

CMST 3270 – CULTURE AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies	Spring 2019
Section: 001	
Room: EBB 216	MWF: 10:30 -11:20AM

Instructor: Dr. Sidi Becar Meyara

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Office: Lundberg 202

Office Hours: MW: 9:30AM –
10:20AM & 11:30 – 12:20 PM

Also available by appointment.

Required Texts:

Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York: Penguin Books.

All other required readings will be available on the CANVAS site. Check the syllabus.

Course Description:

Many scholars have examined the impact a culture's public discourse can have on the way in which members of that culture view themselves in relation to others. While this class starts from the assumptions that culture is socially constructed, we recognize that this construction and reconstruction is achieved through both interpersonal and mass mediated means. In this class, we will examine how discourses are socially constructed and hence a product of their cultural environment. Many discourses circulate in a given culture, and they are sometimes at odds with one another. The primary focus of this class is to understand the impact of sub-cultural, national, international public discourses. It will examine the symbiotic relationship between culture and discourse, looking at how public discourses impact a certain culture and vice versa.

Course Objectives:

- Understand theories and pertaining to culture and public discourse
- Improve your ability to think critically about important contemporary issues
- Strengthen your ability to write coherently and articulate strong arguments
- Enhance your presentation and discussion leadership skills

COURE POLICIES

Written Assignment Format: All written assignments will be in typed in 12- point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides of the document. No extra spacing should be added between paragraphs or before or after lines. Although this many seem stringent, it ensures that all students are playing on equal grounds.

Late Work/Missed Assignments:

- Late work will not be accepted unless a valid reason is provided. When accepted, you may receive a 5-point deduction per 24 hours for up to 5 days after the due date (including weekends). No papers will be accepted beyond 5 days and will result in a zero on that assignment.

- If you miss **any assignment** due date because of a documented illness or emergency situation, you **MUST** provide me with an official note (doctor, police, etc.) justifying why you were not able to make the due date. All notes must be accompanied by a contact number, as this number will be called to verify your illness or emergency.

Special Needs and Accommodations

Disability Resource Center at Utah State University will work with students needing additional accommodations to academically succeed in this class. Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, (435)797-2444 VP, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible.

24/7 Rule Regarding Assignment and Grade Discussions

You are encouraged to discuss assignments and course grades with me frequently to assess your progress throughout the semester and so we can discuss ways to achieve your goals in this course. In general, grades will not be discussed via email or phone. If you should have a question or complaint regarding a grade, please wait 24 hours before bringing it to my attention. After 24 hours, call or email me with a brief description of your concern. As a general approach, please review any assignment feedback in detail and prepare specific questions and concerns you have before our meeting. In essence, develop your argument before you set up the meeting. You must, however, address the issue within one week of receiving the grade/feedback. After one week, the issue is no longer open for discussion (this time will obviously be truncated for the end of semester assignments). This policy ensures that you think through the points you wish to make, review feedback against assignment criteria, and make improvements for future assignments.

Attendance and Participation

You are required to attend class and participate in different activities with your peers. Failure to miss class with greatly affect your participation grade for both the class and group. You have two excused absences that you can use for family emergencies. Any subsequent absences will result in lowering your participation grade 4 points (this will come from your class participation). You will receive a ZERO = for anything done in your absence unless your absence is excused (a result of a documented illness or a university sponsored travel).

Professionalism

Professionalism includes respecting others' opinions, being respectful to those who are speaking during lectures and discussions. It also includes working together in a spirit of cooperation. This is an extremely interactive class, and it is important that we all respect one another, participate to the best of our abilities, and learn to feel comfortable with one another. I will not allow you to be disrespectful toward others.

Class conduct

- No student is permitted to create a threatening, intimidating, or harassing environment in this course. Classroom civility is a part of the Student Code, and infractions will be pursued through the Student Conduct Coordinator. This course will be conducted in a safe and tolerant environment, and any person who detracts from that environment will be

first given a verbal warning about the behavior. If said behavior persists, the student will be asked to leave the class and will not be able to return until the case is settled to the satisfaction of the professor.

- Cellular phones and other electronics are not to be utilized during class time as they distract both the user and the rest of the class. Laptops are permitted for note taking and collaboration, so you should not have your laptop open unless it is time to take notes.

Course Requirements: *All assignments are due through canvas by 11:59 PM on their due date.*

1) Presentations: There will be **TWO** graded in-class group presentations due this semester. A description of the assignments can be found on canvas.

a. **Assignment #1**: Analysis of the impacts of culture on public discourse.

b. **Assignment #2**: Analysis of the impacts of public discourse on culture

2) Thought Essays: You are required to complete **FIVE** one-page, single-spaced, and typed thought essays. In these essays, will synthesize the readings for that week, discussing how they relate to one another and to concepts and theories discussed in this class. You are required to use concepts and theories from the class to help explain your evaluations and analyses. You may relate the readings and class concepts back to events and happenings you are exposed to in the real world, to personal experiences, or to information you have learned in other classes. A description of this assignment will be found on canvas.

3) Discussion Leadership: You will be required to serve as the discussion leader for **TWO** different occasions throughout this semester. You will lead your discussion on the readings for that week. These discussions should be lively and last between 30 – 35 minutes. You will lead the discussion in a group of 3 – 5 students. As a discussion leader, you will write 1-2 paragraphs synthesizing the readings and highlighting the main arguments. On the same document, you will come up with a list of open-ended questions (5-6 questions to ask of your group) in order to help you lead a discussion.

