

ENGL 265 -10, Introduction to Cultural Studies

Summer 2017

Prof. Henry Schwarz

MTWRF 5:45 – 7:45

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Office hours: Every day before and after class and by appointment

Required texts:

Culture and Media Studies: Keywords, Kellner and Durham (**D&K**)

Imaginary Maps: Three Stories, Mahasweta Devi

Citizen, Claudia Rankine

Ways of Seeing, John Berger

And others TBA

Please purchase your books at Bridge Street Books, an independent bookseller: 2814

Pennsylvania Ave. (202) 965-5200; or Powells.com

Additional essays will be placed on Blackboard (**Bb**). You **must** bring personal copies to class. All books are on reserve in Lauinger Library.

Highly Recommended:

Grossberg, Nelson, Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies* (CS)

Simon During, ed., *The Cultural Studies Reader* (CSR)

Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (K)

Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (ML)

Evaluation:

Three short papers 30%

Collaborative Research Project 30%

(with final Presentation)

Two Oral presentations 20%

Attendance, participation, quizzes 20%

Objective:

In the first half, to familiarize ourselves with the new science of Cultural Studies as practiced in the US and UK today by reading canonical and newer works in the field. Cultural Studies is the critical interpretation of cultural objects and events with the object of changing society. We will explore how cultural objects interlace categories of class, race, gender, nation and sexuality to produce a "cultural ensemble of power" that performs actual work in the world. Our job will be to understand how this works and how to use it to produce non-violent but revolutionary change.

We will discuss the history and theoretical contours of the field from the formation of the Birmingham Center for the Study of Contemporary Culture in the early 1960s to the present, charting its main theoretical and practical influences in contemporary social movements, and their relationship to other organizations like the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Topics will include Marxism and decolonization,

feminism, anti-racism, queer equality, deconstruction, postcolonialism, postmodernism and media literacy.

The special emphasis of the second half will be to examine what practical difference we can make in society by practicing culture as forms of expression and dissent. Our attention will be geared partially to events on campus such as those organized by the Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice and to the Program on Justice and Peace. We will also study activism on campus and at large such as the fossil fuel divestment campaign and 350.org, LGBTQ demands and the diversity drive, new social movements like Black Lives Matter and the Occupy Movement. Students will develop independent research projects.

The teaching approach to this course will be heavily influenced by methods developed in the Doyle and ITEL programs.

This course is part of the Doyle Program, which seeks to foster active student engagement with difference and the diversity of human experience. In this course, there will be a special emphasis on: using transformational pedagogies that push us to reflect critically on the ethical and social responsibilities of global citizenship; recognizing the intellectual and personal challenges often implicit in cultural misunderstandings; engaging in debate and disagreement with respect; and building empathy and open-mindedness.

Georgetown has a strict policy on **plagiarism**. Understand it and don't get thrown out of school:

<http://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism>

Learning Goals:

As an undergraduate introduction, this course has four main objectives. Over the course of the semester students who take this class should expect . . .

1. to survey theories and fictions of Culture Studies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the United States, Britain, and globally;
2. to gain a broad but disciplined understanding of the major themes, debates, and approaches that are central to the field of Cultural Studies in its present configuration;
3. to improve their ability to discern how cultural texts shape, and are shaped by, historical contexts; and
4. to work toward achieving professional levels of writing, research, and critical engagement.

Experience in the field of Cultural Studies isn't a prerequisite for this course. However, a cursory knowledge of the basic terms and techniques of cultural analysis will likely prove helpful. The Recommended reading on reserve at Lauinger will help guide your explorations.

Writing Center:

Since writing is a valued part of this class, I encourage you to visit the Writing Center (217a Lauinger) and work with one of the Center's trained tutors. Just as I share my own writing with people I trust before making it public, you can share your writing with student peers at the Writing Center before submitting drafts for this class. While you will always be solely responsible for the writing you submit and the Center's tutors won't

do your work for you, Writing Center tutors can talk you through any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming a thesis and organizing your thoughts to revising, editing and proofreading. It's a terrific, free service. To set up an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>.

Schedule:

is provisional and subject to change. There is a lot of open space to afford flexibility. This is an approximate order of reading. Much will depend on class dynamics and our chemistry, as well as the availability of outside speakers.

Introductions. Assignment: Google Web resources on CS, Critical Theory, Media Literacy. "Independent Media in a Time of War"; Democracy Now! "Buena Vista Social Club"

"Introduction," *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Marx, Ruling Ideas; Gramsci, Subaltern Classes; Habermas, Public Sphere (**D&K**)

Cornel West, "Democracy Matters"; New Cultural Politics of Difference" (**Bb**)

"Sex, Subjectivity, Representation" (**Bb**)

"Bitch Manifesto;" "Marriage"; Studio class on group projects

Raymond Williams, "Literature," "Culture," "Base and Superstructure," "Dominant, Residual, Emergent" (**Bb**)

Review class on what we haven't discussed previously

Guy Debord, "Commodity as Spectacle," (**D&K**); Kalle Lasn, "Culture Jamming" (**Bb**)

Richard Dyer, "Stereotyping" (**D&K**)

Angela McRobbie, "Feminism, Pomoism..."; Bell Hooks, "Eating the Other" (**D&K**)

Walter Benjamin, "Work of Art" (**D&K**)

Adorno & Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry" (**D&K**)

Student Studio presentations

Mahasweta Devi, *Imaginary Maps: Three Stories*, Ch. 1

Imaginary Maps, CH 2

Imaginary Maps, CH 3

Budhan Theatre

Budhan Theatre

Final papers due during exam period