Philosophy 216 Philosophy & Cultural Diversity—Professor Zack

4.00 cr. Philosophical investigation of the implications of cultural diversity for identity, knowledge, and community, from the perspectives of several American cultures. Grading optional for all students

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Available Web-related Resources: This course has a waitlist which can only be accessed via one of the discussion sections associated with the lecture (not via the lecture itself). For more information, see How to Use Wait-listing on DuckWeb

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Associated Sections

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DESCRIPTION: We'll begin this course with a story about an ant colony, E.O. Wilson’s “Trailhead,” and end with a memoir about religion and identity, Haroon Moghul's, How to Be a Moslim. The course work will consist of short essays from Cultural Studies: An Anthology, Michael Ryan, ed. Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-4051-4576-3 (Selected articles will be available in a course packet at the DUCKSTORE), philosophical essays, posted on Canvas, and Haroon. 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: cultural analysis, ideology, rhetoric, race and ethnicity, identity, consumption, media, celebrity, religion and spirituality. Course work will consist of reading, class participation and discussion, and four 3-page papers. (No midterm or final exam, as such)
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

4 three-page papers @ 20 % each (80%)
Informed class participation (you have done the readings before class) and attendance at lecture and discussion (20%)

***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, 1 free absence from section. ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN FOR ALL CLASSES. Absences over these amounts require documentation to be excused. Otherwise, each unexcused absence from lecture or section will detract 1 point from your final grade.

OBJECTIVE GRADING OPTION - If you get full credit for attendance and participation and your total points on all papers is 35 (out of 60), you will automatically get a B for the course. You have to have full credit for attendance and participation to take this option. If you do not have full credit for attendance and participation, or you do and your paper total is more or less than 35, you will be graded in the usual way. If you do not take this option, your final grade will be computed in the usual way.

Class atmosphere - mutual respect, no electronic devices (unless related to a disability or course reading, community building in the classroom.

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 GE about 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 (i.e., whether or not they make sense) and useful (help understand our daily lives)?

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 themselves 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 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. People may be passionate about their cultural expressions. Values are expressed implicitly or explicitly and conformity to them is expected or required. The question of where the values come from 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, cooperation, and micro-interpretation are required for that to succeed.

Required Reading on Canvas
“Drinking Culture Report” (Canvas)

Robert E. Goodin, “Representing Diversity,” British Journal of Philosophy of Science

Ian Hacking, “Making People Up”

Annie Jacobsen, The Riddle of Area 51


Raymond Williams, “The Analysis of Culture,” from The Long Revolution

E.O. Wilson’s “Trailhead” The New Yorker Magazine

NOTE: All readings posted on canvas (above) and assigned from ‘Texts’ (below) are required readings. They are required to be read BEFORE the class meeting associated with them.

Required Texts


Course packet – required essays

17. The German Ideology (Karl Marx and Friedriech Engels). (Ryan)
18. Ideology (Louis Althusser). (Ryan)
19. Interpellation (John Fiske). (Ryan)
20. Becoming Dagongmei: Politics of Identities and Differences (Pun Ngai). (Ryan)
21. The Ideology and Discourse of Modern Racism (Teun van Dijk) (Ryan)
23. The Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television (Margaret Morse).
25. The Rhetoric of Hitler's "Battle" (Kenneth Burke). (Ryan)
27. Thinking About the End of the World with Conservative Protestants (Mark Hulsether). (Ryan)
38. In Our Angelhood: Rave as Counterculture and Spiritual Revolution (Simon Reynolds) (Ryan)
30. What is Race? (Richard Lewontin, Steven Rose and Leon Kamin). (Ryan)
31. The Crisis of "Race" and Raciology (Paul Gilroy). (Ryan)
41. Theories of Consumer Culture (Mike Featherstone).
44. …And Then There Was Shopping (Sze Tsung Leong).
46. Julia Learns to Shop (Sharon Zukin).
70. Theories of Consumption in Media Studies (David Morley).
72. The Cinematic Apparatus and the Construction of the Film Celebrity (P. David Marshall). (Ryan)
73. Fan Cultures: Between 'Fantasy' and 'Reality' (Matt Hills). (Ryan)
74. Is Elvis a God? Cult, Culture, and Questions of Method (John Frow). (Ryan)
75. Serial Killing for Beginners (Mark Seltzer). (Ryan)

Thomas Wolf, The Painted Word

Essays posted on Canvas: by Simmel, Hacking, Appiah, Cabranes-Grant, Keely, and about Area 51. (See syllabus for assignments, below.)
Haroon Moghul, *How to Be a Moslim: An American Story*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2017. (On sale at Duckstore and Knight Reserve.) **Note:** Please make sure you have a copy with page numbers if you are reading an electronic version. Paper versions are preferred.

Short videos will be shown in class. A preliminary list appears under ‘videos’ so that you can refer to them in your papers, if relevant.

