

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



## Department of English & Writing Studies

### **Introduction to Cultural Studies English 2250G (001) Winter 2014**

**Instructor:** Dr. T. Phu

**Date/Time:** Wednesday 6:00pm-9:00pm

**Location:** Kresge Building K103

#### Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

#### Course Description

In an age of media saturation, we can no longer take for granted the assumption that culture is "out there." What is culture? Who makes it and whom does it serve? To help you address these questions, this course will introduce you to the theories and methods of the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, including (but not limited to): the Birmingham School, Frankfurt School, feminism, and postmodernism. These theories and methods offer keywords"-critical concepts with which to explore and how the production and consumption of cultural texts affects the shaping of identities and influences power relations between subjects. In addition to engaging critically with the theories themselves to assess their meanings, we will be drawing on the methods that they provide for our interpretation of a wide range of cultural texts, including advertising, television, and film.

#### **Objectives:**

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Grasp the importance of key concepts ("keywords") in the field of cultural studies;
- Understand the practical application of these concepts for critical analysis;
- Identify and explain theoretical concepts;
- Compare and contrast theoretical approaches;
- Think and write critically about theoretical and cultural texts.

#### Course Materials

Required Custom Course Book available at the university bookstore.

Methods of Evaluation

Semiotic Analysis Assignment	4 double-spaced pages	Jan 22	10%
Essay Proposal + Annotated bibliography	4 double-spaced pages	Feb 5	10%
Final essay	10-12 double-spaced pages	Mar 19	25%
Attendance and Participation		ongoing	10%
Blog discussion	250-500 words	ongoing	10%
Final Exam	format TBA		35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

**Readings and Screenings:**

Custom Course Reader (available at UWO Bookstore)  
 Films: Inception; Children of Men, Brokeback Mountain  
 TV: The Wire, Season 4, Episode 5.

Please note that, while it would be ideal to screen these films and TV shows in class, because of time constraints, you will often be responsible for viewing them on your own. They are available in UC 1, on M-F between 9am-4pm. They cannot be signed out.

**Course notes:** Learning is most effective through active listening: this means you are responsible for compiling your own notes. Although I will be posting PowerPoint slides on the course site, these slides will only contain brief lecture summaries, and should not substitute for a full set of notes. Because your TA and I won't be posting or distributing classnotes, I encourage you to coordinate with your classmates to help you in this task for those days that you miss class.

**Email policy.** Your TA and I will return messages within 48 hours. For questions requiring substantive discussion or regarding academic accommodation, you may be asked to meet with me in person

**Timetable:**

Week 1 Jan. 8	Introduction Keywords: culture and mythology <b>Assignment 1 distributed</b>	Culture: a keyword Saussure, from <i>Course in General Linguistics</i> Barthes, "Myth Today"
Week 2 Jan. 15	Review of Barthes on myth Keyword: Cultural Capital	Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital"
Week 3 Jan. 22	Review of "Forms of Capital" Keywords: cultural capital; habitus Screening: <i>The Wire S.04. E05</i> <b>Due: Assignment 1</b>	

Week 4 Jan. 29	Culture Industry Screening: <i>Inception</i> Essay instructions distributed	Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry"
Week 5 Feb 5	Keyword: Aura <b>Due: Essay Proposal</b>	Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Feb 6	Dr. Judith Jack Halberstam (Bonus Attendance Marks)	Public Lecture in Conron Hall, 5-7pm
Week 6 Feb 12	Ideology "Aura": In- Class assignment Return Essay Proposal Return Assignment 1	Athusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"
Reading Week Feb 19.	<b>No Class</b>	
Week 7 Feb. 26	Sex and Gender Keywords: performativity drag and "Kinging" Tutorial (8-9pm): Writing Research papers	Butler, "Bodily Inscriptions/ Performative Subversions" Halberstam, "Drag Kings: Masculinity and Performance"
Week 8 Mar 5	Queering Culture Keyword: homosocial	Sedgwick, "Introduction" and "Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles"
Week 9 Mar 12	Queering Culture Screening: <i>Brokeback Mountain</i>	
Week 10 Mar 19	<b>Research Day, no class</b> <b>Due Final Essay (submit via OWL)</b>	
Week 11 Mar 26	Biopolitics Screening: <i>Children of Men</i>	Foucault "Society Must be Defended"
Week 12 Apr 2	Lecture: <i>Children of Men</i>	
Week 13 April 9	Return final essays Exam Review	

**Assignments:**

Blog Discussions: Your TA and I will be regularly posting questions on OWL. These questions are meant to function as prompts to extend debates beyond the classroom. Your responses to these prompts-or to points raised by your peers' responses-will be marked on the basis of their originality and quality.

Formatting of essays and assignments: Your papers are expected to be typed and double-spaced, using 12-inch font with 2.5 cm margins. Please use MLA style-guidelines with full citations for references and include a complete bibliography.

Submission of myth analysis assignment: A hard copy of your first assignment, a myth analysis of an advertisement, is to be submitted in class on the due date. You must include the ad that you analyze in your submitted assignment. **Late assignments are to be submitted in the dropbox located outside University College 173.** Your marked assignment will be returned within three weeks.

Submission of annotated bibliography and proposal: This assignment is to be submitted via OWL. Feedback and marks will be sent to you over OWL within three weeks.

Submission of final essay: The final essay is also to be submitted via OWL; feedback and marks will be sent to you over OWL within three weeks.

Late submission: Assignments submitted late without academic accommodation (see above) will be deducted 5% per day, including weekends. These late assignments should be submitted to the Essay Dropbox located outside UC 173.

**Attendance:**

Regular attendance is a good strategy for acquiring a full set of class notes; active participation is a great way of enriching your learning experiences. You're expected not only to attend classes but also to prepare for them by keeping up with the readings, bringing your custom course reader so as to follow-and participate in-class discussions. Please note that excessive absenteeism is grounds for barring students from the final exam. The academic calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course" (p. 35). A meeting with your professor regarding your essay proposal and final essay is mandatory; this meeting will count towards a portion of your participation mark. Bonus attendance marks will be awarded to students who attend Dr. J. Jack Halberstam's public lecture on Feb. 6th at 5-7pm in Conron Hall (UC 224). Dr. Halberstam's important essay on drag king subcultures is included among your critical readings.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

**Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### **Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.