

**University of Ottawa
Faculty of Education
EDU 5463**

Cultural Studies, Educational Theory and Praxis
Winter 2010, Wednesday 5:30-8:30 pm, LMX 106

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COURSE OUTLINE

Calendar Description

Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of contemporary popular culture including theories of representation, texts, social identities, and their implications for school practices.

Course Expectations

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- i) Demonstrate an ability to describe and analyze the historical and/or existing theoretical concepts and movements that inform our understanding of popular culture within the context of cultural studies and educational theory as a form of praxis;
- ii) Utilize educational theory to deconstruct/disrupt “normative” representations of identities depicting youth represented in texts, media, etc.; and in turn the implications for classroom practice; and
- iii) Engage in the playful processes of communicating theorizing (and if needed, translating theoretical concepts in relation to our discussions around classroom practices) through writing and course presentations.

Through group work, presentations, individual assignments, and thoughtful discussions, you are expected to critically engage course material, as well as develop educational perspectives that take into account the theories and popular culture movements covered in this course. The format of the course will vary each week according to content and will be organized to encourage your participation. This means that your thoughtfulness and engagement is both valued and important. At various points throughout the course, we will potentially cover difficult and controversial knowledge, and thus an important expectation is that all participants will be committed to creating an intellectually stimulating, “safe” (if there is such a thing), and respectful class atmosphere.

Required Readings:

Books:

Available at Agora bookstore, 145 Besserer Street.

Dance, J. (2002). *Tough Fronts: The Impacts of Street Culture on Schooling*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Giroux, H. A. (1997). *Channel Surfing: Race Talk and the Destruction of Today's Youth*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching Youth Media*. New York, New York: Teachers College Columbia University.

Freire, P. (1970/1990). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Woo, T. (2000). *Banana Boys*. Toronto: Cormorant Books.

Course Reader:

The course reader can be purchased at Ryttec, 404 Dalhousie Street.

Online Readings:

Students are responsible for locating on-line reading via the Internet or University of Ottawa Library journal database.

Persons with Physical and/or Learning Disabilities

If you require accommodation due to any physical, cultural, neurological, or psychological needs, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible so that we can negotiate the necessary adjustments to course curriculum. You are strongly encouraged to visit Student Services on campus for assistance with regards to physical or psychological learning needs. Staff there can help you formally request the professor to arrange alternatives regarding assignments and exams. Please do so at the beginning of the term.

Late Assignment Policy:

Assignments which are submitted after the due date without an agreed upon extension are considered late assignments. The penalty on late assignments in all courses amounts to a grade loss of 5% per day up to a maximum of 10 days, after which time assignments will not be accepted. Submission of late assignments requires my prior consent and written verification of a medical professional or due to compassionate reasons necessitating a deadline extension. In the event of extraordinary personal circumstances that prevent completion of an assignment by the specified due date, students should speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

Attendance

The Faculty of Education policy that regular attendance in classes, seminars, and workshops is compulsory applies to this course. Any student who is unable to attend a scheduled meeting must notify the instructor before the scheduled meeting time. In the case of absence, students are expected to complete the required readings and in-class assignments on their own.

Academic Fraud

Students are advised to become familiar with the University of Ottawa's policy regulations on academic fraud. The University of Ottawa's regulations on academic fraud, as stated in the graduate student program guide, apply in this course. It is imperative that any ideas or styles of writing that are not yours are properly referenced and will need to be done in compliance with American Psychological Association (5th ed.) style guidelines. Failure to properly reference places you in a situation of academic fraud. Academic fraud/Plagiarism is one type of academic fraud. A student found guilty of committing plagiarism will be subject to sanctions, which range from receiving a mark F for the work in question to being expelled from the University, and even the revocation of a degree, diploma, or certificate already awarded. For useful guidelines to help you avoid plagiarism, please consult the following web pages:

http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fraud_e.html

<http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf>

Assignments and Evaluations

Your final grade will be determined arithmetically first by reducing the numerical grades for each assignment in accordance with each assignment's percentage value of the final grade (listed immediately below). Once summed, the individual figures yield a total that is the percentage grade for the course. This course is structured as a writer's workshop. Therefore three of the four assignments are geared toward helping you improve your academic writing. Furthermore, the scope and sequence of the course assignments works toward supporting you over the course of the term to further develop your academic skills as writer.

