

CCS 3030/POPC 4800 INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, GENDER, AND CULTURE
Fall 2014

Professor Sheffer
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Office hours:

Required Texts:

Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (NYU Press, 2007)
Simon During, ed., *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2007)
Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature*, 2nd edition (Oxford UP, 2011)
Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (Scholastic, 2010)
John Cameron Mitchell, dir., *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001)
Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings* (Drawn and Quarterly, 2009)

Additional readings available on Canvas. (These are marked with an asterisk; further readings may be added at the discretion of the professor.)

Recommended but Not Required:

Richard Bullock and Francine Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (Norton, 2011)

This course is designed to provide an introduction to major schools of thought and key figures of cultural studies theory. We will discuss Marxism, feminism, queer theory, critical race and postcolonial theories, and more. Do not be intimidated by theory! This is an introduction to theory. I do not expect you to understand these concepts already. I DO expect you to gain a critical and theoretical vocabulary that will be applicable to a range of subjects and texts. I am always available during office hours and by appointment to discuss any questions or problems you may have with the material.

Since this is a seminar, I will not primarily be lecturing. I will provide context and explanation as necessary, but the burden lies on you to keep up with the reading, ask questions, make connections, and generally develop your critical and theoretical vocabulary. You are responsible for all assigned material and outside **primary texts** such as films, short stories, and television shows. All readings are from the *Cultural Studies Reader* unless otherwise indicated; items with an * are available on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

10% **A Critical theory reading notebook**, in which you analyze a passage from the assigned essay, explain what you think it means, and then pose one question about the text. These responses are due in class on the day we discuss the assigned reading. The question must be substantial (about a paragraph) and analytical (discussing the meaning and implications of the reading). Your question should engage with a main idea within the reading, and/or explore applications and/or relationships to other texts. I will often provide specific prompts; be sure to

listen in class and to check your email for these suggestions. Your questions must be typed (**Times, 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins**) and submitted in **HARD COPY** by the end of the class period. I will ask students to share their questions every class period. Please see the instructions and sample response on Canvas.

These questions are due once per week on the following schedule:

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| Students with last names beginning with A-M: | Tuesdays |
| Students with last names beginning with N-Z: | Thursdays |

In addition, you should create an ongoing list of **key vocabulary and definitions** that you will use to study for the exams. I will also call on students each period to contribute new terms and offer definitions (see class participation).

30% Essays. THREE times during the semester, you will submit a 3-page essay. Each essay is worth 10% of the your grade. In each essay, you are expected to apply three theories from that unit to the assigned primary text. The essay should have all of the features of good writing: clear argumentation, proper MLA citation, and error-free prose. I encourage you to meet with me early to discuss topics and review drafts. Please also make use of the writing center to improve your writing skills.

10% Presentations. Each class period two people will be assigned to give a presentation. Presenters must work together to plan the presentation, leading the class through key terms, explaining the central concepts in the assigned readings, developing discussion questions to engage the class, as well as providing a game, creative application, or primary text to which the reading(s) will be applied. The presenters will not submit questions (i.e., the reading notebook) on the day of their presentation, but they will post their key terms and definitions to **the Canvas Discussion thread** within 24 hours of their presentation. I highly recommend each group see me in advance of your presentation date to discuss the readings, discussion questions, and activity.

10% Mid-term exam (in-class), covering terms, definitions, theoretical concepts, authors.

20% Final Exam covering terms, definitions, theoretical schools, and essay questions from the entire semester.

10% Class participation. Since this a seminar, regular, active participation is crucial. Participation includes: asking questions; offering to read passages at my request; volunteering key terms, definitions, and responses to the readings; and otherwise displaying consistent engagement with the course.

All requirements need to be completed in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to complete ANY of the major assignments (exams, essay) will result in a failing grade for the course.

Absences: Since this course has requires participation and discussion, you are only allowed three absences without penalty. Each additional absence will result in a one-third-grade deduction, and six or more absences will result in **failure of the course**. Three tardies = one absence.

Please reserve your absences for illness, family emergencies, and other unavoidable events. Any student who comes to class without books or without having done the reading will be asked to leave; these absences will affect your final grade like all other absences.

