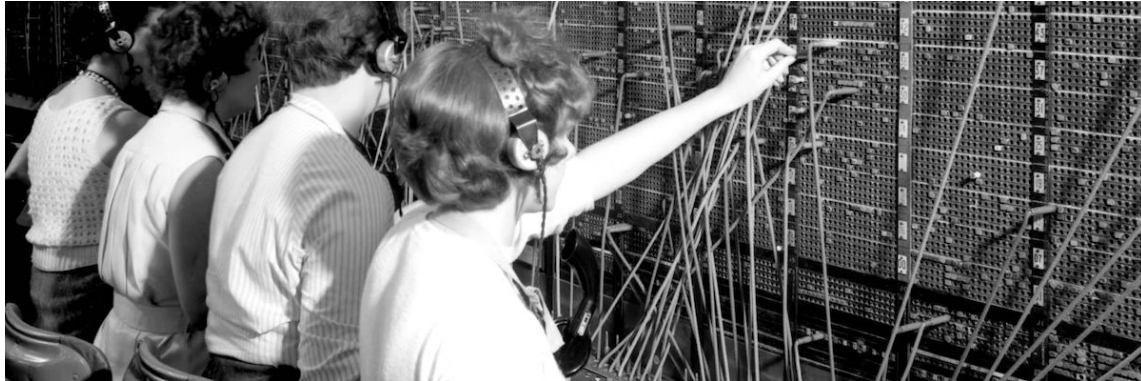


# ENGH 676: Intro to Cultural Studies

Tuesdays, 4:30PM–7:10PM, Enterprise 77



## CONTACT INFORMATION

---

**INSTRUCTOR** Alexander Monea

**EMAIL ADDRESS** [amonea@gmu.edu](mailto:amonea@gmu.edu)

**OFFICE ADDRESS** Robinson B 432

**OFFICE HOURS** Wednesdays, 4:00–5:00PM

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

This course provides an introduction to the field of cultural studies. Throughout the semester we will examine central texts in cultural studies, work to extract from those readings a coherent set of theories and methodologies that we might apply to cultural objects, and begin to analyze cultural objects themselves in light of these theories and methods to discover the social, cultural, political, economic, and aesthetic contexts in which they are embedded.

Students will engage in two primary projects over the course of the semester: (1) constructing a keyword entry that analyzes a key concept from cultural studies in detail, and (2) a rigorous analysis of a cultural object (past or present) of their choosing that takes advantage of the keyword they have previously written about.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

By the end of this course, students will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of cultural studies as an interdisciplinary field and will be acquainted some of its key thinkers and theories.
2. Students will gain a familiarity with cultural studies methodologies and will be able to apply those methods to analyze cultural objects from their everyday lives.
3. Students will gain topical knowledge of globalization, nationalism, post colonialism, science and technology, sexuality and gender, political economy, affect and aesthetics, and mass media in public discourse.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

---

During, S. (Ed.) (2007). *The Cultural Studies Reader* (3rd Edition). New York, NY: Routledge.  
ISBN: 9780415374132 GMU Price: \$54.95

Grossberg, L. (2019). *Under the Cover of Chaos: Trump and the Battle for the American Right*. New York, NY: Polity. ISBN: 9780745337913 GMU Price: \$15.52

Williams, R. (2014). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New Edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199393213 GMU Price: \$25.95

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

---

### KEYWORD ENTRIES

Following the examples from Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, students will be responsible for selecting a keyword from any of the readings for the course or any of the research they are examining for their object analyses and developing a keyword entry for that keyword. For your keyword entry, you will research, document, and analyze your given term in a paper of at least 1,000 words.

In addition to your 1,000-word overview of the keyword, you will provide an annotated bibliography with at least eight academic references that focus on your keyword and densely overlap with your analysis. You are welcome to use non-academic sources from authoritative magazines, newspapers, and similar recognizable sources in addition to your eight academic sources. For each source you include, you will provide a 150-word annotation that outlines the primary argument of the source, its major supporting points of argument and pieces of element, and that briefly outlines its relation to your keyword.

You will additionally be maintaining a 'reject list' of at least four sources that you located, physically examined, and decided were not focused enough on your keyword or densely overlapping enough with your analysis to be useful. This reject list is meant to demonstrate the depth of your research, to encourage you to read deeply, skip sources as soon as you discover they aren't what you need, and get credit for having done so.

