, Trauma, and the Case of Kara Walker”

WEEK 11
3/24
Munoz “A Jete”(blackboard)
Jones. “Performing the Wounded Body: Pain, Affect and the Radical Relationality of Meaning” (blackboard)
Performances by boychild: [http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/17858/1/boychild](http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/17858/1/boychild)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQw_kHoGKiC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQw_kHoGKiC)
Marina Abramovic
[http://marinaabramovicmademecry.tumblr.com/](http://marinaabramovicmademecry.tumblr.com/)
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GD5PBK_Bto](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GD5PBK_Bto)
[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/03/08/100308fa_fact_thurman](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/03/08/100308fa_fact_thurman)
WEEK 12
3/31 Lee, “Joy of the Castrated Boy”; Excerpt from Testo Junkie Beatriz Preciado (blackboard)

WEEK 13
4/7 Carl-Michael Edenborg Parapornagraphic Manifesto; Hoang, "The Rise, and Fall, of a Gay Asian American Porn Star" (blackboard)

WEEK 14
4/14 Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl by Tiqqun (translation Ariana Reines)
Nina Power "She's just not that into you" http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/web/rp177-shes-just-not-that-into-you
Ariana Reine's translator's note from Triple Canopy: http://canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/preliminary_materials_for_a_theory_of_the_young_girl
“Persona Peep Show” on MontevadaiyoL http://www.montevidayo.com/kitsching-bergman-more-on-persona-peep-show/

WEEK 15
4/21 Rough draft workshop for final papers: Read and mark up papers for each of your peers. We will spend 10-15 minutes workshopping each paper.

WEEK 16
4/28 Presentation of Creative Projects
Final Papers due 4/30 by 6:45 in my office.