

Culture and Power

CES 401.1
Culture and Power
Spring 2009
Place: CUE 316
Day/Time: TTH: 12:00–1:15

Instructor: Rory Ong
Office Room #: Wilson 119
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Office Hours: W: 12–2pm
or by appointment
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Course Description:

As the title of this course suggests, we will be examining the possible intersections, complexities, and contradictions between “culture” and “power.” We tend to think of these two concepts as *a priori*, that is as having always existed in, and of, and for themselves. However, as we have studied in Comparative Ethnic Studies, race, gender and class are “socially constructed” and part of the political, social, economic, and historic dynamic in which we live, no less so are “culture” and “power.” Our notions of “culture” and “power” are social constructs just as are race, gender, and class. The questions are, moreover, a) how have culture and power come to work together as part of the (western–white–patriarchal–capitalist) cultural hegemony in which we live, b) can we identify the practice of hegemony in our daily lives (and our involvement in it), and c) what are some practical strategies to counter this “culture/power” dynamic so that it gets deployed for social justice rather than for national(ist), patriarchal, and economic domination?

Required Texts:

Colette Guillaumin. Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology.
Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities.
Supplemental Readings (available at Cougar Copies)

Course Requirements:

Participation

Participation for this class primarily consists of students coming prepared to class and ready to contribute through discussion and engagement with the course materials. This means having the reading done before class, and prepared to engage individually or in groups. You will periodically be asked to respond (individually or within a group) to questions concerning the readings and/or other class material (films or other visual images, etc). These may be oral or written assignments (sometimes take-home) to gauge the extent of your preparation and/or how well you are paying attention to discussion and generally comprehending the material. Participation will count 25% toward the total grade.

Chapter Discussions/Presentations and Papers

You are required to sign up to discuss two of the class readings with a partner. This will involve collaboratively writing, with your partner, a short review of the reading(s) (2–3 pages long, typed and double-spaced), as well as discuss your findings **briefly** to the class (5–10 minutes) highlighting the 2 or 3 key points of your review. I encourage you to meet with a partner and collaborate on topics, themes, so that there is breadth and depth in the presentations (rather than duplication). The review/summary must thoughtfully engage and discuss the assigned readings. The written account of the presentation is due the day of the reading in class. The discussant/presentations and papers will count as 35% of the total grade.

Final Collaborative Project

In lieu of a final paper, you will engage in a collaborative group project. Groups must be comprised of about 4 people. These presentations must cover specific themes, topics, or foci that have been raised by our course readings or course discussions. You will have both individual and group responsibilities in the project. I will provide a guideline sheet as the time gets closer. The final collaborative group project will count toward 40% of the total grade.

Policies:Grading

Grades will be averaged in the following proportions:

Participation	25%
Chapter Discussant/Presentation and Paper	35%
Final Presentation	30%

Grading Scale:

100-98=A+	Suggests that a student's work is outstanding to excellent;
97-93=A	The student's work reflects the content and focus of the
92-90=A-	course and shows thoughtful comprehension and insight
	into the complexities of the material. Students also show
	an attentive engagement with the course. Always well written
	and articulated.
89-87=B+	Suggests the student's work is very good to good; it
86-83=B	reflects a strong and solid understanding of the
82-80=B-	material. Occasionally doesn't go the extra step in
	critical analysis. Mostly well developed, written and
	articulated.
79-77=C+	Suggests the student's work is adequate; it reflects a
76-73=C	fair, but somewhat disengaged, limited grasp of the
72-70=C-	material, and doesn't go very far in comprehension, or
	reflects a lack of understanding of the issues represented
	in the material. Undeveloped, unclearly written or articulated.
	There may be some attendance problems.
69-63=D	Suggests the student's work shows some, but little
	effort. The student does not comprehend the material,
	is disengaged, or reveals a lack of reading, attention,
	to the material. There are some attendance problems.

Attendance

In accordance with the Student Handbook, attendance in this class is mandatory. If you know in advance that you will have to miss class for a legitimate reason, contact me to see whether arrangements can be made to make up any work that will be missed. If you have not finished an assignment for a given class period, attend class anyway to avoid missing further assignments and in-class work/discussions. **Only institutional excuses will be accepted. If you have more than four (4) unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one point for every absence thereafter.**

Extra Credit

There may be many opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. I will announce those opportunities as they come up. Extra Credit assignments must relate to the course content of CES 411. Extra Credit should be in the form of a short 1-2 page review of the event, lecture, or film attended--typed and double-spaced. To receive the possible full credit, students not only review but must also discuss how the event, film, or lecture compliments the content of this course. Students are allowed to turn in 2 Extra Credit assignments. Each Extra Credit will count 2.5 pts toward the student's overall final grade (for a total of 5 extra credit points).

