

CUS502 Critical Thinking through Popular Culture 普及文化的批判思考

Course Title : Critical Thinking through Popular Culture 普及文化的批判思考

Course Code : CUS502

No. of Credits : 3 credits

Mode of Tuition : 3 hours of lecture

Class Contact Hours : 3 hours per week, 42 hours for the whole course

Category : Core Course

Discipline : Cultural Studies

Prerequisite(s) : Nil

Co-requisite(s) : Nil

Exclusion(s); : Nil

Exemption Requirements; : Nil

Brief Course Description : This course focuses on the relationship between critical theories and popular culture. It examines how the mediation of popular culture affects the ways in which our everyday life experience is shaped. Our main concern is that a renewed understanding of the everyday experience through popular culture can provide illuminating examples and patterns of critical thinking much needed for public cultural education today. Students will learn about different approaches to the many forms of popular culture, from cinema to popular journalism, from advertisement to shopping mall culture, to video games, fan stories and the internet. We aim to see how the popular ways of life can be analyzed as representing complex negotiations of power and pleasure, solidarity and resistance, distinction and community formation in a field increasingly characterized by multiple centers and domains of value.

Aims :	: 1. To introduce the basic approaches to popular culture in Cultural Studies so as to allow students to undertake the analysis of individual cases in relevant social contexts; 2. To provide a dynamic inter-disciplinary platform for the discussion of social, ideological, ethical and aesthetic issues through the perspectives of popular culture
Learning Outcomes (LOs) :	: On completion of the course, students will be able to: 1. LO1 : demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationship between popular culture and everyday life in the contemporary context; 2. LO2 : discuss critical insights on a range of examples encountered in local contexts relating to the experience of popular culture as a dimension of the everyday life; 3. LO3: present in-depth analysis of individual cases of popular culture formation with a relevant critical perspective.
Indicative Contents	: 1. Popular culture and cultural studies: the question of culture and <i>value</i> re-visited; debates on the critical attitude toward and status of popular culture in its many forms (e.g., fiction, fashion journalism, advertisement, tourism, shopping, media and cyber culture); 2. Analytical approach to the practices of everyday life: culture as <i>ordinary experience</i> in the contemporary contexts; the critical concept and functions of <i>mediation</i> in popular culture; <i>play, performance</i> and <i>consumption</i> as the key dimension of popular experience for cultural analysis on the everyday; 3. Interface with popular sensuality, commodity and everyday culture: culture as event, spectacle and meaningful acts; popular culture and the experience of home, community, the state and the globe; identity and difference; social relation, aesthetics, history and politics; globalization, fetishism, and the society of the spectacle (cases to be examined may include: celebrity and fan culture; shopping, tourism, and consumer culture; sport, eating, digital and cyber cultural activities).
Teaching Methods	: Lecture and class discussion (in groups), with student reports on readings and project outlines. Emphasis is put on student participation in the

analysis of issues, relating their own views and experience of popular culture to the critical questions addressed in the course framework. Guest speakers are invited to share perspectives from the industry points of view when appropriate.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes:

LO: \ Assessment:	Group Presentation	Two Reading Reports	Term Paper Proposal	Mid-term (Short) Assignment	Term Paper
	(10%)	(10%x2=20%)	(10%)	(30%)	(30%)
LO1			v	v	v
LO2	v	v		v	
LO3			v		v

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Group Presentation/Reading Reports
 - Group presentations and discussions on selected topics to test students' understanding of assigned readings, grasp of theoretical materials, and application of conceptual framework to local examples;
 - Reading reports on the assigned materials give an opportunity for students to follow up on their oral presentations in class, and develop critical understanding on a small issue in the form of reading notes or analytical reflections;
 - Class discussions (in roundtable format) on term paper proposals help students to formulate initial project ideas, develop critical problems for in-depth study, and share with others their viewpoints on selected topics/cases through dialogues (LO2).
2. Mid-term (Short) Assignment
 - An analysis of either (i) a single popular cultural text, or (ii) a well-defined site or process of everyday/popular cultural production and/or consumption of meanings, or (iii) a specific event/activity in everyday lives where cultural meanings are made, mediated and circulated.
 - This aims to focus students' work in critical analysis on a particular item/site/process in the making of popular culture. Students choose to do either (a) a close reading of the text/site/event that addresses issues as framed within the broader context involved (which the student must identify and discuss); or (b) a critical analysis of an issue or concept studied in the course with reference to the particular case chosen (LO1, LO2).
3. Term Paper Proposal/Term Paper
 - A well-focused study of a specific topic discussed in the course, which reveals students' command of their critical and analytical ability in handling a contextualized problem or case of popular/everyday life culture effectively. Students' ability to present and examine the

case/topic with an effective framework of critical analysis would be assessed (LO1, LO3).