According to university guidelines, “excused absences” are limited to “verified illness, participation in athletic events or other group activities sponsored by the university, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and religious observances.” If you have unavoidable obligations or commitments outside of class (such as the above), you must make prior arrangements with me regarding work that is due for that day.

NOTE ABOUT DISABILITY SERVICES

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact Disability Services at 419 372-8495 in room 413 South Hall to get documentation for any disabilities and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

Chapters from Robert Dale Parker’s *How to Interpret Literature* are indicated by his name. Keywords come from Burgett & Hendler’s *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. All essays are from the *Cultural Studies Reader* unless otherwise indicated. Additional readings are marked with an *, and will be available on Canvas in pdf format. Always read the entire essay, plus any headnotes. ALWAYS bring the assigned readings to class in hard copy.

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| August 26 | Introduction |
| August 28 | Parker, Introduction Keywords: America, Culture, Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies” Begin reading Suzanne Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i> |

CLASS, CAPITALISM, & CULTURE

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| September 2 | Parker, Chapter 8 “Marxism” Keywords: Capitalism, Class Georg Friedrich Hegel, from <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> [The Master/Slave Dialectic] Louis Althusser, from <i>Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses</i> * |
| September 4 | Keywords: Economy Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproduction” Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” |
| September 9 | Parker, Chapter 9 “Historicism and Cultural Studies” Raymond Williams, “Ideas of Nature” Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding” |
| September 11 | Pierre Bourdieu, “Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus” Carl Wilson, selections from <i>Let’s Talk About Love</i> * |

- September 30 Keywords: City,
Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City”
Dick Hebdige, “Subculture and Style”
- October 2 Michel Foucault, “Space, Power and Knowledge”
Jean Baudrillard, from *The Precession of the Simulacrum**
- October 7 Discussion of Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*
DUE: ESSAY 1
- October 9 **Fall Break**

FEMINISM & QUEER THEORY

- October 14 Parker, Chapter 6 “Feminism”
Keywords: Gender, Identity, Marriage
Simone de Beauvoir, from “The Independent Woman”
Annette Kolodny, “Dancing through the Minefield”*
- October 16 Deborah McDowell, “Recycling: Race, Gender, and the Practice of
Theory”*
Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”*
- October 21 Keywords: Domestic, Sentiment
Janice Radway, “The Institutional Matrix of Romance”
Laura Wexler, from *Tender Violence**
- October 23 Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”*
Sarah Hagelin, from *Reel Vulnerability**
- October 28 Parker, Chapter 7 “Queer Studies”
Keywords: Disability, Queer, Sex
Judith Butler, “Subversive Bodily Acts”
Eve Sedgwick, “Axiomatic”
- Homework: Watch *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (available on Amazon
streaming)

EXTRA CREDIT EVENT: Tuesday, October 28 at 4 pm in 101 Olscamp
Speaker: Chef Jeff Henderson, “**Ordinary People, Extraordinary
Stories.**”

- October 30 Discussion of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*
DUE: ESSAY 2

November 4 **Mid-term Exam**

RACE & ETHNICITY

November 6 Parker, Chapter 10 “Postcolonial and Race Studies”
Keywords: Empire, Exceptionalism, Orientalism
Edward Said, from *Orientalism**
Watch videos: Katy Perry, *Roar*
Avril Lavigne, *Hello Kitty*

Homework: Begin reading Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*

November 11 **Veterans Day**

November 13 Keywords: Ethnicity, Race
Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “On the Theoretical Status of the
Concept of Race”*
Paul Gilroy, “The Crisis of ‘Race’ and Raciology”

November 18 Keyword: White
Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” *
Ruth Frankenberg, “Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness”*

November 20 Keywords: Indian, Mestizo/a
Gloria Anzaldúa, from *Borderlands/La Frontera**
Gerald Vizenor, from *Manifest Manners**

November 25 Keywords: Asian, Coolie, Naturalization
Lisa Lowe, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, and Multiplicity”*
David Eng, from *Racial Castration**

November 27 **Thanksgiving**

December 2 Discuss Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*
Due: ESSAY 3

December 4 **Exam Review**

FINAL EXAM will follow the posted schedule set by the University.