

CURE 1001 Introduction to Cultural Studies



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Tutors: TBA

10:30 am to 12:15 pm, Thursday
WMY 408
Fall 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course to Cultural Studies designed specifically for students new to the discipline. There are many ways to begin the intellectual journey into Cultural Studies, and in this course we focus on three keywords—Identity, Ideology, and Capitalism. These three concepts are treated as windows for students to explore the general concerns of Cultural Studies, particularly related to the dynamics among culture, society, economics, and politics. In the section on identity, we will study the connections and differences among identity, subjectivity, and agency, and we will also explore the importance and complications of identity politics around the world. In the section on ideology, we discuss how we are fundamentally shaped by dominant ideologies, and how we might develop an agile self-reflection against different competing discourses. In the section on capitalism, we focus primarily on economic disparity in capitalist society and neoliberalist society. Throughout the course we will also study the complex relations between text and context, expression and control, as well as individual and society. We analyze how power and control are operated in our everyday life, and we also explore the meanings of autonomy and resistance. Students will confront and unlearn some of their previously held values, with the aim to develop their own ways to encounter this world ridden with contested power operations. Overall, the course aims to help students develop a sense of criticality and cultural connectedness that is urgently needed in our society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students are expected to learn the importance of culture in our world, particularly in relation to subject formation, ideology, and social justice. Students are also expected to acquire the basic reading skills to understand critical theories, so that they can apply them to cultural texts and their own everyday life critically and creatively. They are expected to understand some key concepts and values of Cultural Studies, and how they are different and related to other disciplines.

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SYLLABUS

Sept 5 **Introduction**

IDENTITY

Sept 12 **Social Roles and Social Norms**

Sept 19 **Representations and Identity**

Sept 26 **Identity and Intersectionality**

Oct 3 **“Once Upon a Time in HKDSE” (Run Run Shaw Hall)**

Main Readings:

- Suzan G. Brydon, “Men at the Heart of Mothering: Finding Mother in *Finding Nemo*,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 18, no.2: 131-146.
- Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 222–237;
- bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin: As a Space of Radical Openness,” in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (South End Press, 1990), 145–153;
- Patricia Hill Collins & Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 2nd ed. (Polity, 2020), Chapter 1.

Reference:

- Barker and Jane, *Cultural Studies*, Ch. 7 (ref list)

IDEOLOGY

Oct 10 **From Identity to Ideology**

Oct 17 **Ideology and Power**

Oct 24 **Ideological State Apparatus**

Oct 31 **Hegemony**

Main Readings:

- Terry Eagleton, “What is Ideology?” in *Ideology – An Introduction* (Verso, 1991), 1–25;
- Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press, 2001), 85–126;
- Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (International Publishers, 1971), 192–200.

Reference:

- Oswell, *Culture and Society: Introduction to Cultural Studies*, Ch. 3 (ref list)

CAPITALISM

Nov 7 **Capitalism, Labor, and Value**

Nov 14 Class cancelled – University Congregation

Nov 21 **Eternal Crises**

Nov 18 **Neoliberalism**

Main Readings:

- Karl Marx, *Capital vol. 1*: Session 1 of Ch 1, and Ch 4;
- David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford UP, 2003), 87–136;
- Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 17–45.

Reference:

- Strinati, *An Intro to Theories of Popular Culture*, Ch. 4 (ref list)

Tutorials

There will be 6 tutorial sessions, each lasting 1 hr and 45 mins. Students will be organized into groups, each of which leads the discussion of that session. The group should supply their research, supported by the assigned readings, and relate their discussions to lectures. Students must also consult their tutors before the presentation.

Session 1: Introduction

Section 2: Racial Identity in Hong Kong

- Lisa Leung, *Ethnic Minorities, Media and Participation in Hong Kong* (Routledge, 2021), 1-18.

Section 3: Political Identity in Hong Kong

- Veronica Sau-Wa Mak and Amber Kai-Yan Poon, "Digital Activism and Citizenship: A Case Study of 'Yellow' Food Influencers and Political Consumerism in Hong Kong." *Food, Culture & Society* (2023), 1-19.

Section 4: K-Pop and Afro-American Culture

- Crystal S. Anderson, *Soul in Seoul: African American Popular Music and K-pop* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2020), 17-34.

Section 5: The Otaku Culture

- Patrick W. Galbraith, *Otaku and the Struggle for Imagination in Japan* (Duke UP, 2019), 185-226.

Section 6: Social Inequality

- Ha-Joon Chang, "The Political Economy of Parasite" (2021)
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/internationaldevelopment/2021/10/13/cutting-edge-issues-in-development-the-political-economy-of-parasite-the-movie/>

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Assessment

- 20%: Problem statement (around 1000 words) with the research question(s) and major concerns related to the lectures (due Nov 20). See <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/problem-statement/>
- 40%: Examination
- 30%: Tutorial presentation
- 10%: Attendance

REFERENCE LIST: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

Barker, Chris, and Emma A. Jane. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, 5th ed. London: Sage, 2016.

Durham, Meenakshi Gigi and Douglas M. Kellner ed. *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, 2nd ed. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

During, Simon. *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: 2005.

Hall, Stuart, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon ed. *Representation*, 2nd ed. London: The Open University, 2013.

Kidd, Dustin. *Pop Culture Freaks: Identity, Mass Media, and Society*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Ryan, Michael. *Cultural Studies: A Practical Introduction*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Storey, John. *Critical Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 8th ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. The final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide. Generative AI tools are allowed to be used in the Problem statements and tutorial presentations, but they must be properly indicated.

GRADE DESCRIPTOR

A: Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.

A-: Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.

B: Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

C: Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.

D: Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes

F: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.