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|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1) Reader Response Commentary | (20 %) |
| 2) Popular Culture Blogs | (15 %) |
| 3) Popular Culture Presentation | (30 %) |
| 4) Final Paper | (35 %) |

Reader Response Commentary (20%):

Students must sign-up during the first class to present *a reader response* over the course of this term. The sign-up sheet will have a limited amount of spaces for each week.

During each class two or three students will share their commentaries with other students and myself. Your commentary should stimulate an ensuing conversation on your assigned articles or book chapters for that week. Your commentary need only focus on the one assigned article for the week in question, but can make reference to the other articles covered prior to, and for that class. Assuming that each student, including myself, has read the assigned readings, *the commentary should not be a straight summary* of the article. Instead, you should *utilize the articles or book chapters as a methodological filter*, if you will, which in turn informs your commentary on the curricular issues you decide to *complicate* and put forth to your fellow graduate students. *You must send a draft of your commentary to me at least one week prior to your presentation* in order to receive formative feedback on your writing.

I encourage you to *play with* the theoretical underpinnings of each article or book chapter. Focus on what speaks to your educative experiences? How do the various theoretical concepts *inform your educative experiences* both inside and outside the institutional walls of schools in term of curriculum? Or, how can *your lived experiences* inform or create dialectical tensions with the articles or book chapters in terms of *creating contradictions, confusions, and paradoxes*?

Your commentary must be between 600-1000 words (which is 2 to 4 pages double-spaced in 12 font Times New Roman, no more than 1000 words). You will have 15 minutes to present/read your commentary. Once you have read your paper, you will turn in a hardcopy to me at the end of class. *These will commence during week three of course.*

Popular Culture Blogs (15%):

Over the course of the term you are responsible for posting *at least three blogs (5% each)* that put forth a commentary on a popular culture artifact. This artifact itself can be a book, image, text, film, television show, invention, toy, song, idea, word, saying, etc. that has impacted the ways in mass culture/subcultures are represented inside and/or outside the context of schooling and in turn has affected you. Linkage between your artifacts and course content is required, at least to some degree. *You are required to post your blog (400-600 words) on our social networking page.* Consider each blog as a writing assignment that affords you the opportunity to practice and develop the following:

1. Quality of writing in terms of style (aesthetics of referencing, narrative structure, etc.);
2. Ability to utilize theoretical concepts put forth in readings to analyze/make connections with popular culture artifact; and
3. Originality of such theoretical connections and analyses.

Finally this writing assignment provides you an opportunity to experiment with your writing as a public form of narrative reflection (a praxis) on the various ways you are utilizing the readings to reread representations of identities found within popular culture.

Deconstructing Pop Culture Presentation (30%):

In groups of 2-4 you are expected to identify a pop culture sites (movie, CD, cartoon, graffiti, book, performance, art piece, etc.) that marked your group the most. You are expected to utilize theoretical concepts put forth in the course to “reread” and “dialogue” with these “texts,” especially in terms of the pedagogical implications for classroom practices with youth culture. Utilizing the educational theories put forth in the course readings, how might your group push us to reread historical and contemporary cultural representations we might find within popular culture artifacts and/or movements? How might your presentation push us to consider what, who, and how such representations are socially constructed, performed, interpreted, etc.? What kinds of assumptions are being made? Who is talking and who is being silenced? Are there any stereotypes and prejudgments? What is being subverted and/or challenged? What are the overall underlying messages behind these textual mediated representations? Finally, what is it from the chosen artifact and/or movement that captures your imagination and why?

