



LC 110
Reading Cultures
Spring 2019

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Professor Patrick Saveau
Instructor's Email: psaveau@fus.edu
Class meeting times: T/F: 10:00 - 11:15
Class location: LAC 7
Office Hours: M-Th: 16:00-17:30 and by appointment

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course has two primary goals: to introduce students to the history and theoretical writings of various strands of cultural studies, and to acquaint them with some of the intersecting axes - race, class and gender - that energize the field. Close attention will be paid to issues such as the shaping of identity, forms of representation, the production, consumption and distribution of cultural goods, and the construction of knowledge and power in a host of cultural practices and cultural institutions.

III. RATIONALE

LC 110 is a foundation course to be taken by students who are interested in majoring or minoring in CLCS.

The course is made up of **2 interrelated parts**:

- The first part is **theoretical and methodological** and serves as an introduction to key terms and players in cultural studies, to different forms of pop culture, and methods we can use to read cultural products and practices. It gives you some of the theoretical background you need to understand various forms of popular culture. Think of this part of the course as your toolbox that provides you with the necessary analytical paradigms, ideas and languages to begin to reflect on the culture that surrounds you.
- The second part is **analytical** and invites you to use the critical and theoretical skills you are acquiring (through lectures, readings, class discussions, etc...) to develop your own brand of cultural analysis on everyday cultural forms we usually consume "just for pleasure".

IV. COURSE GOALS

- Introduce intellectual paradigms, concepts and theories – many overlapping to some extents, others at odds with one another – developed over the last several decades to “read culture.”
- Examine these different methodologies and theories so as to be in a position to gauge their effectiveness for a contemporary study of culture.
- Impart knowledge of the following intellectual terms: hegemony, ideology, consumption, communication, visual culture, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, space, identity, power... and analytical frameworks: neo-Marxism, psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, feminism, modern liquidity...
- Apply theories learnt in class when analyzing cultural forms.
- Develop critical thinking.

V. SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this class, students should be able to:

- apply modes of analysis relevant to the study of popular culture.
- use appropriate theoretical terms and models to the study of contemporary cultural texts (whether it be an ad, a song, a movie, a TV series, a novel, etc).
- analyze and critique theoretical models used in the study of popular culture.
- articulate concepts and arguments clearly and accurately in written work, in class discussions and oral presentation, and in their final research paper.

VI. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Course Reader. It is alphabetically ordered. Each chapter usually starts with the cover of the book it is copied from.
- Further texts will be made available to you on Moodle when and if need be.

VII. ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Homework	20%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
1 Short essay	15%
Research paper	25%
Participation	25%

VIII. ASSESSMENT DETAILS

➤ Participation

This course is largely about the understanding, structuring and expressing of ideas. Talking – spontaneously and **prepared** – is key (this means you must have done the readings for each class). The goal of the class is to have everyone participate readily and with pleasure. **I allow only one unexcused absence in this class.** All subsequent absences will affect your participation grade unless justified by a valid medical certificate. **Should you be absent 6 times during the semester, you will be asked to withdraw from this course.**

➤ 1 short writing assignment

I will ask for one short and concise essay of 4 **full** pages. This essay will explore the phenomenon of re-presentation through advertising and is due on **March 1**. Choose your ad / commercial as early in the semester as possible; this will enable you, during class, to take notes (in relation to your ad/commercial) that will then be relevant when the time comes to write your paper. Ask yourself why your ad/commercial is effective, and most of all which discourse lies behind the ad/commercial. **I strongly encourage non-Western students to choose ads coming from their own cultures.** Please note that these essays while short, require lots of pre-writing time during which you jot down the main ideas of the various theories we are studying, as this paper requires you to **substantiate your analysis with references to texts and videos we will have seen in class.**

➤ **Homework**

Before some topics we are discussing in class, I am asking you to turn in personal reflections that show you are a critical thinker. Arguments from the readings can be used to support your own personal reflections. These assignments will be graded. **No late assignment will be accepted.**

➤ **Mid-term exam**

This exam provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the different articles and book chapters we will have read in class during the first part of the semester.

