

Communication 6345
Contemporary Cultural Studies
Spring 1996

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Office Hours: Tu, Th 2-3 pm and by appointment

Over the past several years, cultural studies has become an exceptionally hot intellectual property, with the “cultural studies” label being used to describe an ever-expanding range of scholarly books, journals, conferences, courses, job descriptions, and even entire academic programs. One of the more obvious consequences of this boom is a growing confusion as to just what this thing called “cultural studies” really is. While, in part, this uncertainty is related to the newness of cultural studies to many people, a great deal of it is actually intrinsic to the nature of the field. From the very beginning, the range of intellectual projects that travelled under the cultural studies banner has always been too diverse to make simple and straightforward definitions of the field possible. While the field isn’t completely unbounded, it also doesn’t have (and never has had) a clearly identifiable center: there is no single object of study, no body of theory, and no methodological paradigm that defines cultural studies neatly or completely.

What this means for this course is that we won’t be able to map out all of the issues and subjects that currently occupy the attention of cultural studies scholars, though we will give detailed attention to some of the most important of these. We won’t be able to examine cultural studies’ tangled and fractious history in its entirety, but we will trace out enough of that history to help explain how the field came to be what and where it is today. And ultimately we won’t be able to define cultural studies in any exhaustive fashion, but we will sketch out some of the boundaries suggested for the field in the past and address the question of where cultural studies might -- and, perhaps more importantly, where it should -- head in the future. The best way to think of this course, then, is not so much as a source of definitive answers, but as an opportunity to wrestle with productive and important questions.

Course materials:

(1) *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, Linda Baughman, and John MacGregor Wise. Available (eventually) at the University Bookstore. A copy is also on reserve at the USF Library.

(2) Photocopied essays. Required readings are available at the reserve desk of the USF Library *and* in the Communication Department Library (CIS 3026). Recommended readings are *only* available in the Department Library. Given the size of the class, the quantity of articles to be read, and the limited number of copies available, I *strongly* encourage y’all to engage in cooperative reading/photocopying practices.

(3) An e-mail account. Participation in the listserv (CULTSTUD-L) that has been set up for this course will require you to have (and use) an e-mail account. Students without e-mail accounts should check with their college or department for details on how to get one (see separate handout).

Listserv participation:

The primary purpose of this list is to provide an additional forum for discussion of the issues raised by the assigned readings and our weekly sessions. Prompts intended to spur on the dialogue will be posted semi-regularly; just how often these appear, however, will depend largely on how active the list is on its own.

Given that listservs tend to evolve in amorphous and chaotic fashion, there will be no formal bookkeeping procedures used to assess your contribution to the list. As a rough guideline, I would estimate that ten substantial (i.e., more than a paragraph long) posts per person over the course of the semester would constitute a reasonable contribution to the discussion.

Occasionally, the list may be used to make course-related announcements (e.g., “please add the collected works of Marx to next week’s reading”) or to pass word on about other cultural studies related topics that may be of interest to the class (e.g., calls for papers, upcoming conferences, recently published articles and books, etc.). So check your e-mail often.

- To *join* the list, send an e-mail message consisting of **subscribe CULTSTUD-L your-firstname your-lastname** to **LISTSERV@nosferatu.cas.usf.edu**
- To *post* to the list, send an e-mail message to **CULTSTUD-L@nosferatu.cas.usf.edu**

Additional information about the list and how to use it will be sent to you when you subscribe.

Papers:

Choose one of the following two options:

(a) One (1) 25-30 page research paper on a cultural studies related subject. Due by Tuesday, April 30. Those choosing this option should consult with me no later than March 5 to discuss their choice of topics. Ideally, the finished product should be suitable for submission to a conference or a refereed journal.

(b) Three (3) 8-10 page critical response papers. The due dates for these papers are:

<u>Paper due on</u>	<u>Covering course sections</u>
February 20	1/2/3/4/5
March 26	6/7/8/9
April 30	10/11/12/13/14

You are free to write on whatever topic(s) you like from the material covered during the course sections associated with each paper. These essays should be thoughtful, critical engagements with the course material in question; they should *not* be mere summaries of the readings or regurgitation of our in-class/on-line conversations.

