

HONRS 303T HISTORY, CULTURE, POWER

Dr. Nancy Fitch

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Monday 4:00 – 6:45 p.m.

H 621

Office Hours: TTh 1:00-2:15 p.m., T 4:00-5:00 p.m., Th 6:00-7:00 p.m. and by appointment

This course is designed as an introduction to postmodern thinking and culture and their relationship to history, power, and knowledge. Students will obtain an understanding of the variety of ways in which postmodernism both enriches and challenges contemporary historical practice. At the same time, we will explore postmodern cultural production from critical and historical perspectives. Students will learn how to “read” film, popular music, and multimedia Internet productions. At the end of the class, students should recognize the possibilities inherent in multimedia historical production.

Learning Goals for Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences

- a. To understand broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives
- b. To solve complex problems that require social scientific reasoning
- c. To relate the social sciences to significant social problems or to other related disciplines
- d. When deemed appropriate, to apply disciplinary concepts from the social sciences in a variety of settings, such as community-based learning sites and activities

Learning Goals for Cultural Diversity

1. To understand that culture is socially constructed and fundamental to social interaction
2. To appreciate the complex relationships that gender, ethnicity and class bring to a discussion of society and culture
3. To understand that because we live in an inter-connected world, we need to understand the diversity and relationships within and among cultures
4. To recognize and evaluate how one’s cultural history affects one’s sense of self and relationship to others

Assessment:

Class Discussion: 30%

Short (3-5 pages) Paper on Each of Four Class Sections: 10% each

(note: students are free to choose a topic or film of their choice in each class section, but must write a paper for each section)

Final Paper or Project: 30% (this could be a group effort)

Required Reading

--John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1993)

--Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988)

--Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did not Take Place*, trans. by Paul Patton (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995)

--Henry A. Giroux, *Fugitive Cultures: Race, Violence, and Youth* (New York: Routledge, 1996)

SECTION ONE: CULTURE(S), SUBCULTURES, AND GLOBAL CULTURE

Schedule of Class Meetings

08/28 Introduction to the Course and Main Themes

[Show "Reel History"]

09/01 **LABOR DAY—NO CLASS**

09/08 Introduction to Cultural Studies and History

[Show "History and Memory"]

Required Reading:

--Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Chapters on "What is Popular Culture," "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," and "Postmodernism"

09/15 Cultures and Subcultures

Required Reading:

--Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, The Meaning of Style*, Chapters on "Bleached Roots: Punks and White Ethnicity," and "Ok, It's Culture, but Is It Art?"

--Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Chapter on "Composing"

--Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Chapter on "Culturalism"

09/22 Race, Violence and Children's Culture

Required Reading

--Giroux, *Fugitive Cultures*, Chapters on "White Panic and the Racial Coding of Violence" and "Racism and the Aesthetic of Hyper-real Violence: *Pulp Fiction* and Other Visual Tragedies"

09/29 Disney Realism and the Disneyfication of American Culture

Required Reading

--Giroux, *Fugitive Cultures*, Chapters on "Animating Youth: The Disneyfication of Children's Culture" and "The Milk Ain't Clean: National Identity and Multiculturalism"
--Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Chapter on "Feminism"

SECTION TWO: POLITICS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF POLITICAL SPECTACLE

10/06 Constructing the Political Spectacle

Required Reading

--Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, Chapters on "Some Premises about Politics," "Political Language and Political Reality," and "The Political Spectacle as Tactic and as Mystification"
--"Battling for Minds," in Macdonald and Cousins, *Imagining Reality* [Coursepack on Reserve]

10/13 The Construction and Uses of Political Leaders and Political Enemies

Required Reading

--Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, Chapters on "The Construction and Uses of Social Problems," "The Construction and Uses of Political Leaders," and "The Construction and Uses of Political Enemies"

10/20 The Gulf War Did Not Take Place

[Show film on "Imagineering the Gulf War"]

Required Reading

--Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*

SECTION THREE: HISTORICAL MEMORY AND HISTORICAL AMNESIA

10/27 Cultural Production and History as Memory

[Show excerpts from “The Sorrow and the Pity”]

Required Reading

--James Roy MacBean, “*The Sorrow and the Pity: France and Her Political Myths*,” from Alan Rosenthal, ed., *New Challenges for Documentary* [In Coursepack on Reserve]

11/03 How Does One Represent Mass Murder/The Holocaust?

[Show selected pieces of “Our Hitler”]

Required Reading

--Dominique LaCapra, “Representing the Holocaust: Reflections on the Historians’ Debate” in Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* [Coursepack on Reserve]

--Eric L. Santer, “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma,” in Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* [Coursepack on Reserve]

--Anton Kaes, “Holocaust and the End of History: Postmodern Historiography in Cinema,” in Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* [Coursepack on Reserve]

11/10 Is There a Doc(umentary) in the House?

[Show the film, “The Atomic Café”]

Required Reading

--Jeffrey Youdelman, “Narration, Invention, and History,” in Alan Rosenthal, ed., *New Challenges for Documentary* [Coursepack on Reserve]

11/17 News, History, and Power

[Show film “Six O’Clock News”]

Required Reading

--Stuart Hall, “Media Power: The Double Bind,” in Alan Rosenthal, ed., *New Challenges for Documentary* [Coursepack on Reserve]

--Mark Crispin Miller, “How TV Covers War,” in Alan Rosenthal, ed., *New Challenges for Documentary* [Coursepack on Reserve]

--Giroux, *Fugitive Cultures*, Chapter on “Talking Heads and Radio Pedagogy: Microphone Politics and the New Public Intellectuals”

11/24-11/28 **THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS**

SECTION FOUR: COLONIALISM AND ORIENTALISM

12/01 Colonial Desire and the Making of Others

[Show film “Bontoc Eulogy”]

Required Reading

--Mia Blumentritt, “*Bontoc Eulogy*, History, and the Craft of Memory: An Extended Conversation with Marion E. Fuentes,” [Coursepack on Reserve]

12/08 Orientalism

Required Reading

--Edward Said, *Orientalism*, introduction [Coursepack on Reserve]

--Giroux, *Fugitive Cultures*, Chapter on “Licensing Bigotry without Being Politically Correct”

--“Diversity” in Macdonald and Cousins, *Imagining Reality* [Coursepack on Reserve]

12/15 **5:00 P.M. – FINAL PAPER/PROJECT DUE**