**Cultures and Societies**

**SOCI 298**

**Dr. Lynda Harling Stalker**

**AX111B**

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**Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9:30-10:30am or by appointment**

**Description:**

As cultural theorist Raymond Wiliams tells us, culture is one of the most difficult words to define. Richard Hoggart points out that there needs to be a sociological methodology in order to understand culture. Some argue that culture is filled with dupes, others argue that active agents shape and participate in culture. This course will focus primarily on the second argument by exploring how society shapes culture and culture shapes society. Drawing on local, national and global practices of culture and cultural objects, students will learn how meaning-making is critical to understanding everyday life.

Sociology of culture has three guiding principles that come to shape this field of study:

1. Theory has to be informed needs to be informed by empirical data.
2. Engaging with issues of social structure and social action / agency.
3. Attempt to understand the relationship between social factors and cultural factors.

These principles will underlie the scope of study for this course.

**Objectives**

This course will help students develop the following skills and abilities:

1. Engage critically on how society and culture are intertwined.
2. Write a critical and analytical essay that meets the guiding principles of the sociology of culture.
3. Be able to take the material learned and apply it to everyday lived experiences.
4. Begin to develop an intercultural understanding.

**Textbooks:**

 Griswold, W. 2013. *Cultures and societies in a changing world*. Los Angeles: Sage.

 Williams, R. (1976/2014) *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. Oxford Press

**Evaluation:**

*Tests* (2x30%): The tests will consist of a mid-term (**February** 10) and a final (scheduled by registrar).

*Quizzes* (5x2%=10%): To be decided by the class if these are to be done in small groups or individually on the first day. These quizzes will test your knowledge of course material. There will be 10 questions and will be done at the beginning of the designated classes (see Schedule). They will be drawn upon the readings and lectures. The answers will be discussed immediately after the quiz. Students in the top 5% of the class at the end of the year will receive a 2% bonus.

*Paper* (30%): In this paper you will be expected to write a 5-7 page analytical essay on a cultural object. It cannot be one that was used in class or in the text books. This cultural object needs to be seen as somehow representative of a cultural practice or idea. Students must get their cultural object approved by Dr. Harling Stalker before Reading Week. The student will be expected to describe and contextualise the cultural object, provide a theoretical perspective they will bring to the analysis, and come to employ a minimum of three concepts with which to analyse the cultural object. It is expected that a minimum of **five** academic and sociological sources will be used. ASA format for citations and style will be used. More details will be presented in class. **DUE March 16th during class.**

N.B.: Be sure to retain a hard copy of all assignments that are handed in.

**Plagiarism**

**Late penalties:** For each day a paper is late (including weekends), **5%** will be deducted from the assignment’s grade.

**Extensions**: Extensions will only be granted with proper documentation.

Copying of direct quotes or ideas without acknowledging the original author is considered plagiarism. Handing in a paper that you did not write, or a paper that you handed in for another class without permission of the instructor is also considered an infraction. These are serious academic offences. Any such offence will result in a ZERO in this course and referred onto university officials. For more information on plagiarism see the University Calendar.

**Special needs**

If a student requires special accommodations, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

**Course schedule:**

**N.B.: The “Chapter” reference is to the Griswold book. “Keywords” refers to the Williams book.**

Week one (January 4 &6):

* Introduction to the course
* Ways of looking at culture
* *Chapter One,*
* *Keywords: Culture*

Week two (January 11 & 13):

* Links between society and culture
* Methodology for a sociology of culture
* *Chapter One (con’t)*
* *Keywords: Society, Tradition, Empirical*
* ***QUIZ January 13***

Week three (January 18 & 20):

* Marxist approach
* Weberian approach
* *Chapter Two*
* *Keywords: Theory, Materialism, Ideology*

Week four (January 25 & 27):

* Durkheimian approach
* Symbolic interactionist approach
* *Chapter Three*
* *Keywords: Modern, Structural, Idealism*
* ***QUIZ January 27***

Week five (February 1 & 3):

* Culture industry
* Audience
* Mass culture
* *Chapter Four*
* *Keywords: Masses, Industry, Popular*

Week six (February 8 & 10):

* Class
* Gender
* Race
* *Keywords: Class, Racial, Man*
* **TEST February 10**

Week seven (February 22 & 24)

* Collective identity
* Religion
* Social movements
* *Chapter Five*
* *Keywords: Religion, Individual, Collective*
* ***QUIZ February 24***

Week eight (February 29 & March 2):

* Multiculturalism
* Organisational culture
* *Chapter Six*
* *Keywords: Isms, Ethnic*

Week nine (March 7 & 9):

* Media
* Community
* Aesthetics
* *Chapter Seven*
* *Keywords: Community, Media, Aesthetic, Communication*
* ***QUIZ March 9***

Week ten (March 14 & 16):

* Food
* Music
* Fashion
* Literature
* *Keywords: Literature, Folk*
* ***TERM PAPERS DUE March 16***

Week eleven (March 21 & 23):

* Power
* Politics
* *Chapter Eight*
* *Keywords: Elite, Democracy, Bourgeois*
* ***QUIZ March 23***

Week twelve (March 28 & 30):

* Sociology of culture
* Cultural sociology
* Cultural studies

Last Class (April 4)