You will be assessed on your ability to communicate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts put forth within the readings in relation to the your group’s deconstruction of a chosen popular culture artifact and or movement as well as your ability to facilitate your peers engagement with deconstructing the popular culture artifact

and/or movement through an ensuing discussion. *Each presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes.* This does not include ensuing discussion.

Final paper (35 %):

Drawing on the course readings, you will prepare a paper, which in turn will be presented at an in class *University of Ottawa Graduate Student Curriculum Studies Conference* (of which we will organize to take place at the end of the term). *You can choose any topic for your paper as long as you utilize the course readings.* Strategically, you might try to utilize our course readings to write a paper on your current thesis topic, if you are currently at that stage of the graduate program. This final paper could also be the commencement of a theoretical chapter for your thesis and/or synthesis paper. You can also organize panel presentations where each of you present an individual paper which focus on the same educational research question (for example, how might reread the film “Save the Last Dance” as a gendered and racialized text?).

Each conference session will be 1 hour and 30 minutes. Each session will host three presenters and each of you will have a 20-minute slot to present your paper. As a result, the conference version of your paper should not exceed 7-8 pages double-spaced (1750-2000 words), depending on how fast you read.

Final Paper Writing Schedule

- 1) Outline due *March 10th* **(5%)**
- 2) First draft of final paper due *March 24th* **(10 %)**
- 3) Final papers due night of class *April 7th* **(20%)**

Grades are awarded according to the following scale:

Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	90 - 100 %	Exceptional
A	85 - 90 %	Excellent
A-	80 - 84 %	Excellent
B+	75 - 79 %	Very good
B	70 - 74 %	Very good
C+	66 - 69 %	Good

All grades below C+ (66%) are failing grades for graduate students.

Bibliography

Books:

- Dance, J. (2002). *Tough Fronts: The Impacts of Street Culture on Schooling*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Giroux, H. A. (1997). *Channel Surfing: Race Talk and the Destruction of Today's Youth*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching Youth Media*. New York, New York: Teachers College Columbia University.
- Freire, P. (1970/1990). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Woo, T. (2000). *Banana Boys*. Toronto: Cormorant Books.

Course Reader:

- Boyd, D. (2008). Why Youth Love Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life. In David Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing Identities. In David Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Douglas T. KPK, Inc: Race, Nation, and Emergent Culture in Online Games. In Anna Everett *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Fernando, S. (2006). Race and the City: Chinese Canadian and Chinese American Political Mobilization (Ch.3). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Giroux, H. A. (2000). Postmodern Education and Disposable Youth. In Peter Pericles Trifonas (Ed.), *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Cultural Politics, Instituting Education, and The Discourse of Theory*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essay on Education, The Arts, and Social Change* (Chapter 4, Discovering Pedagogy). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Guins, R. & Cruz, A. O. (2005). *Popular Culture: A Reader* (Intro, Ch.1-5, 21, and 29). London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Guins, R. (2008). Hip-Hop 2.0. In Anna Everett *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Herring, S. C. (2008). Questioning the Generational Divide: Technological Exoticism and Adult Constructions of Online Youth Identity. In David Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Morris, M. (2003). Queer Pedagogies: Camping Up the Difference. In Peter Pericles Trifonas (Ed.), *Pedagogies of Difference*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Palfrey, J. & Gasser, U. 2008). *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. New York: Basic Books.

Online Readings:

- Giroux, H. A. (1982). The Politics of Educational Theory. *Social Text*, 5, pp. 87-107.
- Giroux, H. A. (1990). Perspectives and Imperatives Curriculum Theory, Textual Authority, and The Role of Teachers as Public Intellectuals. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 5 (4), pp. 361-383.
- Giroux, H. A. (1993). Disturbing the Peace: Writing in the Cultural Studies. *College Literature*, 20 (2), pp. 13-26.
- Giroux, H. A. (2004). Pedagogy, Film, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals: A Response. *Cinema Journal*, 43 (2), pp. 119-127.
- Schwind, J. (2008). Cool Coaching at Ridgemont High. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 41 (6), pp. 1012-1032.