### OBJECT ANALYSES

Each student will be responsible for completing an analysis of a cultural object (past or present) for their final project. These analyses ought to use cultural studies theories and methodologies drawn from the course to examine the cultural, social, political, economic, aesthetic, and/or historical conjuncture in which that object emerged. A good project will show how it was possible that your particular object came to exist rather than some other object.

Object analyses ought to be at least 3,500 words in length. Your 3,500-word analysis ought to provide a bibliography with at least twelve academic references that densely overlap with your analysis. These bibliographies *do not* count towards your 3,500 word minimum for the analysis.

You will additionally be maintaining a 'reject list' of at least ten sources that you located, physically examined, and decided were not focused enough on your object or densely overlapping enough with your analysis to be useful. This reject list is meant to demonstrate the

depth of your research, to encourage you to read deeply, skip sources as soon as you discover they aren't what you need, and get credit for having done so.

### **DISCUSSION FACILITATION**

Twice during the semester students will be required to work in groups to facilitate discussion for the course. On the day of the class, I will still lead class discussion. Your job will be to help fill silences and answer questions about the assigned texts. You ought to know the assigned texts rather well and have done some background research beyond the assignment on the subject and the authors. If you are unclear on any of the texts you ought to reach out to me *before* class to try to work out any material you don't feel comfortable discussing.

Students will get the option to sign up for weeks that they are particularly interested in. At least one week prior to that course, students will submit a list of discussion questions (at least one per assigned reading) that they think it will be useful for us to talk through in class and a list of at least five keywords from Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* that are densely related with that week's readings for the course. If you have any other materials or supplemental readings that you would like to share with the class I will be happy to pass those along as well.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation is crucial in this class because we will rely on in-class discussion to facilitate our analyses of the course texts. It is my hope that you will learn as much (or more) from each other as you will from me. It is for this reason that participation will account for ten percent of your final grade.

Class participation means more than how much you say in class; it's your effort to be present—both in mind and in body—in our discussions. Your grade will reflect your attendance, preparation, and the quality of your contributions to our class work. Accordingly, participation grades will be awarded as follows:

In order to earn an average participation grade (in the C range), you must fulfill four basic requirements: arrive on time; be ready to discuss readings when called on; be prepared with the book or reading in class; listen respectfully.

To earn a B, you must consistently fulfill the above requirements and: volunteer questions or points of interest from readings to generate discussion; willingly offer ideas in class; make sure your contributions are topical and thoughtful.

To earn an A, you must consistently fulfill the above criteria and: show leadership in class discussion (i.e. respond to open-ended questions, challenge received opinion, ask difficult questions); respond to other students' ideas (not just mine) by asking questions or building on their points.

You will receive a failing participation grade if you are excessively and/or frequently tardy; unprepared for class; disruptive during class; and/or occupied with activities other than those related to our class.

## DUE DATES AND DISTRIBUTION

04/04	Keyword Entry	30%
05/14	Object Analysis	40%
–	Discussion Facilitation 1	5%
–	Discussion Facilitation 2	5%
–	Participation	20%

## GRADING SCALE

<b>A-</b>	90–93	<b>A</b>	94–96	<b>A+</b>	97–100
<b>B-</b>	80–83	<b>B</b>	84–86	<b>B+</b>	87–89
<b>C-</b>	70–73	<b>C</b>	74–76	<b>C+</b>	77–79
<b>F</b>	>64	<b>D</b>	64–66	<b>D+</b>	67–69

## COURSE SCHEDULE

---

I will maintain this syllabus throughout the semester as a Google Drive document to which I will provide you a link at the beginning of the semester. I reserve the right to modify the course schedule in two ways throughout the semester: (1) I may swap out readings on any given week for alternate readings of comparable length and/or complexity, and (2) I may revise due dates for assignments given the progress of the course. I will notify you in class of any changes and will alter the Google Drive syllabus to reflect those changes one week before they occur.

The majority of the readings come from the course texts. All readings marked 'CSR' are from *The Cultural Studies Reader* and all keywords come from Raymond Williams' *Keywords*. Any texts marked 'PDF' are available in our [Google Drive folder](#) for download. Any texts marked 'WEB' will directly link to online articles.

