

CURE 1001 Introduction to Cultural Studies



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11:30 am to 1:15 pm, Monday
LSK 206
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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 Inequality. 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 inequality, we focus primarily on economic disparity in capitalist society and neoliberalist society. 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 4 **Introduction**

IDENTITY

Sept 11 **Representations and Identity**

Sept 18 **Margins and Identification**

Sept 25 **Identity Politics**

Main Readings:

- 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.
- James Tully, "Identity Politics," *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge UP, 2003), 517–533.

Reference:

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

IDEOLOGY

Oct 2 National Day Holiday – no class

Oct 9 **From Identity to Ideology**

Oct 16 **What is Ideology?**

Oct 23 Chung Yeung Festival – no class

Oct 30 **Ideological State Apparatus**

Nov 6 **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)

INEQUALITY

Nov 13 **Capitalism, Labor, and Value**

Nov 20 **Eternal Crises**

Nov 27 **Neoliberalist Society**

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 minutes. Students will be organized into groups, and each group will lead the discussions of that session, supported by one set of assigned readings. Students must consult their tutors before the presentation, and they must relate their discussions to lectures.

Session 1: Introduction

Section 2: Identity Politics in Hong Kong

- 陳錦榮、梁旭明，〈《認識香港南亞少數族裔》〉（香港：中華書局，2016），第二章；
- Gordon Mathews, "The Hong Kong Protests in Anthropological Perspective: National Identity and What it Means," *Critique of Anthropology* 40.2 (2020).

Section 3: Identity Politics in the West

- Susan Neiman, *Left is Not Woke* (Polity, 2023), Ch 2;
- Adbul Noury and Gerard Roland, "Identity Politics and Populism in Europe," *Annual Review of Political Science* no. 23 (2020): 421-439.

Section 4: COVID and Ideology

- Christian Fuchs, *Communicating Covid-19* (Emerald, 2021), Ch 3;
- David Craig, "Pandemic and Its Metaphors: Sontag Revisited in the COVID-19 Era," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 23, no. 6 (2020): 1025-1032.

Section 5: Social Inequality in Affluent Society

- You Yenn Teo, *This is What Inequality Looks Like* (Singapore: Ethos Book, 2018), Chs 1 and 2;
- 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/>

Section 6: Local Economy in Hong Kong

- 駱穎佳，〈情感資本主義下的小店倫理〉
- 邱林川、阮耀啟編，〈《平台點合作》〉（香港：印象文字，2018）

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Assessment

- 15%: A problem statement (around 500 words) with research question(s) and major concerns related to the lectures (due Nov 20). See <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/problem-statement/>
- 40%: Examination
- 25%: 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 and Malden 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.