



## English 383: Introduction to Cultural Studies

Fall, 2013

Instructor: Dennis Allen  
Office: 110 Colson  
Office Hours: T/Th:  
4:00-5:15  
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Course Purpose: Cultural Studies analyzes texts (ranging from literature and film to Justin Bieber, *Game of Thrones*, and World of Warcraft) as social practices that reflect and reinforce (and sometimes destabilize) a culture's beliefs and values. This class will provide an introduction to the theoretical work in this field and apply this theory to texts of various sorts. Some of the topics we will cover will include: cultural ideas of gender and race, theories of consumer culture, the basic principles of Media Studies, and the social significance of space.

Course Requirements: Course grades will be based on a midterm (35%), a final exam (35%), and three two page response papers (30%).

The Response Papers: Should consist of a two page typed analysis of an essay from the course reading assignments. These should not summarize the reading but should engage it intellectually. In other words, a response to a particular essay should do one or more of the following: critique the essay, apply it to a literary or cultural text, or relate it to previous reading in the course. Also, if an essay proves exceptionally difficult, your response paper on that essay could present some focused, specific questions on points that you did not understand.

Attendance: You are allowed three absences. If you miss class a fourth time, you will fail the course.

Text: Michael Ryan, ed. *Cultural Studies: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2008)

## Assignments:

### Basic Principles:

Aug. 20: Introduction--Course Structure

Aug. 22: Louis Althusser, "Ideology," pp. 304-310

Aug. 27: John Fiske, "Interpellation," pp. 311-315

Aug. 29: Roland Barthes, "Mythologies," pp. 683-686 **Response 1 Due**

### Media Studies:

Sept. 3: Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," pp. 907-916

Sept. 5: Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, "The Phenomenon of Lara Croft," pp. 990-996

Sept. 10: Nick Couldry, "Teaching Us to Fake It: The Ritualized Norms of Television's 'Reality' Games," pp. 1079-1092

Sept. 12: Application Day

Sept. 17: Barbara Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine," pp. 243-254

Sept. 19: Barbara Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine," pp. 254-265 **Response 2 Due**

Sept. 24: John Frow, "Is Elvis a God?" pp. 1166-1176

Sept. 26: Application Day

Oct. 1: Review Day

Oct. 3: **Midterm**

### Consumer Culture:

Oct. 8: Mike Featherstone, "Theories of Consumer Culture," 667-682

Oct. 10: Elizabeth Niederer and Rainer Winter, "Fashion, Culture, and the Construction of Identity," pp. 687-697

Oct. 15: Fall Break

Oct. 17: Andy Opel, "Constructing Purity: Bottled Water and the Commodification of Nature," pp. 773-786 **Response 3 Due**

### Identities, Gender, and Ethnicity:

Oct. 22: Judith Butler, "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions," pp. 205-216

Oct. 24: Teun van Dijk, "The Ideology and Discourse of Modern Racism," pp. 335-350

Oct. 29: Pamela Tracy, "'Why Don't You Act Your Color?'" pp. 610-616

Oct. 31: Application Day

## Space and Place:

Nov. 5: Margaret Morse, "The Ontology of Everyday Distraction," pp. 366-373

Nov. 7: Morse, continued: pp. 373-392

Nov. 12: Don Mitchell, "Metaphors to Live By: Landscapes as Systems of Social Reproduction," pp. 101-112

Nov. 14: Mitchell, continued: pp. 112-123

Nov. 19: Kathleen Stewart, "An Occupied Place," pp. 180-191

Nov. 21: Stewart, continued: pp. 191-202

## Break

Dec. 3: Alice Crawford, "*Unheimlich* Maneuver: Self Image....in Virtual Reality Environments," pp. 975-989

Dec. 5: Application Day

Dec. 10: Review Day

**Final Exam:** Thurs. Dec. 12th, 8:00-10:00 AM