Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to cultural studies and service learning and to have you engage in undertaking “cultural studies praxis” (a combination of cultural studies, service learning for social justice and critical ethnography). You will be introduced to the origin(s), histories and some of its contemporary concerns, approaches and projects of cultural studies. This is not as simple a task as it would first appear, principally because cultural studies is not an academic discipline in the ordinary sense of the term, and also because there are so many different and competing ways of conceptualizing cultural studies. In fact, few have been brash enough to attempt to produce definitive definitions of cultural studies. This is because cultural studies is so many things— from a relatively new academic paradigm to a number of social movements, from the academic ethnography-like study of culture to the performative acts of performing/studying culture, from an umbrella for postcolonial and media studies to the undertaking and analysis of specific activist projects. Cultural studies happens literally everywhere: from the academy and academic journals to the internet and cyberspace; from the streets and street performance of culture to television and the televisual; from comics and film to literature and chamber music, from ethnographic studies in the field to community organizations and their work. It is a discourse that takes popular culture seriously, obfuscates the traditionally rigid divide between high and low culture, and insists on the performative. It is particularly suited to exploring praxis—the inextricable link between theory and practice.

In the academy cultural studies is virtually parasitic: it draws on and utilizes the established traditional disciplines for its own substance and sustenance. However, it is also innovative, liberating and interdisciplinary; freeing theorists and practitioners to move beyond the confines of individual disciplines, allowing them to undertake interdisciplinary work. Finally, it is an upstart, interventionist and antidisciplinary discourse which repudiates the utility of individual disciplines in the effort to place culture itself, rather than individual disciplines’ approaches to culture, at the centre of the study of culture.

Service learning has existed in many forms and is based on the idea of learning through the experience (and reflection on the experience) of service in the community. Service learning has recently become quite popular as a means of forging links between educational institutions (including universities) and the surrounding community. As a component of a cultural studies course, the version of service learning we will engage in will be "service learning for social justice" (i.e. a version of service learning that involves...
examining issues of social difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc), forms of discrimination based on social difference (racism, class discrimination, sexism, homophobia, etc), and the promotion of equity and justice in society. Because we will be using cultural studies material and concepts to reflect on and analyze the organizations we will be working with, it is more accurate to describe our work as "activist cultural studies" or "cultural studies praxis."

In this course we shall explore some of the characteristics of cultural studies and/through its origins, histories, schools and themes and undertake work in what could be considered “cultural studies praxis,” a form that blends with service learning for social justice and critical ethnography. The readings and video material have been selected to represent a variety of voices, both “canonical” and non-canonical, the relatively general as well as the very specific, and both theory and practice. The aim is for us to discuss cultural studies both as an academic (anti)discipline and as cultural praxis. The readings, videos and community work will hopefully inform our on-going explorations of what is to constitute cultural studies praxis in general and more specifically for your own projects.

**Required Readings**


A course booklet of selected essays will be the required reading for the class.

**Required and Recommended Readings**

A second course booklet of selected readings. Readings on your selected theme for class lecture are required reading for you and your group and those for other additional themes are recommended. In addition, a number of books on cultural studies have been listed under various themes as recommended further reading.

Reference Text for Cultural Studies and Media Studies Terms


Above is available free online.

**Videos**

If class time permits the videos below will be screened in class. Otherwise it is recommended that you view them at the library and/or utilize them and/or similar videos in your lectures and presentations.

- "Paulo Freire at the Highlander Center"
- “Living in the Hyphen” (multiracial identity in Canada) Director- Anne Marie Nakagawa.
Assignments

Grades

Attendance & Participation = 25%
Lecture = 25%
Report = 25%
Final Paper = 25%

Attendance and Participation:
You are expected to attend seminar meetings and participate in discussions. As a
seminar, the success of the course depends to a large extent on your participation.
Participation grades will be based on the quality of participation and the extent to which
such participation reflects a growing understanding of and engagement with the course
material and issues of culture, social difference, and social justice in general.

Lecture:
This involves a small group leading the class for a particular set of readings (selected
from additional themes). The lecturers will summarize the basic points of the readings,
identify ways in which the readings complement or diverge from each other in content
and focus, point to the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments the authors make and
raise questions for the class to consider. Lecturers will be evaluated on grasp of the
authors’ ideas, quality of analysis and critique of the papers, and of questions posed.
Aids such as videoclips or points from additional reading are welcome.

Report:
This involves you (individually or in a small group) reporting to the class on the work of
a particular local activist organization and your involvement with the organization or a
topical issue that can be analyzed using cultural studies. The report should cover such
aspects as the origin and history of the organization, its past and present foci,
organizational structure, membership, successes and failures, and what the process and
content of your service work with the organization as well as ways in which students are
or can get involved. Particular consideration should be given to a cultural studies and
social justice approach to the analysis.

For both the Lecture and the Report it is important to write up and hand in a
summary of your points, approach, critique and questions to facilitate evaluation.

Individual Final Paper
Students who choose the individual final paper option will write a paper on a cultural
studies issue not covered directly in the seminar. Papers should be approximately 15
pages long, typewritten and double-spaced. APA format is preferred.

Individual Extended Report
You can opt to do an individual activist/praxis project report in lieu of a purely academic
paper, especially if you’ve worked individually with an activist group. The report must
be typewritten, double spaced and about 15 pages long (excluding appendices). APA
format is preferred. Final reports should build on half term reports, extending the arguments and analysis considerably.

