DESCRIPTION: We’ll begin this course with a story about an ant colony. E.O. Wilson’s “Trailhead,” and end with serial killers. In between the course work will consist of short essays from Cultural Studies: An Anthology, Michael Ryan, ed. Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-4051-4576-3. The main idea is that cultural events and cultural differences are both created by individuals and exceed individual intentions and actions. Our focus will be on how people act and react in society with readings about: art, ideology, rhetoric and discourse, ethnicity, identity, consumerism and fashion, media, and celebrity. Course work will consist of reading, class participation and discussion, and three 3-page papers and one final 5-page paper.

The course can be applied to the Arts & Letters group requirement and the University multicultural requirement (as an “AC” or American Culture course).
Course Objectives

- Acquire a familiarity with contemporary key ideas in multi-disciplinary cultural studies and media studies.
- Critically engage these ideas and representative scholars by using philosophical methods of analysis, as well as contemporary cultural examples.
- Contrast and compare philosophical treatments of cultural studies with treatments in other fields such as literature, social sciences, and cultural and media studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

✔ Knowledge acquired of an emerging philosophical tradition and some of its paradigm examples and subjects.
✔ Exposition, Interpretation, and Criticism of perspectives and analyses from communications, cultural studies, and philosophy.
✔ Ability to understand some of the complexities of contemporary cultural diversity.
✔ Acquire a sense of literacy/competency about cultures and subcultures different from one’s own.

Requirements (See Appendix, A-D)

GRADE Components 3 three-page papers (45%); One final four to five-page paper (25%) Informed class participation (you have done the readings before class) and attendance at lecture and discussion (30%) ***PLEASE SEE PAPER ASSIGNMENTS AT END OF SYLLABUS.


Absences - You are allowed 2 free absences from lecture, which do not require a written excuse or advance notification, unless you are missing a due date for a paper, and, 2 free absences from section. Absences over these amounts require documentation to be excused. Otherwise, each unexcused absence from lecture or section will detract 2 points from your final grade.

Class atmosphere - mutual respect, no electronic devices (unless related to a disability or course reading)

Late papers will be accepted without penalty if you have the kind of documentation that would count as an excused absence. Otherwise, late papers will lose a third of a letter grade for each class day they are handed in late. E.g. if a paper due on Tuesday (which they all are) is handed in on Thursday, a B grade will be lowered to a B-. If it is handed in the following Tuesday, to a C+ and on the next Thursday, to a C. The maximum penalty for late papers is a deduction of 2 letter grades. If you fall behind, please stay in touch with your GTF about your plans to catch up.
Introduction and Key Concepts for Course

In the preface to the anthology, *Cultural Studies*, Michael Ryan provides a useful overview of this new field. But, although most of our course content would fall under the relatively new field of cultural studies, our approach will be philosophical, which is to say critical:

- Do authors support their claims with either plausible factual references or valid logical arguments? Do you agree or disagree, and why?
- How do different perspective compare with one another?
- How are key concepts used in different readings and are the concepts that cultural studies practitioners use coherent (do they make sense?) and useful?

In approaching the material from cultural studies, the following key ideas should be kept in mind, throughout the course, to be applied as relevant, to each and all of the readings, as well as taken up in discussion. All of these ideas should be critically considered. They are not being ‘taught’ to the student, but rather offered for consideration, thought, discussion, and your own conclusions. We will return to these key ideas throughout the term, in lecture and discussion.

- ‘Diversity’ is the general term and idea that refers to group differences within societies and between interest sub-groups.
- Insofar as diversity is not harmonious, culture is a constant process of negotiating diversity.
- There are two senses of culture—artifacts or products such as books, paintings, music, and how people act and react in society. These two senses are difficult to keep separate.
- A general post-modern perspective on culture is that culture is a system of signs, language, and other symbols and representation that derive their meanings from the same system. This entails that there is no outside, objective, or factual external reality.
- The average individual accepts the culture in which he or she participates, and also reproduces that culture in behaviour. But he or she may also create new aspects of it or change it. Cultural change is most evident in innovative artifacts or artistic productions (e.g., fashion) or actions/products/ beliefs/expressions of objection, rebellion, or resistance to existing culture.
- Culture in these senses is not value-neutral, but normative. Values are expressed implicitly or explicitly and conformity to them is expected or required. The question of where the values come form or who ‘makes’ them is usually answered with reference to ruling elites in macro and micro hierarchies of power. Elites and other leaders make and enforce the values that benefit them and maintain their dominant status. But mass agreement and complicity is required for that to succeed.

Readings

On Canvas: All of these readings are required as assigned.


Ian Hacking, “Making People Up”

E.O. Wilson’s “Trailhead” *The New Yorker Magazine*
NOTE: Beginning with week III, Parts IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X and XII from Cultural Studies will be assigned as required readings. All essays will be discussed in lecture and discussion and each student is required to read at least half of the essays in each section, as indicated. Please keep a log/notes of the essays you have read, because this is the material you should refer to in your papers. The articles posted on Canvas (Appiah, Cabranes-Grant, Goodin, Hacking, and Wilson) and Wolfe’s The Painted Word are required reading for all students.