On a different page, you will also need to create a discussion activity to do with your group and provide a full description of that activity. The activity should help student discuss the issues from the readings. It is your job to keep the discussion going and your group members involved in the discussion. You will be graded based on your ability to concisely synthesize the materials, ask open-ended questions, and keep the discussion lively. Please note that what you write for your discussion leadership assignment does not count as your thought essay. Also, note that a discussant does not dominate the conversation, but rather help students consider new perspectives and distinct ways of thinking about the subject matter.

4) Class participation: Because this is a 3000-level class, a high level of individual participation is expected of each student. As you cannot participate if you are not in class, regular attendance is therefore vital to your overall success in this course. Please arrive *on time* having already completed the assigned reading, ready to engage in our discussion of the materials.

5) Quizzes and Exams: You are required to come to class prepared, having read the materials. You will take 9 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will only count your 8 highest scores. You should expect to take a quiz on a Monday or a Wednesday of each week. These are not pop-up quizzes since you know you should expect them every week we have materials to read. You cannot make up a quiz unless you have a valid excuse.

You will take 2 exams this semester. Both exams will cover assigned readings and lectures. Early exams or make-up exams will rarely be given, and only to students who have unavoidable conflicts—that can be documented—with the exam time. The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Grading System

Presentations:

Presentation 1	60 Points
Presentation 2	60 Points

Thought Essays:

5 Thought Essays @ 20 points each	100 Points
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<i>Discussion Leadership</i> 2 @ 30 points each	60 points
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<i>In-class Participation</i>	40 Points
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Quizzes & Exams:

9 Quizzes @ 10 points each	80 Points
Midterm	80 Points
Final	80 Points

Total:	560 Points
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The following grading scale will be used in the course:

A = 93%-100%	A- = 90%-92%	
B+ = 87%-89%	B = 83%-86%	B- = 80%-82%
C+ = 77%-79%	C = 73%-76%	C- = 70%-72%
D+ = 67%-69%	D = 63%-66%	D- = 60%-62%

Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule provides an outline for our time together this semester. The schedule is displayed by week and day below. Please note that this schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
1	Jan 7 th	Introduction to the Course		
	Jan 9 th	The Question of the Medium	McLuhan- The Medium is the Message Postman- Ch.1. The Medium is the Metaphor	
	Jan 11 th	Schedule Discussions		
2	Jan 14 th	The Question of the Medium	Postman- Ch.2. Media as Epistemology Postman- Ch.4 – The Typographic Mind	
	Jan 16 th	The Question of the Medium	Chaffee and Metzger – End of Mass Media	
	Jan 18 th			*Discussion Leadership *Thought Essay #1
3	Jan 21 nd		NO CLASS – MLK DAY	
	Jan 23 th	Social Constructionism	Gamson et al – Social Construction	
	Jan 25 th			*Discussion Leadership
4	Jan 28 th	Framing	Gorp – Framing and Culture	
	Jan 31 st	<i>Continued ...</i>	Entman – Framing and Power	
	Feb 1 st			*Discussion Leadership *Thought Essay #2
5	Feb 4 th	Framing	Scheufele-Framing&Media	
	Feb 6 th	<i>Continued ...</i> Schedule Presentations		
	Feb 8 th			*Discussion Leadership

6	Feb 11	Cultural Studies & Public Discourse	Postman – Ch. 6 - The Age of Show Business Postman – Ch. 7 – "Now ... This" Kim – About Face Perez-Cultural Identity and Telenovelas	
	Feb 13 th	Critical Perspectives & Public Discourse	Santa Ana – Anti-Immigrant Discourses	
	Feb 15 th			*Discussion Leadership *Thought Essay #3
7	Feb 18 th		NO CLASS - PRESIDENT DAY	
	Feb 20 th	MIDTERM REVIEW		
	Feb 22 th		<i>NO CLASS – WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE</i>	
8	Feb 25 th		<i>NO CLASS – WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE</i>	
	Feb 27 th	MIDTERM EXAM		
	Mar 1 st	WRAP UP POSTMAN	Postman- Ch. 11- Huxleyan Warning	
9	Mar 4 th	Group Presentation		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS
	Mar 6 th	Group Presentation		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS
	Mar 8 th	Group Presentation		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS
10	Mar 11 th		SPRING BREAK	
	Mar 13 th		SPRING BREAK	
	Mar 15 th		SPRING BREAK	
11	Mar 18 th	Stereotypes and Public Discourse	Berg – Stereotyping Hispanic Durham – Media and Sexuality	
	Mar 20 th	<i>Continued ...</i> Schedule Presentations		
	Mar 22 th			*Discussion Leadership

12	Mar 25 th	Stereotypes and Public Discourse	Said – Covering Islam	
	Mar 27 th		McCombs – Agenda Setting	
	Mar 29 th			*Discussion Leadership *Thought Essay #4
13	Apr 1 st	The Role of the Intellectual	Said – Holding Nations and Traditions at Bay	
	Apr 3 rd		NO CLASS - CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE	
	Apr 5 th		NO CLASS – CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE	
14	Apr 8 th	The Role of the Intellectual	Said – Professionals and Amateurs	
	Apr 10 th	<i>Continued ...</i>		
	Apr 12 th	<i>Continued ...</i>		*Thought Essay #5
15	Apr 15 th	The Role of the Intellectual	Chomsky – Elite Power and the Responsibility of Intellectuals	*Discussion Leadership
	Apr 17 th	FINAL EXAM REVIEW		
	Apr 19 th	Group Presentations		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS
16	Apr 22 nd	Group Presentations		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS
	Apr 24 th	Group Presentations		SEE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS

Final Exam: Friday, April 26th at 9: 30 AM.