**Small Group Extended Report**

Students can opt to a group activist project report in lieu of a purely academic paper. Such a report must be typewritten, double spaced and about 25 pages long. APA format is preferred. Final reports should build on half term reports, extending the arguments and analysis considerably. Please note that a group grade will be assigned such that every member of the group will get the same grade for the assignment.

**JULY 23: Introductions**


Wright, Handel. (). How (not) to define cultural studies in five minutes, under pressure.

Further Reading


**JULY 24: Introductions to Cultural Studies**


Further Reading


**JULY 25: CCCS: Institutional Origin of Cultural Studies**


Schulman, Norma. (****). Conditions of their own making: An intellectual history of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. *Canadian Journal of Communication.*


Further Reading


**JULY 26: “Other” Introductions to Cultural Studies**


Further Reading

**JULY 27: Town/Gown Relationships: Critical Perspectives**


*Lecture One Due*

**JULY 30: Critical Service Learning (and Cultural Studies)**


Further Reading


*Lecture Two Due*

**JULY 31: Regional Cultural Studies (Canada- sociocultural difference)**


*Lecture Three Due*
**AUG 1: Queer Cultural Studies**

*Presentations*

**AUG 2: Regional Cultural Studies (Chineseness)**

Further Reading

*Presentations*

**AUG 3: Cultural Studies and/of Education**

Further Reading
*Presentations*

**AUG 6: The Glocalization of Cultural Studies of Education**


Further Reading


**AUG 7: Cultural Studies of Global Youth Identity**


**AUG 8: Feminism and Cultural Studies**


Joke Hermes. (2000). Of irritation, texts and men: Feminist audience studies and cultural...
Melissa Deem. (2003). Disrupting the nuptials at the town hall debate: Feminism and the politics of cultural memory in the USA. *Cultural Studies*, 17 (5), 615-647.

Further Reading

AUG 9: Globalization and Social Movements

AUG 10: Challenging the Future of Cultural Studies

Further Reading:
*Final Paper Due*
ADDITIONAL THEMES

Traditional Service Learning
Further Reading

Regional Cultural Studies (Space and Canadian Cultural Studies)
Further Reading

Audience Studies
Further Reading
**Sport and Cultural Studies**


**Further Reading**


**Regional Cultural Studies (African Cultural Studies)**- readings available from instructor.

**Regional Cultural Studies (American Cultural Studies)**- readings available from instructor.

**Regional Cultural Studies (Australian Cultural Studies)**- readings available from instructor.

**Stuart Hall** - readings available from instructor.

**Paul Gilroy** - readings available from instructor.

**Raymond Williams** - readings available from instructor.
Recommended Journals. Please share others you come across with class.

*Cultural Studies* (US- probably best in field)

*European Journal of Cultural Studies* (cultural studies, especially European)

*International Journal of Cultural Studies* (UK- media/cultural studies)

*Topia* (Canada- cultural studies)

*Space and Culture* (Canada- cultural studies of space)

*Review of education, pedagogy & cultural studies* (US- cultural studies and education)

*Taboo* (US- cultural studies and education)

*Critical Arts* (South Africa- media and cultural studies)

*Discourse* (Australia- critical education and cultural studies)

*Media, Culture and Society* (media studies)

*Cultural Values* (small English journal. philosophy and IRintersection with CS)

*New Formations*

*Public Culture* (highly theoretical, deals with postcolonialist stuff)

*Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (communication studies specifically)

*Cultural Critique* (very exclusive. Emphasis on theory)

*Screen* (media studies. Deals with praxis sometimes)

*Boundary 2* (more postcolonialist than cs)

*Discourse* (education and/in cultural studies. Australian)

*Social Text* (high on theory and exlcusive. Lost some prestige post Sokal affair)

*Fuse Magazine* (magazine/journal. Activist. Innnovative. Canadian)

*Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* <http://reconstruction.eserver.org>

*Cultural Dynamics* (interdisciplinary and critical though not specifically cultural studies)
 http://sage-news.msgfocus.com/c/1y740KJJHOfLBMc
Recommended websites. Please share any others you come across with the class.

Cultural Studies Central -- http://www.culturalstudies.net/index.html -- an introduction to cultural studies with a particular focus on popular culture and ways to approach it through resources and websites.

PopCulture.com -- http://www.popcultures.com/ -- a great site with pointers to popular culture in general, journals, figures of note, bibliographies, and more.

SWIRL -- http://www.sou.edu/English/IDTC/Swirl/swirl.htm -- a "guide to post-millenial paradigms" which includes a valiant attempt to answer the question, "What Is Cultural Studies?"

Yahoo's List of Theorists and Critics -- http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Critical_Theory/Theorists_and_Critics/ -- a good brief list of sites devoted to certain critics and theorists (e.g. Marx, Althusser, Foucault, Barthes) who have made lasting contributions to cultural studies as we know it today.


CultureWork
http://aad.uoregon.edu/culturework/culturework.html

Media, Gender, and Identity Theory
http://www.theory.org.uk/

Sarah Zupko's Cultural Studies Center
http://www.popcultures.com/

The New Cultural Studies Central
http://www.culturalstudies.net/

Canadian Journal of Communications (back issues and full text)
http://www.cjc-online.ca/

Public Sphere (full Texts within "General Cultural Theory and Theorists")
http://www.publicsphere.net/philosophy/

Cultural Studies and Critical Theory Readings
(http://eng.hss.cmu.edu/theory/

Black Cultural Studies Site
http://www.blackculturalstudies.org

Cultural Activism
http://www.wwcd.org/action/action.html

Nova Scotia Cultural Network
http://www.culture.ns.ca/