### WEEK ONE (01/22) – INTRODUCTION to the COURSE

- Simon During, "Introduction" (CSR) ([PDF](#))
- Hua Hsu, "Stuart Hall and the Rise of Cultural Studies" ([WEB](#))

### WEEK TWO (01/29) – TRANSMITTING, RECEIVING, and REMIXING

- Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" (CSR)

- Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding” (CSR)
- Henry Jenkins & Mark Deuze, “Convergence Culture” ([PDF](#))

KEYWORDS: COMMUNICATION, CONSENSUS, FORMALIST, LITERATURE, MEDIA, MEDIATION

## WEEK THREE (02/05) – MEDIA and PUBLIC SPHERES

- Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” (CSR)
- Jodi Dean, “The Net and Multiple Realities” (CSR)
- Eli Pariser, “Beware Online ‘Filter Bubbles’” ([WEB](#))
- Sarah Sharma, “Going to Work in Mommy's Basement” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: COLLECTIVE, COMMUNICATION, CONSENSUS, DEMOCRACY, MASSES, MEDIA, PRIVACY, ROMANTIC

## WEEK FOUR (02/12) – MARXISM and CULTURE

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: CLAY BARAN, MATTHEW HORNE

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Norton Anthology Selections ([PDF](#))
- Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” ([PDF](#))

KEYWORDS: ALIENATION, BOURGEOIS, CAPITALISM, CIVILIZATION, COMMERCIALISM, COMMUNISM/SOCIALIST, HEGEMONY, IDEOLOGY, LITERATURE, TRADITION

## WEEK FIVE (02/19) – GLOBALIZATION, the INTERNET, and LABOR

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: ALEXANDRA SWORDS

- Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, “Postmodernization, or the Informatization of Production” (CSR)
- Tiziana Terranova, “Free Labor” ([PDF](#))
- David Beer, “Power Through the Algorithm? Participatory Web Cultures and the Technological Unconscious” ([PDF](#))

KEYWORDS: ANARCHY, CREATIVE, ECOLOGY, EXPLOITATION, LABOUR, WORK

## WEEK SIX (02/26) – NATIONALISM, POSTCOLONIALISM, MULTICULTURALISM, GLOBALIZATION

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: JORDAN REICH, HANA KAFRI

- Benedict Anderson, “Imagined Communities: Nationalism’s Short Roots” (CSR)
- Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Selection ([PDF](#))

- Walter D. Mignolo, “Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)Coloniality, Border Thinking, and Epistemic Disobedience” ([WEB](#))
- Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Globallectics*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Aiwha Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Kwame Appiah, “There is No Such Thing as Western Civilisation” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: CAPITALISM, CIVILIZATION, CULTURE, DIALECTIC, GLOBALIZATION, INTELLECTUAL, MULTICULTURALISM, NATIONALISM, NATIVE, POSTCOLONIALISM, WESTERN

## WEEK SEVEN (03/05) – TRACES of RACE

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: N/A

- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Interrogating ‘Whiteness,’ Complicating ‘Blackness’: Remapping American Culture” ([PDF](#))
- Michelle Alexander, “The New Jim Crow” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: ETHNIC, GENETIC, HUMANITY, RACIAL, UNDERPRIVELEGED

## WEEK EIGHT (03/12) – NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

## WEEK NINE (03/19) – CONSERVATISM and the ALT-RIGHT

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: CAROLYN CONLEY

- Lawrence Grossberg, *Under the Cover of Chaos: Trump and the Battle for the American Right*
- Paul Gilroy, “The Crisis of ‘Race’ and Raciology” (CSR)
- Heather Boushey, “How the Radical Right Played the Long Game and Won” ([WEB](#))
- Frank Rich, “The Billionaires Bankrolling the Tea Party” ([WEB](#))
- Contrapoints, “Decrypting the Alt-Right” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: DEMOCRACY, ELITE, NATIONALIST, RACIAL, REACTIONARY

## WEEK TEN (03/26) – BLACKNESS and FEMINISM

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: TBD

- Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, Selection ([PDF](#))
- Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” ([PDF](#))
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” ([WEB](#))
- Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book” ([PDF](#))



KEYWORDS: TBD

### **WEEK ELEVEN (04/02) – SEXUALITY and GENDER, PT. I**

KEYWORD ENTRIES DUE

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: TBD

- Judith Butler, “Subversive Bodily Acts” (CSR)
- Will Fraker, “Gender is Dead, Long Live Gender” ([WEB](#))
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Axiomatic” (CSR)
- Donna Haraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto” (CSR)

