ENG 4775-001: Studies in literary criticism: Cultural studies

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Required Texts
Burgess, A Clockwork Orange, Norton, 1995
Durham and Kellner, Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works, Blackwell, 2005 (revised edition)
Gilman, The Yellow Wall-Paper and Other Stories, Oxford, 1995
Hamper, Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line, Warner, 1992 (reprint edition)
Rivkin and Ryan, Literary Theory: An Anthology, Blackwell, 2004 (second edition)
Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Norton, 2003

*Additional readings listed in the schedule will be provided

Recommended Texts

Course Description
In assessing the impact of cultural studies, Paul Gilroy describes it as a field of study that created "a global network of readers and interlocutors" who "directed scholarly attention toward areas hardly taken seriously elsewhere as objects of sustained academic interest." As Gilroy suggests, cultural studies tends to break down the high and low art distinction, and emphasize that individual texts emerge and circulate within larger historical networks of production and consumption. Institutions, media, and other everyday cultures not only provide important contexts for understanding canonized "Art" or "Literature" but also for thinking of them as social practices implicated within a larger field of power relations. Several interpretive practices—Marxism, feminism, queer theory, and media studies, among them—have contributed to the development of cultural studies, and this course will survey a range of such critical approaches. In conjunction with readings of criticism and theory, we will consider verbal and visual materials as diverse as Anthony Burgess's novel A Clockwork Orange (focusing on youth subcultures); Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Anthony Minghella's film The Talented Mr. Ripley (focusing on gender and sexuality); and Ben Hamper's working-class memoir Rivethead (focusing on class and the organic intellectual). The course requires careful preparation of challenging readings; measured contributions to class discussions; and engaged critical thought.

Writing-Intensive Course
Consider submitting an essay written for this class to the EWP. Visit the following web address for information on the submission process: <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/electronic_writing_portfolio1.htm>. The course deadline for EWP submissions is Thursday, April 24, 2008.

Brief Description of Assignments
1. Mid-term and Final Examinations: these examinations will test your knowledge of course readings and discussions through a variety of question formats, including identification, short answer, and essay (25% each).
2. Research Project Proposal/Annotated Bibliography: you will propose a topic for the research project (750 words) and begin your research by compiling an annotated bibliography (5%).
3. Research Project: you will write a research paper in which you produce an original interpretation of a text using concepts and reading techniques drawn from the field of cultural studies (undergraduates: 2500-word, graduates: 4000-word minimum) (25%).
4. Research Project Presentation: you will present the findings of your research paper to the class (5%).
5. Daily Assignments: daily assignments will consist of quizzes, in- and out-of-class writings, group activities, peer reviews, and a range of other work assigned at my discretion (5%).
6. Participation: this seminar requires careful preparation of challenging readings, measured contributions to class discussions, and engaged critical thought (10%).

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Policies
Late work: Daily assignments will not be accepted late and cannot be made up. Papers are due at the start of class on the final due date. If you want an extension on a paper, you must seek the extension two full days in advance of the class period during which the assignment is due and cite compelling reasons for the request; otherwise, you will be penalized one letter grade for not turning in the paper on time and an additional letter grade for every twelve hours thereafter. After forty-eight hours, the paper will not be accepted, and you will receive a zero on it. Only in the case of a properly documented absence may an examination be taken before or after the scheduled date. The rescheduled examination may cover different material than the original.

Grading Scale: 100 to 90 = A, 89.99 to 80 = B, 79.99 to 70 = C, 69.99 to 60 = D, 59.99 and below F

Assessment: Your grades for the various parts of the Research Project assignment will be determined by how well your work fulfills the requirements outlined in the assignment sheet. You must turn in the research project proposal/annotated bibliography, research project, and research project presentation to pass the class. You will typically receive verbal instructions for daily assignments. Each daily assignment will be worth ten points, except for the peer review, which will be worth fifty. At the end of the semester, I will divide earned daily assignment points by the total possible to arrive at a grade. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance, the regularity and quality of your contributions to class discussions, and your level of engagement during group work and other class activities.

