Tuesday and Thursday, 10am-12pm (Communications 121)

Instructor: Suzanne Scott • sulscott@ucsc.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 4-6pm (Communications 105)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will survey the history, theoretical preoccupations, and scholarly legacies of Cultural Studies. As a field, Cultural Studies is notable for its diversity and flexibility, both in terms of its objects of study, and its theoretical approaches, which range from Marxist analyses to studies of representation and identity politics. This course will offer an overview of the core concepts of Cultural Studies, examining seminal texts alongside emergent scholarly work, with power as a critical through line. Whether that power is tied to producers or consumers, the industry or the academy, the ruling class or subculture, this course will offer students the opportunity to speak back to claims that Cultural Studies has been “depoliticized,” and consider the future of the field.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Readings are listed below on the course schedule; assigned articles are to be read before the class date under which they are listed. All readings are required and can be found either in the anthology below, which can be purchased at The Bay Tree Bookstore, or through the library’s online journal archive [L]. Additional links to online articles or recommended reading may be sent via email. For journal articles marked [L], go to http://library.ucsc.edu/find/online-journals and find the PDF of that article using the publication information provided in the syllabus. If you have any trouble accessing these readings, please inform me immediately.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Tuesday class will be comprised of a short lecture to contextualize the week’s theme and a lengthy discussion of the reading, occasionally accompanied by select clips. Some weeks we will be placing the readings in conversation with film and television texts, some will be devoted entirely to discussing the readings. Consequently, it is vital that you complete all of your readings for the week by class on Tuesday, on the weeks we have screenings. If there is no screening, the readings will be split up between Tuesday and Thursday (see your syllabus). Attendance is required at both sessions every week, even if you’re familiar with the screenings.
Your attendance and active participation is central to the class’ success and to your success in the class, as is your thoughtful engagement with the course readings. Documented medical or family emergencies will be excused, and you have one “free pass” for when you need a personal day. All other absences will negatively impact your attendance and participation grade. As part of your participation and attendance grade, you are required to email me one discussion question based on one or more of the readings before class on Tuesday each week. This question should be designed to provoke conversation, and convey that you have read the texts thoroughly. You are welcome to ask clarifying questions about the essays in class, but your discussion question should push beyond comprehension to critically engage with the readings. You’re encouraged to email me with any additional material you come across that you think might be relevant to the class (blog posts, videos, articles, etc.).

In addition to a midterm exam composed of short identifications and essay questions, you will be responsible for conceptualizing and writing a term paper on a research topic of your choice, and giving a 10 minute presentation on your research findings and argument in the final weeks of class. You will submit your proposed final paper topic in week 7 in the form of a short paragraph describing your project and how it relates to the themes of the class. More details on this assignment will be distributed in the coming weeks.

All assignments must be handed in on time, and turning in assignments late will be detrimental to your grade. All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Exceptions will be made and extensions will be given only for medical or family emergencies (provided you can offer documentation).

Grading breakdown: Attendance/Participation = 25% 
Midterm = 25% 
Presentation = 20% 
Final Paper = 30%

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g., office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or http://drc.ucsc.edu for more information on the requirements and/or process.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
PLAGIARISM IN ANY FORM WILL BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE PROVOST’S OFFICE, WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE, AND COULD LEAD TO DISMISSAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY. If you have any questions or doubts about how to properly cite a source, don’t hesitate to contact me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 • Introduction to the Course and Cultural Studies
Tuesday 1/4 and Thursday 1/6
Read: - Douglas M. Kellner and Meenakshi Gigi Durham, “Adventures in Media and Cultural Studies: Introduction to KeyWorks” (ix-xxxviii)
Week 2 • Ideology
Tuesday 1/11 and Thursday 1/13
    - Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (41-72)
    - Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation)” (79-87)
Screen:  *They Live* (Dir. John Carpenter, 1988, 93 min.)

Week 3 • Hegemony and Resistance
Tuesday 1/18 and Thursday 1/20
Read: - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas” (9-12)
    - Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (130-143)
    - Dick Hebdige, “(i) From Culture to Hegemony; (ii) Subculture: The Unnatural Break” (144-162)
Screen:  *Heathers* (Dir. Michael Lehman, 1989, 103 min.)

Week 4 • Encoding/Decoding
Tuesday 1/25 and Thursday 1/27
Read: - Stuart Hall, “Encoding/Decoding” (163-173)
    - Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message” (107-116)
    - Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (18-40)

Week 5 • Political Economy and the Audience/Commodity
Tuesday 2/1 and Thursday 2/3
Read: - Nicholas Garnham, “Contributions to a Political Economy of Mass Communication” (201-229)
    - Herbert I. Schiller, “Not Yet the Post-Imperialist Era” (295-310)
Read: - Dallas W. Smythe, “On the Audience Commodity and Its Work” (230-256)
    - Eileen R. Meehan, “Gendering the Commodity Audience: Critical Media Research, Feminism and Political Economy” (311-321)
    - Pierre Bourdieu, “(i) Introduction; (ii) The Aristocracy of Culture” and “On Television” (322-336)

Week 6 • Representation I: Considering Identity
Tuesday 2/8 and Thursday 2/10 (MIDTERM- bring blue books)
Read: - Paul Gilroy, “British Cultural Studies and the Pitfalls of Identity” (381-395)
    - Richard Dyer, “Stereotyping” (353-363)
Week 7 • Representation II: Gender
Tuesday 2/15 and Thursday 2/17
Read:  - Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (342-352)
       - Angela McRobbie, “Feminism, Postmodernism and the ‘Real Me’” (520-532)
       - Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (396-421)
Screen: Kamikase Girls (dir. Tetsuya Nakashima, 2004, 102 min)
Due: Term paper topics (via email by 2/16)

Week 8 • Representation III: Race
Tuesday 2/22 and Thursday 2/24
Read:  - bell hooks, “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance” (366-380)
Screen: Select episodes of The Wire
Sign up: Presentation date/time

Week 9 • Cultural Studies in the Age of Media Convergence
Tuesday 3/1 and Thursday 3/3
Read:  - Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra” (453-481)
       - Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” (482-521)
       - Henry Jenkins, “Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars?: Digital Cinema, Media Convergence, and Participatory Culture” (549-576)
Screen: Exit Through the Gift Shop (Dir. Banksy, 2010, 87 min.)

Week 10 • Term Paper Presentations
Tuesday 3/8 and Thursday 3/10

Week 11 • Term Papers Due
Tuesday, 3/15