

CUS515 Special Topics in Cultural Studies 文化研究專題

Course Title : Special Topics in Cultural Studies 文化研究專題

Course Code : CUS515

No. of Credits/Term : 1.5 credits

Mode of Tuition : 3 hours of lecture

Class Contact Hours : 3 hours per week, 21 hours for the whole course

Category : Elective course

Discipline : Cultural Studies

Prerequisite(s) : Nil

Co-requisite(s) : Nil

Exclusion(s) : Nil

Exemption Requirements : Nil

Brief Course Description : This elective course aims at providing students with focused theoretical and practical tools drawing from the field of cultural studies to critically analyze and effectively address current socio-cultural issues. Topics may vary from year to year. Examples are: identity politics, cultural education, cynicism, populism, xenophobia, language and finance, the cultural politics of nuclear energy, the cultural politics of climate change etc..

Aims :
1. To introduce focused theoretical and practical tools drawing from the field of Cultural Studies for students to study and address current issues;
2. To familiarize students with the critical perspectives needed for

understanding that cultural matters are significant social and public issues through in-depth study of a particular theme.

Learning Outcomes : On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. LO1 : outline theoretical concepts and practical tools introduced in the course;
2. LO2: demonstrate a critical understanding of socio-cultural issues with in-depth intellectual insights.

Indicative Contents : Various issues in the field of cultural studies. Specific content may vary year from year.

Teaching Methods : Lectures, seminar discussions, and students' presentations.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes:

LOs\Assessment	Group presentation and discussion	Research paper
	(30%)	(70%)
LO1	V	
LO2		V

Measurement of Learning Outcomes : 1. Scrutinizing students' class presentation/discussion to examine whether students are able to understand the theoretical and practical tools introduced in the course and to raise relevant and critical questions with clear and precise formulation; (LO1)

1. Students' ability to formulate in-depth comments on socio-cultural issues will be assessed in term project. (LO2)

Assessment : Students are assessed on the basis of 100% continuous assessment – group presentation /discussion and a term project, with the following grade distribution: Group presentation / discussion 30% Research Paper 70%

The group presentation ranges from 15 to 20 minutes. Research Paper: Of approximate length of 4,000 characters in Chinese or 3,000 words in English. 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 /discussion 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 and discussion (30%)

*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 (24%)	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 arguments and counter arguments are fully examined.	Identifies an issue area, but without specific delineation of the main issues to be addressed Examines the question/ issue/ problem from some of the important perspectives.	Fail to identify an issue area and the main issues to be addressed No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Presentation characterized by serious 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 (6%)	Excellent performance of teamwork.	Good performance of teamwork.	Fair performance of teamwork. Demonstrates limited	Poor performance of teamwork. Demonstrates no communication

	Demonstrates full communication with formal roles for each group member. Equal distribution of workload.	Demonstrates some communication with roles for each group member. Moderate distribution of workload.	communication with informal roles for each group member. Some distribution of workload.	with unclear roles for each group member. Unequal distribution of workload.
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2) Research Paper 70%

Criterion	Excellent (90-100%)	Good (60-89%)	Pass (30%-59%)	Failure (0-29%)
Understanding of Topic (20%)	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 (20%)	Wide range of evidence used to support arguments. Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.	Good use of evidence to support arguments. Have researched and drawn on some evidence.	Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn on more suitable evidence.	Inadequate use of evidence to support argument. No use of evidence to support argument
Critical analysis (20%)	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	Clear structure.	Clear structure.	Argument needs	Poor structure.

Argument (5%)	Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Develops a sound argument.	further development. Structure needs more clarity.	No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing & Referencing (5%)	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.

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. Each Student is allowed to enroll in a maximum of TWO topics under this course.
6. 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 :

Varying from year to year

Recommended/Supplementary Readings :

Varying from year to year

Sample course content in the previous years includes

a. CUS515B Special Topics in Cultural Studies - Cultural Politics of Emotion

This course introduces to students the significance of boredom, fear, shame, despair, hope and love, as actual emotions and as ways of looking at the world, in contemporary societies. It discusses the histories of these emotions, as well as the consequences of the emerging culture of fear and boredom. Apart from encouraging students to examine their own experiences of these emotions, this course also draws on theoretical resources from the field of cultural studies and the field of affect studies. Specific attention will be put on the role of the mass media, political forces and commodity culture.

b. CUS515H Special Topics in Cultural Studies - Theories of Ideology

The course is a review of the criticisms of ideology, which have come from different approaches. Students are guided to understand the diverse problematics and theoretical frameworks in their applications to cultural analyses.

c. CUS515G Special Topics in Cultural Studies - Digital Humanities into Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies has long been involved in making the humanities public. This is a key agenda of Digital Humanities (DH), which provides a digitally enabled platform for new work in the humanities and for forms of community engagement involving networked and public knowledge. Creating knowledge in inter-disciplinary ways has always been a key feature of Cultural Studies work. DH provides a new emphasis on 'building' / 'making' , involving a movement from reading and critiquing to making and building with digital technology, thus demonstrating that 'building' could well be an exciting new route to knowledge production. This MCS course will offer exposure to a variety of digital platforms and tools in the broader context of Cultural Studies work at Lingnan, and stimulate students to work towards a collective digital project.