KEYWORDS: TBD

### **WEEK TWELVE (04/09) – SEXUALITY and GENDER, PT. II**

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: NAJWAN HAWA, CAROLYN CONLEY

- Lauren Berlant & Michael Warner, “Sex in Public” ([PDF](#))
- Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” ([PDF](#))
- Sara Ahmed, “Happy Objects” in *The Affect Theory Reader* ([PDF](#))
- Dean Spade, “Right-Wing Fantasies About Gender Are Killing Trans People” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: TBD

### **WEEK THIRTEEN (04/16) – POP CULTURE**

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: JORDAN REICH, NAJWAN HAWA, ALEXANDRA SWORDS, HANA KAFRI

- C. L. R. James “What is Art?” (CSR)
- Russell A. Potter, “History – Spectacle – Resistance” (CSR)
- Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (CSR)
- Alex Ross, “The Naysayers: Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and the Critique of Pop Culture” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: TBD

### **WEEK FOURTEEN (04/23) – SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY**

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: TBD

- Joseph Rouse, “What Are Cultural Studies of Scientific Knowledge?” ([PDF](#))



- Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” ([PDF](#))
- Bonnie Tucker, “Technocapitalist Disability Rhetoric: When Technology is Confused with Social Justice” ([WEB](#))

KEYWORDS: TBD

### **WEEK FIFTEEN (04/30) – NATURE and ENVIRONMENT**

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: CLAY BARAN, MATTHEW HORNE

- Sheena Wilson, Imre Szeman, and Adam Carlson, “On Petrocultures: Or, Why We Need to Understand Oil to Understand Everything Else” ([PDF](#))
- Raymond Williams, “Ideas of Nature” (CSR)
- Bruno Latour, “War of the Worlds” (CSR)
- Ava Kofman, “Bruno Latour, the Post-Truth Philosopher, Mounts a Defense of Science” ([WEB](#))

### **EXAM WEEK**

OBJECT ANALYSES DUE (TBD)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

---

### **DIGITAL SYLLABUS**

I will be maintaining the syllabus and daily schedule via Google Docs for the course of the semester. The daily schedule is subject to change. Any changes I make to the assigned readings will be announced at least a week in advance. I will also try to keep the amount of work the same (e.g. if I add a reading, I will also cut a reading of a similar length from the same week). No other parts of the syllabus or schedule will be changed during the semester.

### **ATTENDANCE**

As per GMU Academic Policies: “Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole.” Attendance is particularly crucial in a discussion-based course.

Unexcused absences will be negatively factored into participation grades. Any student with more than two unexcused absences will receive a failing participation grade for the course.

Students may arrange for excused absences which will not be factored into participation grades as per GMU Academic Policies on Registration, Attendance and Grading. In these instances, it will be the responsibility of the student to provide as early advance notice as possible and to arrange to make up any missed work.

### **TARDINESS**

If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as absent. If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to catch up with the rest of the class. I will not repeat the instructions delivered at the beginning of classes for the benefit of tardy students. Furthermore, students leaving class early will also be counted as tardy.

### **LATE WORK**

All assignments must be submitted to me by the provided deadlines. I reserve the right to refuse to accept, grade, and comment on any assignments submitted late. That being said, if you contact me in advance about any problems you are having getting a particular assignment in on time *before the deadline*, I can usually work out an extension for you. I do, however, reserve the right to refuse any given extension on a case by case basis.

### **EMAIL POLICY**

My response to your emails will not be immediate. Please budget at least one business day for a response to any given email. This means you need to plan in advance if you are going to contact me with time sensitive questions or concerns.

Additionally, students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, pregnancy status or genetic information is a violation of state and federal law, as well as George Mason University's Non-Discrimination policy, and *will not be tolerated*. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) similarly *will not be tolerated*. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is prohibited.

We will be dealing with complicated and often disconcerting aspects of race, color, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, pregnancy status and genetic information

in this course. Students will not be punished for engaging in these themes openly and honestly, so long as they demonstrate a good faith effort towards inclusivity and sensitivity to otherness.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

---

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean for this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you do rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

## DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

---

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu>, SUB 1, Room 4205, (703)993-2474) to determine the accommodations that you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

---

The University Catalog (<http://catalog.gmu.edu>) is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

## OTHER RESOURCES

---

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall, (703) 993-1200, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES' "Ask a Librarian": <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>  
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380,  
<http://caps.gmu.edu>