

Department of English & Writing Studies

Introduction to Cultural Studies**English 3201F (001)**

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Thy Phu**Course Date/Time:** Tuesday 11:30-1:30pm;
Thursday, 11:30-12:30pm**Course Location:** University College 2110**Office hours:** Thursdays 1:30-2:30pm

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1000-1999, or permission of the Department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

What is culture? Who makes it and whom does it serve? To help you address these questions, this course will introduce you to the theories and methods of the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. These theories and methods offer keywords critical concepts, including power, ideology, gender, race, and sexuality, which will enable you to explore how the production and consumption of cultural texts affects the shaping of identities and influences power relations between subjects. In addition to engaging critically with the theories to assess their meanings, we will be drawing on the methods that they provide for interpreting a wide range of cultural texts, including advertising, television, and film.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Identify and explain theoretical concepts
- Compare and contrast theoretical approaches
- Understand the practical application of these concepts for critical analysis;
- Think and write critically about theoretical and cultural texts.

Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and participation	15%	ongoing
Short essay: Why culture matters	15%	Oct. 10 (preliminary draft due Oct. 1)
Group presentation	15%	Per schedule
Reflection paper	10%	
Quiz	10%	Nov. 14
Final essay proposal	5%	Oct. 29
Final essay draft	5%	Nov. 28
Peer editing workshop	5%	Dec. 3
Final essay	20%	Dec. 10

- **Note that there is NO exam in this course.**

Course Materials

Readings will be made available on OWL.

This course provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics that some students may find difficult and/or traumatizing. The instructor will aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content. All students are asked to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

The professor reserves the right to revise this syllabus as needed.

Timetable

Week 1	Sept. 5	INTRODUCTION: Defining and studying culture	Raymond Williams, "Culture" (excerpt from Keywords)
Week 2	Sept. 10	MASS CULTURE	Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"
	Sept. 12		Model group presentation.
Week 3	Sept. 17	MASS CULTURE	Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
	Sept. 19	COMMODITY FETISHISM	Karl Marx, "Commodities," excerpt from Capital, volume 1. bell hooks, "Eating the Other"
Week 4	Sept. 24	IDEOLOGY/ MYTHOLOGY	Roland Barthes, excerpt from Mythologies
	Sept. 26	Presentation 1	Drawing on an ad of your group's choosing, apply Barthes's semiotic method to develop an interpretation of how myth operates in this advertisement.
Week 5	Oct. 1	IDEOLOGY AND IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES	Louis Althusser, excerpt from <i>On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses</i> Class time to be devoted to drafting "Why Culture Matters" short essay.
	Oct. 3	Presentation 2	Focusing on a case study of a repressive state apparatus of your group's choosing, discuss what dominant values are constructed and how these values are reinforced.
Week 6	Oct. 8	PLEASURE AND IDEOLOGY	Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

	Oct. 10	Presentation 3	Focusing on a clip from any film or TV show of your group's choosing and drawing on Mulvey's concept of the gendered gaze, discuss how gender is constructed in your selected cultural text. (Make sure you show this clip during your presentation so that your classmates will be familiar with your discussion.) Due: Why culture matters short essay
Week 7	Oct. 15	CONSUMPTION: ENCODING, DECODING	Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding"
	Oct. 17	Presentation 4	Focusing on a clip of your choosing, discuss how Hall's three interpretive positions, as outlined in his essay on "Encoding, Decoding," applies. How are each of these positions manifest and what does this suggest, overall, about consumption and agency?
Week 8	Oct. 22	CONSUMPTION: ROMANCE AND FANTASY	Janice Radway, excerpt from <i>Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature</i>
	Oct. 24	Presentation 5	Focusing on any cultural text that employs fantasies of romance and drawing on Radway's key ideas about the ways that women imaginatively reckon with and attempt to reconcile sexuality through their reading practices, discuss how your group's case study negotiates patriarchy.
Week 9	Oct. 29	FEMINISM: THE POLITICS OF EMOTION	Arlie Russell Hoschild, "Exploring the Managed Heart," excerpted from <i>The Managed Heart</i> Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger" Sara Ahmed, <i>Introduction to Living a Feminist Life</i> Roxane Gay, "The Bad Feminist Manifesto" Final essay proposals due.
	Oct. 31	Presentation 6	Focusing on a case study of your group's choosing and drawing on theoretical concepts introduced in this course, discuss how emotions are gendered and the significance of this gendering. To what extent are particular emotions deemed appropriate or inappropriate and what is the significance of this process?
	Nov. 5 Nov. 7	Fall reading week	No class
Week 10	Nov. 12	SEXUALITY	Michel Foucault, excerpt from <i>The History of Sexuality</i> , vol. 1 Judith Butler, excerpt from <i>Gender Trouble</i>

	Nov. 14	QUIZ	To be completed in class.
Week 11	Nov. 19	RACE	Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" Ta-Nihisi Coates, "Between the World and Me" Maisha Z. Johnson, "What's Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?" Minh-ha Pham, "Fashion's Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless"
	Nov. 21	Presentation 7	Focusing on an example of your group's choosing and drawing on a theoretical concept introduced in this course, discuss a recent case study of cultural appropriation. How was race represented and what historical contexts were inaccurately portrayed or historically erased?
Week 12	Nov. 26	VIOLENCE AND RESISTANCE	Rob Nixon, Introduction to <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i>
	Nov. 28	Presentation 8	Nixon contends that violence is not always experienced in spectacular and immediate ways. It is also ordinary and unfolds slowly. Drawing on a case study of your choosing and on Nixon's ideas, discuss the significance of the slowness of violence manifest in this example. Due: essay draft (1500-2000 words)
Week 13	Dec. 3	Peer editing workshop	Bring a hard copy of your essay draft to exchange with a classmate for this peer review session.
	Dec. 5	One-on-one essay consultation.	During class time, your professor and TA will be available for one-on-one assistance on your final essay. Final essay due: December 10 (submit via OWL dropbox)

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.