N.B.: I will assume that anyone who hasn’t turned in a response paper by the first of the deadlines above has opted to do the research paper instead.

**Readings marked with asterisks can be found in the *Cultural Studies* book.

Jan 9 0: Introduction and overview

no readings

Jan 16 1: Defining cultural studies: what it is

Grossberg, "The Circulation of Cultural Studies"

**Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction"

Nelson, "Always Already Cultural Studies: Academic Conferences and a Manifesto"

Bérubé, "Pop Goes the Academy: Cult Studs Fight the Power"

Frow and Morris, "Introduction" [*Australian Cultural Studies*]

Turner, "Moving the Margins: Theory, Practice and Australian Cultural Studies"

Schwarz, "Where Is Cultural Studies?"

Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: What's in a Name (One More Time)"

recommended: Johnson, "What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?"

R. Williams, "The Future of Cultural Studies"

Ross, "Ballots, Bullets, or Batman: Can Cultural Studies Do the Right Thing?"

Jan 23 2: Historicizing cultural studies: what it was

Hoggart, "Contemporary Cultural Studies: An Approach to the Study of Literature and Society"

Hall, "The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis in the Humanities"

Grossberg, "The Formations of Cultural Studies: An American in Birmingham"

**Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies"

Clarke, "Cultural Studies: A British Inheritance"

During, "Introduction" [*The Cultural Studies Reader*]

recommended: Grossberg, "The Scandal of Cultural Studies"

Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms"

Hall, "Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems"

Jan 30 3: Disciplining cultural studies: what it shall be?

Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Forum on Political Economy and Cultural Studies

Garnham, "Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce?"

Grossberg, "Cultural Studies vs. Political Economy: Is Anyone Else Bored With This Debate?"

Carey, "Abolishing the Old Spirit World"

Murdock, "Across the Great Divide"

Garnham, "Reply to Grossberg and Carey"

Tester, "The Problem of Cultural Studies"

Rooney, "Discipline and Vanish: Feminism, the Resistance to Theory, and the Politics of Cultural Studies"

Pfister, "The Americanization of Cultural Studies"

Denning, "The Academic Left and the Rise of Cultural Studies"

recommended: Brantlinger, "The Humanities (and a Lot More) in Crisis"

Carey, "Mass Communication and Cultural Studies"

**McRobbie, "Post-Marxism and Cultural Studies: A Post-Script"

Feb 6 4: Some key terms and concepts: a detour through theory

R. Williams, *Keywords* [selections]

R. Williams, "Culture Is Ordinary"

R. Williams, "The Analysis of Culture"

Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony"

Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"

Hall, "Reflections Upon the Encoding/Decoding Model"

Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview With Stuart Hall"

Grossberg, "Mapping Popular Culture"

Mellencamp, "Theorizing Affect"

Seigworth, "Sound Affects"

recommended: Bauman, "Legislators and Interpreters: Culture as the Ideology of Intellectuals"

R. Williams, "Communications and Community"

Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* [selections]

Feb 13 5: Postmodernism and cultural studies

Bérubé, "Just the Fax, Ma'am: Or, Postmodernism's Journey to Decenter"

Morris, "Introduction: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism"

Lipsitz, "Cruising Around the Historical Bloc: Postmodernism and Popular Music in East Los Angeles"

Hebdige, "Staking Out the Posts"

Frow, *What Was Postmodernism?*

recommended: Grossberg, "Putting the Pop Back Into Postmodernism"

Hebdige, "Post-Script 1: Vital Strategies"

Hebdige, "Post-Script 2: After (the) Word"

Hebdige, "Post-Script 3: Space and Boundary"

Hebdige, "Post-Script 4: Learning to Live on the Road to Nowhere"

Feb 20 6: Theorizing race and ethnicity

Response paper #1 due

Omi and Winant, "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race"

Gates, "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes"

Diawara, "Black Studies, Cultural Studies: Performative Acts"

Hall, "Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies"

**Gilroy, "Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism"

Gray, "Margin (in)to Future: From a Racial Past to a 'Different' Future"

Gray, "African-American Political Desire and the Seductions of Contemporary Cultural Politics"

**West, "The Postmodern Crisis of the Black Intellectuals"

**Wallace, "Negative Images: Towards a Black Feminist Cultural Criticism"

Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities"

recommended: Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: The Production of Racism in the Media"

Hall, "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?"