Assessment : 100% Continuous Assessment, to be based on:

1. Group Presentation (10%)
2. TWO Reading Reports (2-4 pages each) on any assigned materials.
(10% x 2 = 20%)
3. Term Paper Proposal (10%)
(*Presentation: in English, Cantonese or Putonghua)
4. Mid-term (Short) Assignment (30%)
5. Term Paper (30%)

On a focused study of any one of the topics/areas discussed in the course, of approximate length of 4,000 characters in Chinese or 3,000 words in English.

Class presentation (30 to 45 mins) is group presentation. If a particular student is keen on answering questions and expressing one's views, course teacher will give additional marks for that student.

Criteria for group presentation assessment

- Quality of Interpretation of the readings
- The relevance of the case to the arguments raised
- Organization of flow
- Clarity of the presentation/ commentary
- Relevance of questions raised
- Response to classmates' questions

Assessment Rubrics:

1) Group Presentation (10%)

***Peer assessment will be conducted as a reference for assessment of one's contribution to the group presentation or project.**

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Content (8%)	Identifies clearly the main issues to be addressed Examines the issues from all important perspectives. Overall logic is clear.	Identifies most of the main issues to be addressed Examines the issue / problem from most of the important perspectives but not all relevant	Identifies an issue area, but without specific delineation of the main issues to be addressed Examines the question/ issue/ problem from some	Fail to identify an issue area and the main issues to be addressed No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Presentation characterized by serious

		arguments and counter arguments are fully examined.	of the important perspectives.	inaccuracies and misunderstanding
	Presenter(s) engage the audience at all times, actively seeking for suggestions from the audiences and incorporate these insights into the final project in thoughtful ways	Presenter(s) engage the audience most of the time, consistently seeking for suggestions from the audiences, and incorporate these insights into the final project	Presenter(s) attempts to engage the audience, tries to seek for suggestions from the audiences, and to incorporate these insights into the final project	Presenter(s) seem to make little attempt to engage the audience.
Team-work (2%)	Excellent performance of teamwork. Demonstrates full communication with formal roles for each group member. Equal distribution of workload.	Good performance of teamwork. Demonstrates some communication with roles for each group member. Moderate distribution of workload.	Fair performance of teamwork. Demonstrates limited communication with informal roles for each group member. Some distribution of workload.	Poor performance of teamwork. Demonstrates no communication with unclear roles for each group member. Unequal distribution of workload.

2) TWO Reading Reports (10% x 2 = 20%)

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Understanding of Topic (2.5%x2)	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.	Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.
Use of evidence (2.5%x2)	Wide range of evidence used to support	Good use of evidence to support	Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn	Inadequate use of evidence to support

	arguments. Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.	arguments. Have researched and drawn on some evidence.	on more suitable evidence.	argument. No use of evidence to support argument
Critical analysis (3%x2)	Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.	Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.	More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.	Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Structure of Argument (1%x2)	Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure. No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing & Referencing (1%x2)	Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.	Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.	Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.	Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.

3) Term Paper Proposal (10%)

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Understanding of Topic (2.5%)	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.	Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.
Use of evidence (2.5%)	Wide range of evidence used to	Good use of evidence to	Adequate range of evidence used.	Inadequate use of evidence to

	support arguments. Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.	support arguments. Have researched and drawn on some evidence.	Could have drawn on more suitable evidence.	support argument. No use of evidence to support argument
Critical analysis (3%)	Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.	Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.	More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.	Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Structure of Argument (1%)	Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure. No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing & Referencing (1%)	Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.	Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.	Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.	Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.

4) Mid-term (Short) Assignment (30%)

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Understanding of Topic (7.5%)	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.	Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.
Use of evidence (10%)	Wide range of evidence used to support arguments.	Good use of evidence to support arguments.	Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn on more suitable	Inadequate use of evidence to support argument.

	Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.	Have researched and drawn on some evidence.	evidence.	No use of evidence to support argument
Critical analysis (10%)	Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.	Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.	More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.	Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Structure of Argument (1.25%)	Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure. No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing & Referencing (1.25%)	Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.	Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.	Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.	Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.

5) Term Paper (30%)

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Understanding of Topic (7.5%)	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.	Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.
Use of evidence (10%)	Wide range of evidence used to support arguments. Thoroughly researched.	Good use of evidence to support arguments. Have researched and drawn on	Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn on more suitable evidence.	Inadequate use of evidence to support argument. No use of evidence to

	Use of primary sources.	some evidence.		support argument
Critical analysis (10%)	Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.	Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.	More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.	Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Structure of Argument (1.25%)	Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure. No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing & Referencing (1.25%)	Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.	Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.	Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.	Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.

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Important Notes:

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations and Course Work. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
5. Students must adhere to the University’s guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents “Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University” and “Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments” can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.

Required/Essential Readings Couldry, N. (2000). *Inside culture: Re-imagining the method of cultural studies*. Sage Publications.

Highmore, B. (2011). *Ordinary lives: Studies in the everyday*. Routledge.

Silverstone, R. (1999). *Why study the media?* Sage Publications.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings Aas, K. F., Gundhus, H. O., & Lomell, H. M. (Eds.). (2009). *Technologies of insecurity: The surveillance of everyday life*. Routledge/Cavendish.

Adorno, T. W. (2001). *The culture industry: Selected essays on mass culture* (J. M. Bernstein, Ed.). Routledge.

Bell, G., & Gemmell, J. (2009). *Total recall: How the e-memory revolution will change everything*. Dutton/Penguin.

Chua, B. H. (2012). *Structure, audience, and soft power in East Asian pop culture*. Hong Kong University Press.

Couldry, N., & Turow, J. (2014). Advertising, big data, and the clearance of the public realm: Marketers’ new approaches to the content subsidy. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 1710-1726.

Danesi, M. (2015). *Popular culture: Introductory perspectives* (3rd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Debord, G. (1994). *The society of the spectacle* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Zone Books. (de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life* (S. F. Rendall, Trans.). University of California Press.

Ellis, J. (1999). Television as working through. In J. Grisprud (Ed.), *Television and common knowledge*. Routledge.

Fitzsimmons, L., & Lent, J. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Asian popular culture in transition*. Routledge.

Hall, S. (2001). Encoding/decoding. In C. L. Harrington & D. D. Bielby (Eds.), *Popular culture: Production and consumption* (pp. 123-132). Blackwell.

Haugen, D. M., & Musser, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Popular culture*. Greenhaven Press.

Kellner, D. (2003). *Media spectacles*. Routledge.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Critique of everyday life, vol. 1: Introduction* (J. Moore, Trans.). Verso.

Marshall, P. D. (2014). *Celebrity and power: Fame in contemporary culture*. University of Minnesota Press.

Morris, M. (1998). *Too soon, too late: History in popular culture*. Indiana University Press.

Moskowitz, M. L. (2011). *Popular culture in Taiwan: Charismatic modernity*. Routledge.

Negus, K. (1996). *Popular music in theory: An introduction*. Polity Press with Blackwell.

Papenburg, J. G., & Schulze, H. (2016). *Sound as popular culture: A research companion*.

Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity*. Oxford University Press.

Waskul, D. D., & Vannini, P. (2016). *Popular culture as everyday life*. Taylor & Francis.

Peer Assessment Form

Team: _____

Instruction: Evaluate your peer team members on their participation in the course group work. This is due on the submission day along with the group work.

Name	Criterion	Ratings (1-10)	Further comments (optional)
1	Participation in project activities		
	Fulfilment of her/his roles		
	Leadership		
	Overall		
2	Participation in project activities		
	Fulfilment of her/his roles		
	Leadership		
	Overall		
3	Participation in project activities		
	Fulfilment of her/his roles		
	Leadership		
	Overall		
4	Participation in project activities		

	Fulfilment of her/his roles		
	Leadership		
	Overall		
5	Participation in project activities		
	Fulfilment of her/his roles		
	Leadership		
	Overall		
** peer assessment will be counted into the final mark.			