Academic Dishonesty: According to the MLA Style Manual, the word “plagiarism” has its origin in the Latin term for “kidnapper”: plagiarists kidnap other writers’ sentences, phrases, or ideas and present them as their own. The Random House Dictionary defines “plagiarism” as “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work.” As these sources suggest, plagiarism often results from faulty documentation or careless note taking. Always place quoted materials in quotation marks, and always cite quoted and/or paraphrased sources, even in rough drafts of papers or presentations. Respect for the intellectual work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources. Inexcusable acts of plagiarism include downloading or buying a paper from the internet; copying and pasting phrases or passages from electronic sources into your paper without citing them; submitting a paper written by another student as your own; borrowing the language and content of a website verbatim and using it as an “original” presentation; and so on. The penalty for academic dishonesty is failure in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

The Office of Disability Services: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

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PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

Each reading should be completed before class on the day it is listed.
Abbreviations: MCS = Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works, LT = Literary Theory

Week One
T Jan 8  | Introduction to the course
R Jan 10 | Arnold, “Dover Beach”; “Sweetness and Light,” from Culture and Anarchy
Eagleton, “The Rise of English,” from Literary Theory: An Introduction

Week Two
T Jan 15 | Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man”
          | Turner, “Language and Culture”
          | Barthes, “The World of Wrestling,” from Mythologies
R Jan 17 | Marx and Engels, “The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas” (MCS 9-12)
          | Gramsci, “The Concept of Ideology” and “Cultural Themes” (MCS 14-16)
          | Countee Cullen, “Incident”
          | Allen Ginsberg, “America”
Week Three
T Jan 22  Foucault, “Panopticism,” from *Discipline and Punish* (LT 551-565)
Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (3-19)
R Jan 24  Kant, excerpt from “What is Enlightenment?”
Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry” (MCS 41-48)
From Gladwell, “The Formula: Could a Computer Predict Movie Hits?”
MC Lars, “Generic Crunk Rap”

Week Four
T Jan 29  Hebdige, begin at “Hegemony: The Moving Equilibrium” (MCS 150) and continue reading through “Subculture: The Unnatural Break” (to 162)
Clip from Temple’s *The Filth and the Fury* (2000)
MC Lars, “Hot Topic is Not Punk Rock”
R Jan 31  Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*

Week Five
T Feb 5   Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*
R Feb 7   Bourdieu, “On Television” (MCS 328-336)
Clip from *Network* (1976)

Week Six
T Feb 12  Fiske, “Television Culture” (LT 1274-84)
Recommended reading: Hall, “Encoding/Decoding” (MCS 163-73)
R Feb 14  Whedon, “Hush,” *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*
Begin Hamper’s *Rivethead*

Week Seven
R Feb 21  Williams, from *Resources of Hope*

Week Eight
T Feb 26  Marx, “The Factory,” from *Capital*
Hamper, *Rivethead*
R Feb 28  Gramsci, “The Intellectuals,” from *Prison Notebooks*
Hamper, *Rivethead*

Week Nine
T Mar 4   Mid-term Examination
R Mar 6   Conferences on Research Projects

Spring Recess
TR Mar 11, 13  No classes

Week Ten
T Mar 18  *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Hyde*
R Mar 20  *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Hyde*
Linehan, “Sex, Secrecy, and Self-Alienation in *Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*” (197-204)
Research Project Proposal / Annotated Bibliography Due

Week Eleven
T Mar 25  Butler, “Performatve Acts and Gender Constitution” (LT 900-911)
Clip from *Paris is Burning* (1990)
Recommended reading: Sedgwick, “Epistemology of the Closet” (LT 912-21)
Week Twelve
T Apr 1 Minghella, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)
Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (MCS 342-52)
R Apr 3 First draft of research project due; peer review

Week Thirteen
T Apr 8 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
Greenblatt, "Martial Law in the Land of Cockaigne"
R Apr 10 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
Selection from *The Tempest* and its Travels

Week Fourteen
T Apr 15 Presentations
R Apr 17 Presentations

Week Fifteen
T Apr 22 Presentations
R Apr 24 Presentations
Research project due; deadline for EWP submissions

Final Exam Thursday, May 1, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

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**RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT**

**The Research Project Assignment**
Write a paper in which you combine research and original close reading to interpret an object of study. Use concepts, reading techniques, and research practices drawn from the field of cultural studies.

