

Spring, 2004
IIS/RLST 168
Pitzer College

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Culture and Power

Course Description:

This course introduces different theories of the relation of culture to power within and between societies, as well as to such processes as cultural nationalism, cultural imperialism and cultural appropriation. Attention is given throughout the course to the interaction of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, nation, and other factors in the distribution and circulation of power.

Prerequisite: IIS 10, or WS/ID 26, or an introductory course in one of the ethnic studies programs, or permission of instructor.

Course Requirements:

The most important part of the course will be in-class discussions of the readings and assignments (35%), and you will be expected to complete readings ahead of class time and come to class regularly in order to succeed in the course. Requirements for the course also include two short papers of 4-6 pages (2 x 20% each=40%) and a take home final examination (25%). Graduate students will be asked to lead a class discussion on a topic of interest and to write a longer research paper (between 30 and 50 pages in length) in place of the final examination. Note: Students with learning or physical disabilities will be given reasonable accommodations. To request accommodations or other assistance, contact the Academic Support Services Office, extension 73553. Students who do not give their sources for ideas and information not their own are practicing plagiarism; they will be given one chance to rewrite the paper and correct the problem, and if it is not corrected they will not receive credit for the assignment.

Course Textbooks and Readings: (All readings are on Honnold Library reserve.)

Alexie, Sherman. The Business of Fancydancing. Hanging Loose Press, 1992.

Center for Public Integrity. Citizen Muckracking. Common Courage Press.

De Landa, Manuel. A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History. Swerve/Zone, 2000.

Marcos, Subcomandante Insurgente. Our Word is Our Weapon: Selected Writings. Ed. Juana Ponce de León. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001.

Muñoz, José Esteban. Disidentifications. Univ. Minnesota, 1999.

Pagels, Elaine, The Gnostic Gospels. Vintage, 1989 (1979).

Rajchman, John. The Identity in Question. Routledge.

Weedon, Chris, Feminist Practices and Poststructuralist Theory, 2nd ed., Blackwell.

Packet of Course Readings (Available free at Honnold Library and for purchase at King's Copies on Foothill Blvd. just east of Indian Hill Blvd.)

Course Schedule:

(Asterisks (*) indicate reading is found in packet (also available at Honnold reserve))

Week 1 Introduction: Why culture and power?

Jan 20 Readings: *Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill, "Difference and Domination," 3-12.

Video: Deadly Currents, 1997; Menses, 1974; R™: Bringing It to You; Lines in the Sand.

Course Schedule (continued):

Week 2 Introduction (cont.)

Jan. 27 Readings: *Shah, "Redefining the Home," 46-56.
*Mazrui, Intro., 1-10.
*Wood and Moore, "Community Activism," 21-34.
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, p. 23.

Week 3 Postmodernism/Feminism: An Introduction.

Feb. 3 Readings: Weedon, Ch. 1,2 & 4.
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, 49, 54-8, 63-4.

Week 4 Social (Re)Constructing Reality: Rethinking History

Feb. 10 Readings: de Landa, Nonlinear, Introduction.
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, 39-47.
Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions," 263-307.

Week 5 Social (Re)Constructing Reality: Rethinking History (cont.)

Feb. 17 Readings: de Landa, Nonlinear,
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, 39-47, 75-9.

Week 6 The Politics of Subjectivity: Agency and Determinism.

Feb. 24 Readings: Muñoz, Disidentifications, Intro.
Rajchman, "Introduction," vi-xiii.
Rajchman-Ranciere, 63-72.

Guest Discussion Leader: Sung E. Bai, Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence, New York City

Week 7 The Politics of Subjectivity: Agency and Determinism (cont.)

Mar. 2 Readings: Muñoz, Disidentifications, Ch. 3, 4, 6, 7, & 8.
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, 16-21, 73.

Mar. 2 First Paper Due

Week 8 Mediated Realities: Simulation and Terrorism.

Mar. 9 Readings: Baudrillard, "Hypotheses on Terrorism," 49-83.
Handout on Middle East news reporting.

Happy Spring Break.

Week 9 Enforcing Orthodoxy: Religion and Power.

Mar. 23 Readings: Pagels, Gnostic Gospels, Intro. & Ch. 1, 2, 3 & concl.

Week 10 Enacting the Modern Regime of Power/Knowledge.

Mar. 30 Readings: Citizen Muckraking, p.

Week 11 Culture as Power: Globalization and Its Discontents.

Apr. 6 Readings: Marcos, Our Word is Our Weapon,
Alexie, Business of Fancydancing, 13-15, 34-36, 50-53.

Apr. 5 Second Paper Due

Course Schedule (continued):

Week 12 Feminist Poststructuralism.

Apr. 13 Readings: Weedon, Ch. 6 & 7.
Rajchman--Butler.

Week 13 Difference and Radical Democracy.

Apr. 20 Readings: Rajchman--West, Mouffe, Laclau, Jameson.

Week 14 Globalization & Commodification

Apr.27 Readings: Alexie, Business of Fancy Dancing, title poem (69) & 48.
Marcos, Our Word is Our Weapon,
Shepard & Haduk, 1-9.

Week 15 Linking Theory to Practice: Culture and Social Movements.

May 4 Readings: Alexie, Business of Fancy Dancing, 34-5, 74.
Marcos, Our Word is Our Weapon,
de Landa, Nonlinear, concl.

Senior Take Home Examination

Due Thurs., May 6, 12 noon.

Other Take Home Examination

Due Mon., May 10 at 5 pm.

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Course Packet Readings

- Baca Zinn, Maxine, and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Difference and Domination," in Zinn and Dill, eds., Women of Color in U.S. Society, Temple U. Pr., 1994, 3-12.
- Shah, Purvi, "Redefining the Home," in Sonia Shah, ed., Dragon Ladies, South End Pr., 1997, p. 46-56.
- Mazrui, Ali, "Introduction: The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture," in his Cultural Forces in World Politics, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1-10.
- Wood, Lesley J. And Kelly Moore, "Target Practice: Community Activism in a Global Era," in Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, ed. From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization, Verso, 2002, 21-34.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914." The Invention of Traditions. Ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1983. 263-307.
- Baudrillard, Jean. "Hypotheses on Terrorism." The Spirit of Terrorism. Trans. Chris Turner. Verso, 2002. p. 49-83.
- Shepard & Hayduk, "Urban Protest and Community Building," in idem, ed. From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization, Verso, 2002, 1-9.