d. CUS515J Special Topics in Cultural Studies – Aesthetics and Governmentality: Martial Arts Cinema

Martial Arts (wuxia) cinema from Hong Kong has long had at its core both performance of and debate about the use of bodily, aesthetic and ethical “techniques” (kung fu) not only for self-cultivation and strengthening but for living through times of socio-political upheaval that brings pressure for cultural

change. In a tradition traceable to the long-running (1940s-1960s) “Wong Fei Hung” series of Cantonese films starring Kwan Tak-hing, then shaped by Japanese influences in the complex generic zone that emerged between the violent nationalism of Wang Yu’s *The Chinese Boxer* 龍虎鬥 (1970) and the comedy of Yuen Woo-ping’s *Drunken Master* 醉拳 (1978), kung fu pedagogy films are concerned with ways for people to negotiate historical shock through teaching and learning an “art” in the midst of governance conflicts. This is one reason for the enduring international appeal of this cinema. With some emphasis on the cross-cultural and historical variability marked by “remakes”, the course will explore the creativity of this tradition in the context of current debates about the uses of art and aesthetics in contemporary social and political life.

e. CUS515K Special Topics in Cultural Studies –Cultural Economy

This course studies the economy and economic discourses through a cultural studies perspective. The course is divided into two sections. Part one discusses what “cultural economy” is and how it works. Part two demonstrates how to do cultural economy with concrete case studies. The main aim of the course is to understand how cultural economy approaches help us to understand economic discourses and the contemporary economy by analyzing the production and consumption of culture and the issues of cultural identity, regulation and representation in relation to the economy.

f. CUS515L Special Topics in Cultural Studies : Cultural Geography

This course investigates the role of culture in shaping regions, landscapes, and places. It will also look at how space and place are central to the understanding of cultural processes. In other words, it will look at how cultural processes are constituted through space and manifest themselves as space. It will take a multi-scalar approach and look at both global patterns of cultural diffusion and differentiation, as well as symbolic aspects of street-level landscapes. Particular attention will be made to the geographies of exclusion, that social relations and practices are crucial in producing contrasting meanings about place for different groups of people.

g. CUS515M Special Topics in Cultural Studies: Agriculture and the Question of the Common -- A Cultural Critique of Globalization

Today’s industrial agriculture is causing a lot of harm to nature, societies and people, from the degradation of soil, quality of the crops produced, cultures, social relations, to the health of both body and mind of the person. This lesson is too painful and costly to be ignored, and a lot of alternative agricultural practices emerge, both as a cure and a way out of today’s plight. These practices are not simply alternative techniques, but rather constitute a critique of the cultural assumption of industrial capitalism/globalization towards a re-centering of our attention on a conception of the common for an understanding of viable relations in the making of a sustainable

future. We will focus on some of these alternative practices in the light of the production of the common.

The course will start with asking the questions: Agriculture concerns each of us, yet we seem to be far from grasping this. How does this come about? In order to make sense of such a present situation of our existence we need to look at the mode of development that dominates us, i.e. modernization, capitalism, and globalization, together with the problems leading to ever deepening crises that make it urgent for us to rethink a whole series of things, and agriculture is definitely a central question we must confront. Thus we are looking at agriculture as a general question confronting us, with nature and the world as its context. We will also look at what the critical problems organized around agriculture call upon us to do.

h. CUS515N Special Topics in Cultural Studies :Community and Cultural Policy

This course introduces students to cultural policy as a practical domain in which government, private enterprise and communities interact to manage and develop culture understood as a collective resource. Using case studies to explain the work of cultural policy as a community-building strategy that may contribute to the building modern nation-states, we examine the factors affecting the development of the arts, the media and cultural education in contemporary societies. Special attention is put on the policy issues posed to cities and communities today by the complex forces of cultural globalization. Key issues may include regulation, censorship, access to cultural goods and decision-making processes; cultural consumption, identity politics and citizenship; cultural imperialism, nationalism, and region-formation; cultural planning, urban renewal and community participation; the cultural/creative industries, talents and education.

i. CUS515O Special Topics in Cultural Studies : Cinema, War and Social Movement

Carl von Clausewitz has famously said that “war is the continuation of politics.” In that sense, war and social movements are both manifestations of political and social conflict, and both are about resistance and domination. In this brief survey course, cinema will be seen in terms of its emergence in tandem with the development of modern warfare, while functioning both as state propaganda and as a tool for social and political analysis. Students will be exposed to cinematic representations ranging from the Algerian civil war to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, from 1989 Tiananmen to Selma, and from the Polish Solidarity uprising to Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement. Cinema and political reality are examined in their dialectical interplay.

Peer Assessment Form

Team: _____

Instruction: Evaluate your peer team members, on their participation in the course group work. Due on submission day 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.