**SCHEDULE – ASSIGNED PAPER QUESTIONS ARE BELOW THIS SCHEDULE**

**WHAT IS CULTURE?**

**WEEK 1.**
Introduction - W.O. Wilson, “Trailhead”
Raymond Williams, “The Analysis of Culture”

**IDEOLOGY and RHETORIC: How leaders and elites structure culture**

**WEEK 2.**
“Trailhead” and Williams, cont’d.
CHAPTER 17 from Ryan. The German Ideology (*Karl Marx and Friedriech Engels*). (Ryan)
18. Ideology (*Louis Althusser*). (Ryan)
19. Interpellation (*John Fiske*). (Ryan)

**WEEK 3.**
21. The Ideology and Discourse of Modern Racism (*Teun van Dijk*) (Ryan)
25. The Rhetoric of Hitler's "Battle" (*Kenneth Burke*). (Ryan)

**MONEY, PRODUCTION, AND CONSUMPTION**

**WEEK 4.**
Paper no 1. **Due Tuesday of Week 4 at NOON**
Readings for week 4.

44. …And Then There Was Shopping (*Sze Tsung Leong*).
20. Becoming Dagongmei: Politics of Identities and Differences (*Pun Ngai*). (Ryan)

**WEEK 5.**
**Tuesday**
41. Theories of Consumer Culture (*Mike Featherstone*).
23. The Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television (*Margaret Morse*).

**Thursday**
70. Theories of Consumption in Media Studies (*David Morley*).
49. Constructing Purity: Bottled Water and the Commodification of Nature (*Andy Opel*).

**WEEKs 6. and 7. IDENTITY, RACE, RELIGION and BELIEF in World Views**

**Week 6**
**Tuesday**
Ian Hacking, “Making People Up” (Canvas)
30. What is Race? (*Richard Lewontin, Steven Rose and Leon Kamin*). (Ryan)
31. The Crisis of "Race" and Raciology (Paul Gilroy). (Ryan)

Thursday
Leo Cabranes-Grant, “Intercultural Poetics: Thinking for (And from) Diversity” Modern Language Association (Canvas)

Week 7

Paper no 2. Due Tuesday of Week 7, at noon.

Tuesday

27. Thinking About the End of the World with Conservative Protestants (Mark Hulsether). (Ryan)
29. In Our Angelhood: Rave as Counterculture and Spiritual Revolution (Simon Reynolds) (Ryan)

Thursday

Brian Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories,” Journal of Philosophy (Canvas)
Resources for Area 51 and “The Road to Area 51 (Canvas)

Week 8, 9, 10 – Cultural Capital, Celebrity, Consumption, and Muslim Identity

Week 8

Tuesday

45. Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption? (Douglas B. Holt). Notes will be provided for this essay.
46. Julia Learns to Shop (Sharon Zukin)

Thursday

72. The Cinematic Apparatus and the Construction of the Film Celebrity (P. David Marshall). (Ryan)
73. Is Elvis a God? Cult, Culture, and Questions of Method (John Frow). (Ryan)

Week 9

Paper no 3. Due. Tuesday of Week 9 at noon.

Tuesday

Haroon Moghul, How to be a Muslim
Thurs *How to be a Muslim*

**Week 10**

**Tues and Thurs** Student Presentations – you might want to sign up for this if you are not sure about your overall participation grade – 1-3 pts extra credit. Student presentations will be about contemporary events related to aspects of the course. 5-10 minutes each. Team presentations of 1-4 students. Please sign up in section. First come, first served.

**THURSDAY - LAST** paper due; Student self-study evaluation grade.

**Paper assignments and due dates**

**ALL PAPERS ARE DUE BEFORE TUESDAY AT NOON.**

*Paper #1.* Write an essay between 900-1000 words in answer to these questions: **A.** Do the ants have a culture? (Give both sides, with reasons.) **B.** How is ideology and rhetoric related to culture? **B.** (3 pp. 20% of final grade.)

*Paper #2.* Write an essay between 900-1000 words in answer to this question: **(3 pp. 20% of final grade.)** Contrast the young women in “Becoming Dagongmei” with consumers of products and media. In your essay, make use of Simmel’s theory of money and bring in examples from the essays about consumer culture and “The Ontology of Everyday Distraction.”

*Paper #3.* Between 900-1000. Write an essay about world views, showing, with examples from the reading, how cultural identities are related to belief systems. You should discuss race, ethnicity, religion, celebrity, and/or conspiracy theories in your answer. (3 pp. 20% of final grade.)

**Paper #4.** due Tuesday at noon on June 6, 2019. (3-5 pp. 20% of final Grade.) No late papers without documented medical excuse. Students who complete evaluations will have early access to grades. Write an essay between 900-1500 words in response to three questions from Part A and three questions from Part B, with page references to Haroon Moghul’s *How to be a Muslim*. Indicate the question you are answering, with 2 questions per page of your essay:

**Chapters 1-11.**

A-1. Discuss social class in terms of cultural, economic, and social capital in terms of Haroon’s family and young adult life.
A-2. What does Haroon mean when he says he could reject God, but not Mohammed?
A-3. What was Haroon’s main religious struggle?
A-4. Did Muslims have an ideology in Haroon’s early experience?
A-5. What is the notion of the self as “created” that Haroon ends up with?
A-6. How does Haroon view the creation of a Muslim community during his college years?
A-7. What did Haroon learn from Galzali, Iqbal, and Rumi?
A-8. Explain the asymmetry of representation by Muslims and Europeans (pp. 86-7)

1. **Chapters 12-25**
B-1. How did Haroon’s existential problems and his life conditions ground his role as an imam while in college?
B-2. Why did Haroon call himself a hypocrite?
B-3. Why couldn’t he leave the Islamic Center after 9/11?
B-4. Discuss the clash between Haroon’s Islamic religious background and his diagnosis that he had to love himself to get beyond suicidal thoughts and actions?
B-5. In chapter 22, Haroon resolves his individuality and suicidal tendencies with his religion. Explain how he does this and assess whether it is satisfactory.
B-6. Overall, how do elements of Haroon’s Muslim experience pertain to universal human existence?

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.

4. **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 online at [www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)

5. **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.

6. **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.