Disability Accommodations

The Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies supports members of our community who request disability accommodations. Please notify me during the first two (2) weeks of class for any requirements needed for the course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. All formal requests are to be made through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in the Administrative Annex Bldg, Rm. 206, 335-1566. Late notification may result in the unavailability of the accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and fraud, is prohibited. The proper use of primary or secondary research sources and without proper citation or acknowledgment, or copying and claiming someone else's work as your own, is illegal and is not acceptable in this or any other class at WSU. Whether intentional or unintentional, academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question, or a grade of "F" for the entire course. Should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty, we will discuss the situation with you before penalties are enforced.

Classroom Etiquette

Out of respect for your classmates and the instructor, all cell phones must be turned off. iPods and any other devices for listening to music, podcasts, radio, or text messaging are also prohibited in class. Unless you have a documented disability, no earphones are allowed in class. Any use of these items during class will automatically result in a loss of 5 points from the student's final grade.

Syllabus: (Subject to Change)

Tuesday, January 13: Review Syllabus. Introduction to the Course. *Film: Wall*. An expose about the wall Israel is building (has built) between itself and Palestine.

Thursday, January 15: *Film: Wall* con't.

Tuesday, January 20: **Review, Recapitulate, and Discuss Key points.**

Culture and Power/Race and Gender

Thursday, January 22: Discuss Chapter 1, "The specific characteristics of racist ideology" in *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* (RSPI).

Tuesday, January 27: Discuss Chapter 2, "The idea of race and its elevation to autonomous scientific and legal status," and Chapter 3, "I know it's not nice, but . . . ': the changing face of race" in RSPI.

Thursday, January 29: Discuss Chapter 6, "Race and Nature: the system of marks: the idea of a natural group and social relationships" in RSPI.

Tuesday, February 3: Discuss "The Intimacies of Four Continents" by Lisa Lowe in Supplementary Readings (SR).

Thursday, February 5: **Review, Recapitulate, and Discuss Key points.**

Tuesday, February 10: Discuss Chapter 7, "Women and theories about society: The effects on theory of the anger of the oppressed" and Chapter 8, "Sexism, a right-wing constant of any discourse: a theoretical note" in RSPI.

Thursday, February 12: Discuss Chapter 9, "The practice of power and belief in Nature, Part 1: The Appropriation of Women," in RSPI.

Tuesday, February 17: Discuss "Colonization and Housewification" by Maria Miles in SR.

Thursday, February 19: Discuss Chapter 10, "The practice of power and belief in Nature, Part 2: The naturalist discourse" in RSPI.

- Tuesday, February 24: Discuss Chapter 11, “The questions of difference,” and Chapter 13, “Nature, History, and Materialism” in RSPI.
- Thursday, February 26: Discuss “Citizens and Strangers” by Shane Phelan in SR.
- Tuesday, March 3: Discuss “Can the Queen Speak? Sexuality, Racial Essentialism, and the problem of Authority” by Dwight A. McBride in SR.
- Thursday, March 5: Discuss “Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn” in SR.
- Tuesday, March 10: **Review, Recapitulate, and Discuss Key points.**
- Thursday, March 12: Film: *Transnational Tradeswomen (2006)*.
- Mon–Fri, March 16–20: **Spring Break**

Culture and Power/ Race, Nation, and Globalization

- Tuesday, March 24: Discuss Chpt 1, “Is There a ‘Neo–Racism’?” by Etienne Balibar, and Chpt. 2, “The Ideological Tensions of Capitalism: Universalism versus Racism and Sexism” by Immanuel Wallerstein in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (RNCAI).
- Thursday, March 26: Discuss Chpt. 3, “Racism and Nationalism” by Etienne Balibar.
- Tuesday, March 31: Discuss Chpt. 4, “The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism,” by Immanuel Wallerstein and Chpt. 5, “The Nation Form: History and Ideology” by Etienne Balibar in RNCAI.
- Thursday, April 2: **Review, Recapitulate, and Discuss Key points.**
- Tuesday, April 7: Discuss Chpt. 6, “Household Structures and Labour–Force Formation in the Capitalist World–Economy,” and Chpt. 7, “Class Conflict in the Capitalist World–Economy,” by Immanuel Wallerstein in RNCAI.
- Thursday, April 9: Discuss Chpt. 8, “Marx and History,” and Chpt. 9, “The Bourgeois(ie)” by Immanuel Wallerstein in RNCAI.
- Tuesday, April 14: Discuss Chpt. 10, “From Class Struggle to Classless Struggle?” and Chpt. 12 “Class Racism” by Etienne Balibar in RNCAI..
- Thursday, April 16: **Review, Recapitulate, and Discuss Key points.**
- Tuesday, April 21: Discuss “The New Imperialism” by Howard Winant, and “Transnational America: Race and Gender After 9/11” by Inderpal Grewal in SR.
- Thursday, April 23: Presentations.
- Tuesday, April 28: Presentations.
- Thursday, April 30: Presentations.
- Mon–Fri, May 4–8: **Final Exam Week. No final exam for CES 401.**