SPRING 2020

Professor: Ethel Brooks

COLLOQUIUM IN WGS
Subtitle: Encampment: Capital, Embodiment, Protest, Futures

16:988:526

Course Description:

This seminar focuses on the meanings of embodied protest in public sites and the ways in which embodied contention moves against and within the monumentality[1] of the city, of capital and the state. Throughout, we will concentrate on the politics of reclaiming space and the question of race, historical narrative and gendered subject production within the movements of capital; in so doing, we engage with a deep critique of neoliberalism, the nation-state, the reinforcement of the border, and the politics of memorialization, recognition and bordermaking involved in creating gentrified urban –urbane—space. We will take up practices, possibilities and histories of encampment, with a particular focus on race, gender, labor and embodiment –drawing from my work on Roma in Europe and globally, whose subject positions, practices and labor are alternately rendered invisible, hypervisible, sexually excessive or abject, and the ambiguous place that Roma occupy in the public sphere; we will explore opportunities for reframing dominant narratives that are presented through the disruptive presence of Roma within the space of the public. The seminar will engage the practices and politics of encampment, asking: Is there a possibility for developing new narratives through embodied critique, through a focus on labor and a reframing of value, through protest as a politics of visibility and of staying in place? Are there possibilities for such narratives to be developed across lines of race, gender, citizenship and class, opening up new futures, new possibilities and new forms of belonging?

[1] My critique of monumentality draws from Edouard Glissant’s contention “our monuments are elsewhere,” and Henri Lefebvre argument about spatialization, the city and capitalism.