Gates, "Trading on the Margin: Notes on the Culture of Criticism"

Feb 27 7: The cultural politics of race and ethnicity

Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics"

Willis, "I Want the Black One: Is There a Place for Afro-American Culture in Commodity Culture?"

Rodman, "A Hero to Most?: Elvis, Myth, and the Politics of Race"

Lipsitz, "Mardi Gras Indians: Carnival and Counter-Narrative in Black New Orleans"

Michaels, "Bad Aboriginal Art"

Valaskakis, "Rights and Warriors: First Nations, Media and Identity"

Roman, "White Is a Color!: White Defensiveness, Postmodernism, and Anti-Racist Pedagogy"

**hooks, "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination"

recommended: Dyson, "Be Like Mike?: Michael Jordan and the Pedagogy of Desire"

Giroux, "Consuming Social Change: The United Colors of Benneton"

Fiske, "Hearing Anita Hill (And Viewing Bill Cosby)"

Mar 5 8: Cultural studies and feminist theory

Research paper topics "due"

McRobbie, "The Politics of Feminist Research: Between Talk, Text and Action"

Treichler and Wartella, "Interventions: Feminist Theory and Communication Studies"

Franklin, Lury, and Stacey. "Feminism and Cultural Studies: Pasts, Presents, Futures"

Long, "Feminism and Cultural Studies"

hooks, "Feminist Scholarship: Black Scholars"

Pollitt, "Are Women Morally Superior to Men?"

de Lauretis, "Upping the Anti (sic) in Feminist Theory"

Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire"

Stabile, "Erasing Racism: *Murphy Brown*, Dan Quayle and the L.A. Riots"

recommended: **Mani, "Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning"

Weedon, "Post-Structuralist Feminist Practice"

Treichler, "Teaching Feminist Theory"

Mar 12 Spring break -- no class

Mar 19 9: Gender, sexuality, and cultural politics

**Crimp, "Portraits of People With AIDS"

Treichler, "Beyond *Cosmo*: AIDS, Identity, and Inscriptions of Gender"

**Kipnis, "(Male) Desire and (Female) Disgust: Reading *Hustler*"

Penley, "Spaced Out: Remembering Christa McAuliffe"

Stabile, "'A Garden Inclosed Is My Sister': Ecofeminism and Eco-Valences"

Stabile, "Shooting the Mother: Fetal Photography and the Politics of Disappearance"

recommended: Winship, "'A Girl Needs to Get Street-Wise': Magazines for the 1980s"

Moore, "Here's Looking at You, Kid!"

**Warner, "Spectacular Action: Rambo and the Popular Pleasures of Pain"

Mar 26 10: Popular culture, mass culture, and media studies

Response paper #2 due

Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'"

Bennett, "The Politics of 'The Popular' and Popular Culture"

**Fiske, "Cultural Studies and the Culture of Everyday Life"

Frith, "The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent: Defending Popular Culture From the Populists"

Ross, "No Respect: An Introduction"

International Labor and Working-Class History, Forums on Mass Culture

Denning, "The End of Mass Culture"

Radway, "Maps and the Construction of Boundaries"

Passerini, "The Limits of Academic Abstraction"

Taylor, "On the Dangers of Theory Without History"

von Saldern, "The Hidden History of Mass Culture"

Denning, "The Ends of Ending Mass Culture"

Herman and Chomsky, "Propaganda Mill: The Media Churn Out the Official Line"

Stabile, "The Emperor's New Clothes: Contemporary Media and Delusions of Democracy"

recommended: *American Historical Review*, Forum on Popular Culture

Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audiences"

Kelley, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Folk'"

Davis, "Toward Mixtures and Margins"

Lears, "Making Fun of Popular Culture"

Levine, "Levine Responds"

Apr 2 11: Looking at/for the audience

Williamson, "The Problems of Being Popular"

Morris, "Banality in Cultural Studies"

Radway, "The Hegemony of 'Specificity' and the Impasse in Audience Research: Cultural Studies and the Problem of Ethnography"

Radway, "Reception Study: Ethnography and the Problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects"

Grossberg, "Wandering Audiences, Nomadic Critics"

Nightingale, "What's 'Ethnographic' About Ethnographic Audience Research?"

Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Forums on the Audience

Allor, "Relocating the Site of the Audience"

Hartley, "The Real World of Audiences"

Lull, "The Audience as Nuisance"

Newman, "On Openings and Closings"

Fiske, "Meaningful Moments"

Allor, "Theoretical Engagements"

Angus *et al.*, "On Pluralist Apology"

Hawes, "Hailing the Other"

Allor, "Maps of Reading"

recommended: Fiske, "Television: Polysemy and Popularity"

Walkerdine, "Video Replay: Families, Films and Fantasy"

Ang, "Introduction: (Not) Knowing the Television Audience"

**Brunt, "Engaging With the Popular: Audiences for Mass Culture and What to Say About Them"

Apr 9 12: Reading popular culture

**Penley, "Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture"

Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music"

Rose, "'Fear of a Black Planet': Rap Music and Black Cultural Politics in the 1990s"

**Radway, "Mail-Order Culture and Its Critics: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Commodification and Consumption, and the Problem of Cultural Authority"

Morris, "Tooth and Claw: Tales of Survival and *Crocodile Dundee*"

Diawara *et al.*, "A Symposium on Popular Culture and Political Correctness"

recommended: **Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music"

McClary, "Living to Tell: Madonna's Resurrection of the Fleshly"

Grossberg, "Is Anybody Listening? Does Anybody Care?: On Talking About 'The State of Rock'"

Gray, "Jammin' on the One!: Some Reflections on the Politics of Black Popular Culture"

Apr 16 13: Cultural studies and critical pedagogy

**Giroux, "Resisting Difference: Cultural Studies and the Discourse of Critical Pedagogy"

Giroux, "Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy"

Sholle, "The Theory of Critical Media Pedagogy"

Henderson, "Communication Pedagogy and Political Practice"

hooks, "Engaged Pedagogy"

Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?: Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy"

Jay and Graff, "A Critique of Critical Pedagogy"

recommended: Giroux and Simon, "Popular Culture and Critical Pedagogy: Everyday Life as a Basis for Curriculum Knowledge"

Pollitt, "Why We Read: Canon to the Right of Me . . ."

hooks, "Introduction: Teaching to Transgress"

Stabile, "Another Brick in the Wall: (Re)contextualizing the Crisis"

Apr 23 14: Cultural studies, public intellectuals, and political intervention

Morris, "Politics Now (Anxieties of a Petty-Bourgeois Intellectual)"

Barrett, "Feminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics"

**Slack and Whitt, "Ethics and Cultural Studies"

Ray, "The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy"

Graff, "Academic Writing and the Uses of Bad Publicity"

Bérubé, "Bite Size Theory: Popularizing Academic Criticism"

Mead, "Yo, Professor"

Boynton, "The Routledge Revolution"

Frank, "Scholar's Soft Sell: Cultural Studies' Field Trip to the Mall"

J. Williams, "Spin Doctorates: From Public Intellectuals to Publicist Intellectuals"

Seigworth, "Everyday Life Is Always Somewhere Else"

Seigworth, "Fear of a Blank Planet"

Seigworth, "To Gump and Gump Not"

recommended: Ulmer, "Introduction: Academic Discourse in the Age of Television"

Rodman, "Making a Better Mystery Out of History: Of Plateaus, Roads, and Traces"

Bérubé, "Entertaining Cultural Criticism"

Apr 30 Research paper/Response paper #3 due

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- Manthia Diawara, "Black Studies, Cultural Studies: Performative Acts," *Afterimage*, 20(3), 1992, pp. 6-7.
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