Texts:

Tom Wolfe, The Painted Word (Knight reserve)


WEEK 1.
Introduction
W.O. Wilson, “Trailhead

WEEK 2.
Tom Wolfe, The Painted Word

WEEK 3.
READ at least 4 of the following essays. Cultural Studies Part IV: Ideologies

17. The German Ideology (Karl Marx and Friedriche Engels).
18. Ideology (Louis Althusser).
19. Interpellation (John Fiske).
21. The Ideology and Discourse of Modern Racism (Teun van Dijk).
22. 9/11 and the Jihad Tradition (Sohail H. Hashmi).
23. The Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television (Margaret Morse).

WEEK 4.
READ at least 4 of the following essays. Cultural Studies Part V: Rhetoric & Discourse.

25. The Rhetoric of Hitler's "Battle" (Kenneth Burke).
27. Thinking About the End of the World with Conservative Protestants (Mark Hulsether).

WEEK 5
READ all of the following essays. Cultural Studies Part VI: Ethnicity.

30. What is Race? (Richard Lewontin, Steven Rose and Leon Kamin).
31. The Crisis of "Race" and Raciology (Paul Gilroy).
32. What is to be Gained by Looking White People in the Eye? Culture, Race, and Gender in Cases of Sexual Violence (Sherene Razack).
33. Fiaca and Veron-ismo (Grant Farred).
WEEK 6

**READ at least 4 of the following essays**

34. Subculture: The Meaning of Style (*Dick Hebdige*).
35. The Goth Scene and (Sub) Cultural Substance (*Paul Hodkinson*).
37. Elements of Vogue (*Marcos Becquer and José Gatti*).
38. In Our Angelhood: Rave as Counterculture and Spiritual Revolution (*Simon Reynolds*).
39. Lowrider Style: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Scale (*Ben Chappell*).
40. Purity and Danger (*Stephen Duncombe*).

WEEK 7

**READ at least 5 of the following essays**

41. Theories of Consumer Culture (*Mike Featherstone*).
42. Mythologies (*Roland Barthes*).
43. Fashion, Culture and the Construction of Identity (*Elizabeth Niederer and Rainer Winter*).
44. ...And Then There Was Shopping (*Sze Tsung Leong*).
46. Julia Learns to Shop (*Sharon Zukin*).
47. Fashion as a Culture Industry (*Angela McRobbie*).
48. Tommy Hilfiger and the Age of Mass Customization (*Paul Smith*).
49. Constructing Purity: Bottled Water and the Commodification of Nature (*Andy Opel*).

WEEK 8

**READ: Cultural Studies** Part X: Media Studies.
57. Encoding, Decoding (*Stuart Hall*).
58. Heliography: Journalism and the Visualization of Truth (*John Hartley*).
59. The Cultural Politics of News Discourse (*Stuart Allan*).
60. Images of Citizenship on Television News: Constructing a Passive Public (*Justin Lewis, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, and Sanna Inthorn*).
62. The Phenomenon of Lara Croft (*Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky*).

WEEK 9

**Read all. Cultural Studies** Part XII: Audience, Performance, Celebrity.
70. Theories of Consumption in Media Studies (*David Morley*).
71. Reading the Romance (*Janice Radway*).
72. The Cinematic Apparatus and the Construction of the Film Celebrity (*P. David Marshall*).
73. Fan Cultures: Between 'Fantasy' and 'Reality' (*Matt Hills*).
74. Is Elvis a God? Cult, Culture, and Questions of Method (*John Frow*).
75. Serial Killing for Beginners (*Mark Seltzer*).

WEEK 10 – DISCUSSION TOWARD FINAL PAPER

**READ: Hacking, “Making People Up,”**
Leo Cabranes-Grant, “Intercultural Poetics: Thinking for (And from) Diversity” *Modern Language Association* AND

**PAPER ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES**
PAPER #1. DUE TUESDAY (WEEK 3) NOON, JAN. 19. USING WHATEVER SOURCES YOU CHOOSE, WRITE AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION: WHAT IS THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCE(S) BETWEEN THE ANT WORLD AS DESCRIBED BY WILSON AND THE ARTWORLD AS DESCRIBED BY WOLFE? (3 PP. 15% OF FINAL GRADE.)

PAPER #2. DUE TUESDAY, NOON (WEEK 6) FEB. 9. USING THE SOURCES IN THE READINGS, EXPLAIN HOW POWER STRUCTURES INFLUENCE CULTURE. (3 PP. 15% OF FINAL GRADE.)

PAPER #3. DUE TUESDAY, NOON (WEEK 8) FEB. 23. TOPIC TBA FROM GTFs. (3 PP. 15% OF FINAL GRADE.)

FINAL PAPER: DUE TUESDAY NOON, MARCH 15. DRAWING ON CABANES-GRAHT, HACKING, AND APPIAH’S ESSAYS, WRITE AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION:

IF THE READINGS FOR WEEKS 8, 9, AND 10 ARE VIEWED AS A COMPOSITE PICTURE OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE, WHAT WOULD DIogenes THINK ABOUT THIS CULTURE? (REFER TO A NUMBER OF THE READINGS, AS WELL AS THESE THREE ARTICLES. 5 PAGES, 25% OF FINAL GRADE.)