**Research Project Proposal/Annotated Bibliography**
Due: R Mar 20 (750-word minimum)

In your proposal, broadly outline your project, explaining your methodology or approach to the topic and your initial idea or argument.

Model questions to ask yourself include: what kind(s) of research will I do? Which concept(s) from the field of cultural studies will be central to my study? Why? Which research question will I explore? How does my research question relate to critical or theoretical debates about my object of study or topic? What argument will I make about my object of study? What will I contribute to scholarship or current debates in this research area?

In the annotated bibliography of criticism and/or theory on your topic, list secondary sources in MLA style—6 secondary sources required for undergrads and 8 for grads. These sources should come from outside the course reading. For practical criticism, try to find recent sources, less than twenty-five years old. Theoretical texts may come from any time period. A book chapter or theoretical piece excerpted in an anthology counts as a whole source. Provide a concise annotation of each source in 2-4 sentences.

**How to Annotate Sources for the Annotated Bibliography**

A good annotation makes a summary statement about a critic’s or theorist’s methodology, purpose, and argument (especially the conclusions reached). However, it also goes beyond mere summary to address the quality of a scholarly or theoretical text. Is the critic’s or theorist’s work useful? How? Does the critic or theorist contribute new or original ideas to debates about the topic?

**An MLA-Style Bibliographic Entry** (see the *MLA Handbook* for more information)

A Poor Annotation of Senf

The scholarly article, "The Comedy of Class in Stoker's Dracula," was written by Carol Senf, a notable literary critic on Dracula. This talks about the language of class, which is its central argument. Aspects of Dracula's vampirism are discussed in this context.

An Adequate Annotation of Senf

Combining Marxist analysis with close reading of the text, this essay takes the notion of Dracula as a bloated aristocrat to its logical extreme, reading Stoker's novel as a metaphor for class relations. In Senf's smart but poorly supported reading, Dracula is the supreme aristocrat and his feeding on blood symbolizes the way he saps the lower classes of their economic power. Specifically, she argues that his character is constructed in opposition to the interests of Victorian England's growing middle class.

Research Project Essay

* Complete First Draft Due: R Apr 3
* Final Draft Due: R Apr 24

Write an essay that puts forth a sophisticated, critically and theoretically informed argument (2500-word minimum for undergrads, 4000-word minimum for grads). Your essay should:

* offer close reading and original analysis of primary texts or objects of study.
* engage thoughtfully with recent criticism or theories relevant to study of your research topic.
* draw on the cultural studies tradition.

Please write clearly and analytically, aiming to produce a contest- or journal-quality essay. Undergrads should use a minimum of 8 sources, grads 10. Any critical or theoretical reading from the course syllabus will count toward the final source requirement for the research project.

Presentation

* Due: T Apr 15, R Apr 17, T Apr 22, R Apr 24 (according to scheduling)

On your scheduled presentation date, be prepared to present the results of your research project to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation. During your presentation, briefly describe the initial aims and goals of your project. Then, move on to the results, explaining how your research project developed over time and how you arrived at your main line of argument. How does your project fit into the field of cultural studies? What conclusions did you reach through research and writing? Consider constructing a handout for the class and/or using audio/visual aids to illustrate key points. Be prepared to answer questions about your project.

Guidelines for the Contribution Presentation

1) You clearly explain the argument of your research project.
2) You do not rely too heavily on audio/visual aids (for instance, read from a PowerPoint presentation).
3) You adequately answer questions about your argument/contribution.