



Purity Culture, Race, and Embodiment

August-September 2022

A Straight White American Jesus SEMINAR

Register: straightwhiteamericanjesus.com

Details

Limited to 15 participants

Some Scholarship Funds Available.

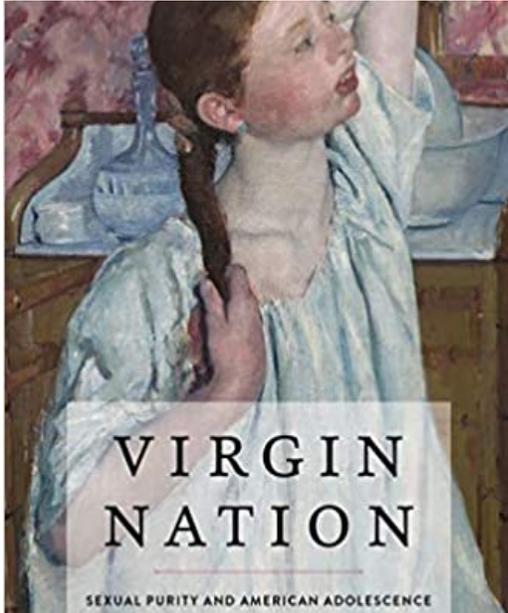
Dates: Every Thursday in August-September 2022: 8/18, 8/25, 9/1, 9/8

Time: 5pm PST/8pm EDT

Price: \$425

Description

Purity Culture is often described as a set of moral and sexual constraints placed upon the bodies of adolescents.



Overwhelming evidence suggests that it takes years for people coming out of purity culture to reclaim a relationship with their body. While this is a critical task in and of itself, when done without acknowledging how ideas of purity intersect with broader histories of white supremacy and Christian nationalism we fail to overcome the disembodiment imposed by purity culture.

Disembodiment, as defined by this workshop, is the underlying problem of all forms of bodily oppression, be it sex/gender, race/ethnicity, dis/ability. In our time together we will investigate why disembodiment is utilized within conservative

religious spaces in order to understand the habits and practices that impact how we, as bodies, show up in the world. We will also root our inquiry in histories of white evangelicalism, white feminist and black feminist/womanist thought, and anti-racism.

Participants in this workshop will leave with a deeper understanding of how evangelical purity culture is a collection of ideologies fomented over a century of white evangelical Protestants seeking cultural and political dominance.

Topics

Week One: The Racist Origins of Evangelical Purity Culture

In our first week together, we will be diving into the 19th century and the origins of purity culture in first wave feminism. We will examine how these movement privileged white women's personal security through Victorian gender roles and racist ideologies. Using primary sources and the first chapter of *Virgin Nation*, we will discover how purity ideologies situated white women as racial boundary markers utilized to maintain racial segregation and secure the "civilizational advancement" of the United States.

Week Two: White Body Supremacy and Purity Culture

In our second week, we will focus on anti-racism and embodiment using the work of Reza Menakem, Tema Okum and Kenneth Jones, and Kimberlé Crenshaw to develop an intersectional framework for examining purity culture, past and present.

Week Three: Purity Culture and Racial Formation

In week three we will compare contemporary purity practices and organizations in different racial contexts. Though purity culture originated within White evangelicalism, Black and Asian thinkers have written extensively about the impact purity teachings have on black and Asian bodies within white evangelicalism and in other racial, religious communities. Drawing on the work of Monique Moultrie, Candace Marie Benbow, Michelle Mitchell, Angie Hong, and MiHee Kim-Kort, we will consider the ways that different racial groups conceive of and experience purity culture and why Black and Asian people speak about their own racial identities in this conversations, but White people often do not.

Week Four: Evangelical Purity Culture and White Christian Nationalism

In our final week, we will turn to the institution of the family and the US nation-state. evangelical purity culture is part of a broader project to protect the white, middle-class, hetero-normative family which evangelicalism has protected and promoted as essential to the survival of the U.S. nation state. Drawing on Cold War tropes of sexual restraint and moral responsibility, our conversation will help us dig into the nationalistic rhetoric that has allowed evangelical purity culture to achieve and maintain political power and social influence.

Instructor

Sara Moslener, PhD (Claremont Graduate University) has been studying evangelical purity for over 15 years. Though she never signed a pledge or wore a ring, at the age of 17 she wrote a very earnest letter to her local paper defending abstinence-only education. Today she is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Central Michigan University, and the

4

author of [Virgin Nation: Sexual Purity and American Adolescence](#). She and her work have appeared in Cosmopolitan Magazine, Jezebel, The Christian Century, Sojourners Magazine, The New York Times and The Washington Post. Her current research The After Purity Project collects stories about evangelical purity culture and situates them within broader histories of evangelicalism, racism, feminism, and white Christian Nationalism. This project is funded by the Louisville Institute and the Luce Project on Religion and Sexual Abuse.

What's Included:

- Four Two-Hour Live Sessions (8 Hours Total)
- Four Exclusive Videos (18-20 Minutes Each)
- One Office Hours Meeting (30 Minutes)
- Participation in the Seminar Discord Server
 - Including Weekly Discussion Topics
- Weekly Assigned Readings



Register at
[Straightwhiteamericanjesus.com](https://straightwhiteamericanjesus.com)