APPENDIX, A-D

A. Disability
Philosophy Department faculty and instructors do their best to comply with Disability Services policy and instructions, as follows. Please see no. 4 in particular.

At a minimum, Instructors have the responsibility to ensure Full access for students with disabilities by responding to a student’s need or request for accommodations as outlined below.

1. If a student presents you with a notification letter from DS:
2. You have the responsibility to cooperate with DS in providing authorized accommodations in a reasonable and timely manner. The specific accommodation determines the amount of involvement required. Refer to the section below entitled “Examples of Shared Responsibility” for a description of your involvement in providing the most common accommodations.
3. If a student does not present you with a notification letter from DS:
4. If a student requests an accommodation without having presented you with the notification letter from DS, please refer the student to DS. If the student is already on file with DS, a request form just needs to be filled out. If the student is new to DS, the process to review documentation and meet with the student may take some time. If the disability is obvious and the accommodation appears appropriate, you may need to provide the accommodation while awaiting official notification. If you are unsure, please call DS for assistance.
5. If a student discloses a disability to you:
6. Ask to see the notification letter from DS. This letter describes the accommodations that the institution is legally mandated to provide. During an office hour or at another convenient time, discuss the letter and the accommodations with the student. Students MUST present a notification letter from DS to receive testing accommodations. If the student does not have a letter, please refer the student to DS. Appropriate accommodations will be determined after reviewing documentation of the disability and the student will be issued the notification letter.
7. If you have a question about the appropriateness of an accommodation:
8. Questions about the appropriateness of certain accommodations should be directed to the Director of DS.
9. If a disability is suspected:
10. Share your concerns with the student regarding his or her performance. If the concern seems disability-related, ask if he or she has ever received assistance for a disability. If it seems appropriate, refer the student to DS for further discussion and guidance. It is the student’s decision whether or not to self-
identify to DS; however, to receive accommodations, disclosure to DS with proper documentation is required.

B. GRADES: U of O Philosophy Department Policy

What kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.? The following reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.

Discussion forms an integral part of the course, and your performance will be graded on the basis of the quantity and quality of your participation. You should arrive prepared to discuss the material and course assignments.

C. Academic Honesty

The stiffest punishments possible will be sought for those who plagiarize, fabricate, or cheat. (The usual punishment is an “F” for the course.) The following offers examples of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. Expectations may vary slightly among disciplines. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts.

A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:
1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials--unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise (for example, written work, printing, computer program, art or design work, musical composition, and choreography) prepared totally or in part by another.

Plagiarism also includes submitting work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor.

Fabrication Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Examples include, but are not limited to:
1. citing information not taken from the source indicated;
2. listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise;
3. inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

Cheating Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.
Examples include, but are not limited to:
1. copying from another student's paper, computer program, project, product, or performance;
2. collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation;
3. resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor;
4. writing a paper for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

D. HOW TO WRITE GOOD PHILOSOPHY PAPERS

Note: When you get your papers back, there will be comments. The letters in parentheses indicate what aspect of your writing might need improvement and you may see them the second or third time this aspect still needs work.

1. CLARITY (CL) Since this is a philosophy paper, make sure that you define your terms and give reasons for claims. All of your ideas should be explicitly stated and not left to the reader to infer. One difference between philosophy and literature is that philosophers spell everything out, while creative writers depend on the imagination of the reader.

2. PRECISION (P) Try not to make vague claims or general statements about the ideas in the readings. Be accurate in reporting the views of others and exact in stating your own.

3. ORGANIZATION (O) Organize the ideas in the paper into a few coherent paragraphs. Summarize the main claims of your paper in 2 or 3 sentences that you write after you write the paper, but put at the very beginning of the paper. This is an appropriate introductory paragraph for a philosophy paper, not a filler or a fluffy beginning.

3. WRITING MECHANICS (WR) The mechanics include spelling, punctuation, syntax and complete sentence structure. Make sure that you already have these down or consult a source if you don't. Highly recommended is Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style*. This is available on line at [www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)

4. ANALYSIS (A) Analyze claims. This means breaking your ideas down into their simpler components, and defining them. Do not start with or rely on dictionary definitions, but use your own words and cite the dictionary only if necessary. Dictionary definitions report usage, whereas a philosophical definition may be critical of current usage or find it vague. Examine the logical consequences of your claims and the claims of others.

5. CITATION (C) Cite the required readings this way in your text: (author’s last name, page no.) As well, provide a list of citations at the end of the paper. It is important to do this to show you have done the required reading and are not just recycling notes from class or discussion group lectures. If you do use material from lecture, please make sure to cite that as well.

6. QUOTATIONS (Q) Quotations should be used to illustrate a claim that you are making about an author. They are not a substitute for explaining the author’s thought in your own words. A good strategy is to state the author’s ideas in your own words first and then “prove” your interpretation with a short quote.

7. DIRECT (D) Be direct. Make sure that you give a direct and focused answer to the question for the paper. This is the most important requirement for papers to reach the B and A range.