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ENG 4775-001: Studies in Literary Criticism: The Sociology of Culture

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Syllabus for English 4775: Studies in Literary Criticism: The Sociology of Culture, Fall 2006

Required Texts

Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Oxford, 1977
Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, Norton, 1995
Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, Blackwell, 2005 (revised edition)
Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*, Dover, 1999
Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook*, MLA, 2003 (6th edition)
Hamper, *Rivethed: Tales from the Assembly Line*, Warner, 1992 (reprint edition)

*Additional readings listed in the schedule will be provided

Course Description

The field of inquiry called the sociology of culture has its roots in several disciplines, including literary studies, economics, sociology, and anthropology. Raymond Williams, a key thinker in the tradition, defines it as an attempt to "see communication, language and art" as centrally constitutive of society rather than "as marginal and peripheral, or as at best secondary and derived social processes." However, like most critical paradigms, the sociology of culture denies simple definition. In this course, we will concern ourselves largely with figures and schools of thought exerting a strong influence on contemporary literary and cultural studies: for instance, Matthew Arnold, Karl Marx, and Pierre Bourdieu; the Frankfurt School of Marxism and the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies. During our forays into theory and criticism we will encounter various concepts—culture, class, ideology, hegemony, cultural reproduction, and subculture, among others—and use close reading to gauge how they shift and develop within the writings of different authors. In conjunction with our critical readings from the sociology of culture, we will discuss visual and verbal representations that also fit loosely into that tradition of cultural critique. These texts will range from eighteenth-century plays and engraved prints (John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and William Hogarth's *Beer Street and Gin Lane*) to modern novels, memoirs, and films (Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, Ben Hamper's *Rivethed*, and Hans Weingartner's *The Educators*).

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: <www.eiu.edu/~assess/electronic_writing_portfolio1.htm>. The course deadline for EWP submissions is Friday, December 8, 2006.

Brief Description of Assignments

- 1. Planning a Production of *The Beggar's Opera*:** in a group, you will choose a key scene from the play, analyze it, and make decisions about how to cast and stage it. You will present your work to the class in a presentation and be strongly encouraged to end the presentation with a performance of the scene (5% of final grade).
- 2. Discussion Leader:** you will pick a secondary reading from the syllabus, read it carefully and write a synopsis of it to hand out to the class, and discuss it during a brief presentation (5%).
- 3. Proposal / Annotated Bibliography:** you will propose a topic for the research project (650-800 words) and begin your research by compiling an annotated bibliography (15%).
- 4. Research Project:** you will write a research paper in which you produce an original interpretation of a text using concepts and reading techniques related to the sociology of culture tradition (undergraduates: 2500-word, graduates: 4000-word minimum) (25%).
- 5. Research Project Presentation:** you will present the findings of your research paper to the class (5%).
- 6. 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 (15% each).

7. Daily Assignments: daily assignments will consist of quizzes, in- and out-of-class writings, group activities, and a range of other work assigned at my discretion (5%).

8. Participation: this seminar requires careful preparation of challenging readings, measured contributions to class discussions, and engaged critical thought (10%).

Policies

Attendance: 5 unexcused absences will result in the reduction of your final grade by one letter (10%). If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what happened and asking me for any missed handouts. Absences will be excused only in the case of a documented illness or emergency, or of documented participation in an official university activity. For your absence to be excused, you must provide me with a legible photocopy of your documentation for my records. Such documentation must be provided prior to the absence or immediately upon your return to class. Please do not come to class late. Three instances of tardiness will count as an absence.

Late work: daily assignments will not be accepted late. Presentations must be given on the dates for which you have scheduled them, except under the most extenuating of circumstances. Unless you are otherwise notified, assignments are due at the start of class on the due date. If you want an extension on the proposal / annotated bibliography or research project, you must seek the extension a full day 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 twenty-four hours thereafter. 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: for items 1-5 under "Brief Description of Assignments," I will provide a longer assignment sheet. Your grade for a given assignment will be determined by how well your work fulfills the requirements outlined in the assignment sheet. You will typically receive verbal instructions for daily assignments. 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 origins 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.

Provisional Schedule

Each reading should be completed *before* class on the day it is listed.

