

O Estudo das Culturas / The Study of Cultures

2^{as}-feiras, 8.00-9.30 (C245.A)

4^{as}-feiras, 8.00-9.30 (C135.A)

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Hora de atendimento: 4^{as}-feiras, 9:30-10:30, e por marcação.



Course description

The course aims to introduce the critical analysis of culture through the scrutiny of the power dynamics that regulated cultural production in the Western world during the 20th century. More specifically, we will investigate how major thinkers and intellectual movements determined significant shifts in our understanding of culture, in order to consolidate epistemological tools that will facilitate the interpretation of our contemporary context.

The overarching narrative of the course will include some key moments of 20th-century intellectual history. Namely, we will consider the notion of cultural hegemony, postwar debates on Eurocentrism, anthropological relativism, and the current deindividuation of spaces and places, in order to explore the influence that Western conceptualizations of culture have had on the perception of the world that we inhabit. Readings will include Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, T. S. Eliot, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Edward Said, Marc Augé, and the screening of a movie by Belgian filmmaker Agnès Varda.

Course taught in English. All materials will be made available by the instructor in this shared Google Drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wMdcLyoKXP9V5MUPOwuwNMZuAdymmTw5?usp=sharing>

Grading and assessment

Students will be graded based on the following class components:

Reading, attendance, and participation in class (10%). Students are asked to attend every meeting and to keep up with the readings assigned for each class. This is a discussion-based course and students are required to respectfully and actively participate in the conversation (both groupwork and plenary discussion).

Home assignment (20%). A written assignment consisting of a close reading exercise.

Midterm exam (30%). In-class exam consisting of three open questions (1h30).

Final group presentation (40%). Students will work in groups of 2/3 towards the preparation of a 15-minute presentation to be recorded with Microsoft Teams. Students may alternatively choose to submit a short argumentative essay if they prefer to do so. More detailed guidelines will follow.

Bibliography

Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, London, New York: Verso, 1995.

T. S. Eliot, *Notes toward the Definition of Culture*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949.

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Claude Levi-Strauss, *Race and History*, Paris: UNESCO, 1952.

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

George Steiner, *In Bluebeard’s Castle. Notes toward the Redefinition of Culture*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1971.

Yoko Tawada, *Where Europe Begins*, New York: New Directions Book, 2002 [1991].

Agnès Varda, *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse*, 2000.

Course Schedule

PART I. THE CULTURAL ARENA: CENTER VS. MARGINS

- **Week 1**

Jan. 23 – Introduction to the main objectives of the course, methodology, corpus, assessment.

Jan. 25 – Culture, hegemony, and power: an overview.

- **Week 2**

Jan. 30 – Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

Feb. 1 – Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

PART II. ON WESTERN HEGEMONY

- **Week 3**

Feb. 6 – T. S. Eliot, “The Three Senses of Culture”.

Feb. 8 – T. S. Eliot, “The Class and the Elite”.

- **Week 4**

Feb. 13 – George Steiner, “In a Post-Culture”.

Feb. 15 – George Steiner, “In a Post-Culture”.

PART III. CULTURAL RELATIVISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM ANTHROPOLOGY

- **Week 5**

Feb. 20 – **No class.**

Feb. 22 – Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race and History*.

- **Week 6**

Feb. 27 – Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race and History*.

Mar. 1 – Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race and History*.

Deadline to submit the home assignment (Mar. 1, 23:59)

- **Week 7**

Mar. 6 – Clifford Geertz, “Deep play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”.

Mar. 8 – Clifford Geertz, “Deep play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”.

PART IV. DECENTERING EUROPE

- **Week 8**

Mar. 13 – Excerpts from Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

Mar. 15 – Excerpts from Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

- **Week 9**

Mar. 20 – Excerpts from Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

Mar. 22 – **Midterm in-class exam (1h30).**

- **Week 10**

Mar. 27 – Yoko Tawada, “Where Europe begins”.

Mar. 29 – Yoko Tawada, “Where Europe begins”.

PART V. CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURE

- **Week 11**

Apr. 10 – Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.

Apr. 12 – Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.

- **Week 12**

Apr. 17 – Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.

Apr. 19 – Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.

- **Week 13**

Apr. 24 – Screening of Agnès Varda's *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse*.

Apr. 26 – Discussion on Agnès Varda's movie.

CONCLUSION

- **Week 14**

May 1 – **No class.**

May 3 – TBD w/ the students.

Important dates

Feb. 20 and 21: Carnival (no class).

Mar. 1: Submission of home assignment.

Mar. 22: Written exam in class.

Apr. 3-9: Easter break.

Apr. 26: Submission of title for conference paper.

May 1: International Workers' Day (no class).

May 7: Submission of final assignment.