➤ **Research paper**

Your final essay can concern anything within your cultural milieu (except ads, the topic for your short essay). A comparative project that explores the differences in cultural forms between the places you come from and the place in which you are studying is especially encouraged. I will expect the final essay to be 10 to 12 pages in length, well-structured, well argued, and **thoroughly researched (it should include a minimum of 5 scholarly references to either articles found on JSTOR or Project Muse or books we have in our collections; using French and Italian language resources is also encouraged)**; it should contain evidence of your grasp of the theories and methodologies we have studied, and it should be executed with attention to grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling worthy of your ideas. You will first submit a thesis statement and bibliography that you will post on Moodle on **Friday, April 26**, before class. Each thesis statement will be peer-reviewed during class. Then, you will submit your first drafts (3 to 4 pages) on **Tuesday, May 7** so that I can return them with corrections, comments and suggestions on content, structure, grammar and lexis. Not posting on Moodle your thesis statement and bibliography on the one hand, and your first draft on the other, will come with a 4% penalty imposed on your research paper. For instance, should you turn in a paper worth 92% (an A), you will receive 88% (an A-). Trust me, submitting your thesis statement and bibliography on the one hand, and turning in a first draft of your final paper is all to your advantage. It will enable you to refine and structure your argument with more rigor, improve your syntax, grammar and spelling if need be. **Your research paper is due on Monday, May 13 at noon in my box on Kaletsch campus (reception stamped required). No extension will be given.**

XIX. GRADING POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

A	92-100	C	68-73
A-	88-91	C-	64-67
B+	84-87	D+	60-63
B	80-83	D	58-59
B-	78-79	F	0-57
C+	74-77		

X. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE (POLICIES / REQUIREMENTS)

- Participation includes being present in class, but most of all it implies being involved in class discussion. Attending all my classes does not mean you will automatically get an A. Participation means showing interest, getting involved, expressing your ideas, substantiating your opinions about the readings we are doing, the videos we are seeing in class with solid arguments. I cannot grade silence. Someone who is present in class but does not say a word throughout the semester will most likely get a C for participation.
- Do not hesitate to send me links to articles you have read / are reading that relate to topics discussed in class. I will add them in our forum.
- If you have questions, if you want help when writing your essay, do not hesitate to talk to me.
- **Cellular phones must be turned off during class.** Should I see you playing with your phone, texting, checking out social media, during screenings and class discussions, I will take your phone away and put it on my desk.
- **Computers are not allowed in class unless specified.** Most of our readings are featured in our Course Reader. Should you not have your course reader in class, I will ask you to leave the class. This policy will apply from the second week onwards.

XI. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: STATEMENT ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

See p. 199 of the FUS Academic Catalog 2018-20: <https://www.fus.edu/files/FUS-academic-catalog.pdf>

XII. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Do not hesitate to stop by in my office if you have any questions about the topics discussed in class. The WLC has students at your disposal to help you go over your papers if need be.

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Tuesday, January 22 Presentation of syllabus.

- Pictures to be commented and analyzed
- Definitions of culture.
- Roland Barthes: Denotation vs connotation

Friday, January 25

- **Paradigms and lexical terms in cultural studies**

Task:

- Think of 3 cultural differences between your own culture and Swiss culture: what does it say about the way your own culture has shaped you?

WEEK 2

RE-PRESENTATION of REALITY

Tuesday, January 29

Homework to be turned in at the beginning of class: Which media do you rely upon to know and understand the world you live in? Traditional media (newspapers; television; radio; books)? The World Wide Web? Social media (Facebook; Instagram; Twitter)? In an image-based culture, how do we relate to and understand the world? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a culture? **(2 pages typed. Times New Roman 12. Double spaced)**

Readings:

- Sut Jhally, "Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture" (GRMC). **Posted on Moodle.**
- Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" in *Jean Baudrillard. Selected Writings*.

Friday, February 1

Readings:

- Geert Lovink. "Society of the Query: The Googlization of our lives", in *Networks Without a Cause. A Critique of Social Media*.
- Geert Lovink. "Facebook, Anonymity, and the Crisis of the Multiple Self", in *Networks without a Cause. A Critique of Social Media*.

WEEK 3

Tuesday, February 5

Homework to be turned in at the beginning of class: In a society driven by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), what is the hidden and ugly face of this modern technology (phones, computers, tablets, street cameras, automated payments, implanted chips, etc.) and how does it impact us without us really

questioning it? **(2 pages typed. Times New Roman 12. Double spaced)**

Reading:

- Michel Foucault, “Panopticism,” in *Discipline and Punish*.

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

Friday, February 8

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” **(On Moodle)**

WEEK 4

Tuesday, February 12

Homework to be turned in before class: do you sense that we are living in a post imperialist era or do you have the feeling that we still live in an imperialist era? What enables you to say we live in an imperialist era or a post-imperialist era? Which position are you speaking from to assert one or the other? How does imperialism or post-imperialism manifest itself in your daily lives? **(2 pages typed. Times New Roman 12. Double spaced)**

Readings:

- Herbert I. Schiller. “Not Yet the Post-Imperialist Era” in Daya Kishan Thussu (ed), *International Communication. A Reader*.
- David Morley. “Globalisation and cultural imperialism reconsidered. Old questions in new guises” in James Curran and David Morley (eds), *Media and Cultural Theory*.