Week One

M Aug 21

Introduction to the course

W Aug 23

Foundations

Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man"

Baudrillard, selections from *The Consumer Society*

Hogarth, *Beer Street and Gin Lane*

F Aug 25 Gramsci, "The Concept of 'Ideology'" (*Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, hereafter abbreviated MCS 14-16)
 Countee Cullen, "Incident"
 Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum est"

Week Two

M Aug 28 Marx and Engels, "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas" (MCS 9-12)
 Allen Ginsberg, "America"
 W Aug 30 Gramsci, "Cultural Themes: Ideological Material" (MCS 16)
 Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper"
 F Sept 1 Architectural plans for the Panopticon
 Foucault, "Panopticism"

Week Three

M Sept 4 Labor Day; no class
 W Sept 6 Hogarth, *The Harlot's Progress*
 Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*
 F Sept 8 Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* continued

Week Four

M Sept 11 Planning a Production of *The Beggar's Opera*
 W Sept 13 Presentations
 F Sept 15 Presentations

Week Five

M Sept 18 **Media and Entertainment**
 Horkheimer & Adorno, excerpt from "The Culture Industry" (MCS 41-48)
 MC Lars, "Generic Crunk Rap"
 W Sept 20 Bourdieu, "On Television" (MCS 328-336)
 Clips from *Network* (1976) or *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005)
 F Sept 22 Herman and Chomsky, "A Propaganda Model" (MCS 257-294)
 Anti-Flag, "The Press Corpse"

Week Six

M Sept 25 Robert Greenwald's *Outfoxed* (2004)
 W Sept 27 Discussion of *Outfoxed*
 F Sept 29 Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, part one

Week Seven

M Oct 2 Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, part two
 W Oct 4 Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, part three
 F Oct 6 Review for mid-term
 Proposal / Annotated Bibliography assigned

Week Eight

M Oct 9 Mid-term Examination
 W Oct 11 Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"
 Hebdige, "Hegemony: The Moving Equilibrium" and "Subculture: The Unnatural Break" (MCS 150-162)
 MC Lars, "Hot Topic is Not Punk Rock"
 F Oct 13 Fall break; no class

Week Nine

M Oct 16 The Clash, "Complete Control"
 Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle" (MCS 117-121)
 The Dead Kennedys, "Drug Me" and "California Über Alles"

- W Oct 18 Black Flag, "TV Party"
Greil Marcus, selections from *Lipstick Traces* and *In the Fascist Bathroom*
The Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen," etc.
- F Oct 20 Dorfman and Mattelart, "Instructions on How to Become a General in the Disneyland Club" (122-130)
Baudrillard, "The Hyperreal and the Imaginary" (MCS 460-462)

Week Ten

- M Oct 23 **Class and Education**
Arnold, "Sweetness and Light" from *Culture and Anarchy*
Hogarth, "The Foundlings"
- W Oct 25 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (MCS 79-87)
The Charity School Movement
- F Oct 27 Eagleton, "The Rise of English"
Begin Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

Week Eleven

- M Oct 30 Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*
- W Nov 1 Hans Weingartner's *The Edukators* (2005)
- F Nov 3 Hans Weingartner's *The Edukators* (2005)
Proposal / Annotated Bibliography due

Week Twelve

- M Nov 6 Discussion of *The Edukators*
Additional reading TBA
- W Nov 8 **Class and Labor**
Marx, "The Factory"
Hamper, *Rivethead*
- F Nov 10 Williams, "Structures of Feeling" from *Marxism and Literature*
Hamper, *Rivethead*

Week Thirteen

- M Nov 13 Gramsci, selection on "organic intellectuals" from *The Prison Notebooks*
Hamper, *Rivethead*
- W Nov 15 Clips from *Roger & Me*
- F Nov 17 Conferences on research projects

Fall Recess

Nov 20, 22, 24 No classes

Week Fourteen

- M Nov 27 Review for final exam
- W Nov 29 Presentations or conferences on research projects
- F Dec 1 Presentations

Week Fifteen

- M Dec 4 Presentations
- W Dec 6 Presentations
- F Dec 8 Presentations
Research project due; deadline for EWP submissions

Final Examination: Tuesday, December 12, 12:30-2:30 pm