Friday, February 15

- Alan Bryman, “The Disneyization of Society” in *McDonaldization. The Reader*.

WEEK 5

GENDER

Tuesday, February 19

Screening:

- *Killing You Softly*, by Jean Kilbourne

Friday, February 22

February Break

WEEK 6

Tuesday, February 26

Task:

- Be prepared to talk about THE AD / COMMERCIAL YOU HAVE CHOSEN in analytical terms. Why did you choose this ad? What makes it interesting to analyze? Which argument are you going to defend? Which analytical frameworks and theories are you intent on using to substantiate you analysis?

Friday, March 1

Essay I on advertisement due (4 full pages).

Reading

- J. Jack Halberstam. “Gaga Relations: The End of Marriage” in *Gaga Feminism. Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*.

WEEK 7

Tuesday, March 5

Reading

- Michael Warner, “What’s Wrong with Normal?” in *The Trouble with Normal. Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*.

Friday, March 8

Mid-term exam

WEEK 8 and 9: Academic Travel (March 9-23)

WEEK 10

Tuesday, March 26

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

Homework to be turned in before class: How does the tourist industry manipulate us to see what it deems interesting (in other words what brings capital)? How does it encourages us to stay on a path that has carefully been defined and constructed for us to maximize profit? Furthermore how do we more often than not end up embracing social media curated trips? What does it say about us? **(2 pages typed. Times New Roman 12. Double spaced)**

Reading:

- John Urry, “Theories” in *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*.
- John Urry, “Mass Tourism ” in *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*.

Friday, March 29

RACE

Task

**How is the Middle Eastern (wo)man represented in art (painting) and in movies?
Be ready to discuss your findings, substantiating them with precise examples.**

Reading:

- Edward Said, "Introduction", in *Orientalism*
- Documentary: Edward Said on Orientalism

WEEK 11

Tuesday, April 2

Reading:

- Shawn Kelley. "Racialized Discourse. Modernity, race and reason" in *Racializing Jesus. Race, ideology and the formation of modern biblical scholarship*.

Friday, April 5

Readings

- Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino and al. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life," *American Psychologist*, May-June 2007.

WEEK 12

Tuesday, April 9

No class

Task.

Watch Spike Lee's *Do the right Thing*

Friday, April 12

No class

Homework to be turned in my box on Kaletsch campus at 11:15 am (Reception stamp required): write a film review of Spike Lee's movie (1 page typed. Times New Roman 12. Double spaced)

WEEK 13

THE FOOD INDUSTRY

Tuesday, April 16

Task

- Go through your cupboards, your fridges, and list the ingredients of the food items you have. Take pictures of the wrappers, boxes where the ingredients are listed. How does the food industry influence what you eat and drink?

Friday, April 19

Readings

- Carol J. Adams, “Preface to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*”, in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*.
- Carol J. Adams, “Preface to the Tenth Anniversary Edition”, in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*.

WEEK 14

Tuesday, April 23

Reading

- Peter Singer, “Becoming a Vegetarian”, in *Animal Liberation*. (**On Moodle**)

Friday, April 26

Task:

- Post your thesis statement and your bibliography in the appropriate folder on Moodle. The key questions your thesis statement must ask are: what do I want to demonstrate and what am I adding to the debate? You may want to focus on sport, music, tourism, art, literature (a particular book you read), architecture, the body, a social movement, a film etc... What is important in your research paper is to show that you understand the analytic categories of race, class, gender, and that you appreciate their interconnectedness.
- Peer reviewed session: be prepared to talk about your paper.

WEEK 15

Tuesday, April 30

Reading

- Peter Singer, “Man’s Dominion...” in *Animal Liberation*. (**On Moodle**)

Friday, May 3

Reading

- David Morse, “Striking the Golden Arches. French Farmers Protest McD’s Globalization” in *McDonaldization. The Reader*

WEEK 16

Tuesday, May 7

First draft of research paper

- Post first 3 to 4 pages of your paper before class in appropriate folder on Moodle. I will annotate them and return them to you with comments, corrections, suggestions so that you can proceed in the good direction.

WEEK 17

Monday, May 13:

Final Research Paper

- **Due at noon in my box on Kaletsch Campus. Send me as well an electronic copy.**