

CUS512 Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation 文化再現與詮釋專題

Course Title	:	Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation 文化再現與詮釋專題
Course Code	:	CUS512
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours per week
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 takes the production of meaning and ideology as a fundamental issue in Cultural Studies. Through case studies, it examines how specific forms of representation help shape and reconstruct aspects of our social reality, our experience of the world, and indeed our view of others and of ourselves. Students will analyze the modes of cultural production involved, and attempt to understand how cultural practices generate, fix and deliver meaning for us in particular social contexts. The question of interpretation will be raised in relation to the generic formation of the "Text" at issue, so that we can approach the plurality of textual functions and effects in terms of the contextual issues involved.
Aims	:	1. To deepen students' understanding of representation as the basic critical concept in Cultural Studies by way of topics and cases selected

from a wide range of social and generic contexts;

2. To familiarize students with the critical scholarship needed for understanding aspects of social life through two fundamental categories in Cultural Studies – representation and interpretation.

Learning Outcomes	:	On completion of the course, students will able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. LO1 : outline a critical understanding of cultural studies concepts related to representation from different social and generic contexts;2. LO2 : discuss meaningful questions in the area of cultural representation and interpretation with clear and precise formulation;3. LO3: present alternative systems of thought in the area of cultural representation and interpretation, and recognize and assess, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences.
Indicative Content	:	Issues in the area of cultural representation and interpretation will be selected and discussed. Specific content may vary year from year.
Teaching Method	:	Lecture, seminar discussion, and students' presentation.
Measurement of Learning Outcomes	:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students demonstrate an understanding of cultural studies concepts that are related to representation and interpretation, through term project (60%); (LO1)2. Students demonstrate an ability to raise meaningful questions in cultural representation and interpretation, through class presentation (20%)/ class participation (20%); (LO2)3. Students demonstrate the ability to formulate alternative views and thoughts, as well as critically reflect on these views, through term project. (60%) (LO3)
Assessment	:	100% continuous assessment, such as class participation (20%), group presentation (20%) and a term project (60%).

The group presentation ranges from 30 to 45 minutes. Term project: Of approximate length of 7,000 characters in Chinese or 5,000 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 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 : **1) Class Participation (20%)**

Rubrics

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Participates actively and constructively all the time. Engages constructively with, all course material (assigned readings, issues, concepts). Provides insightful analyses, raises critical points, and advances and deepens group discussion.	Participates actively most of the time. Demonstrates a good understanding of, and engages constructively with course material. Frequently provides helpful points or asks questions that advance and deepen group discussion. Generally appreciates	Participates most of the time but sometimes requires prompting. Demonstrates a basic understanding of most of the course material and engages with it, though not always successfully. Sometimes makes positive contributions that advance group	Student does not attend tutorial. Or if student does attend, he or she demonstrates little or no understanding of course material, lacks engagement with it, or makes little or no effort to contribute to group discussion. Little or no engagement / participation in group discussion even with prompting.

Consistently appreciates others' contribution and engages with their ideas sensitively.	others' contribution and engages with their ideas sensitively.	discussion. Attempt to appreciate others' contribution and to engage with their ideas sensitively, with some success.	Shows no appreciation of others' knowledge and skills.
---	--	---	--

2) Group Presentation (20%)

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

5%

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
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.

15%

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Identifies and addresses clearly the main	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s).	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s).	Lacks an understanding of what the question requires.

question(s) Examines the question /issue/ problem from all important perspectives. Overall logic is clear. Presenter(s) engage the audience at all times.	Examines the question/issue/ problem from most of the important perspectives but not all relevant arguments and counter arguments are fully examined. Presenter(s) engage the audience most of the time.	Examines the question/ issue/ problem from some of the important perspectives. Presenter(s) engage the audience most of the time	No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Presentation characterized by serious inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Presenter(s) seem to make little attempt to engage the audience
--	---	---	---

3) Term project (60%)

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Offers a vision expressed in a completely unique way. Demonstrates critical thinking that challenges values or that transcends subject matter. Reveals knowledge that is correct and consistent with purpose of project.	Offers a vision expressed in a unique way. Demonstrates critical thinking. Reveals knowledge that is mostly correct and consistent with purpose of project.	Expresses a clear perspective. Attempts to reveal knowledge or provides partially correct knowledge that reflects purpose of project.	Expresses an unclear perspective. Reflects a lack of knowledge consistent with purpose of project

- 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.in.edu.hk/>.

Required Readings:

Varying from year to year

Recommended Readings:

Varying from year to year

Sample course content in the previous years includes

a. CUS512S Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation : The Cultural Politics of Chinese Music

The concept of music yue 樂 in dynastic China deviates from that of the West in that it has been strongly grounded in politics, or to be precise, it is directly related to the art of governance as well laid out in Chinese classics. Such an understanding sustains to the last century and continues to make impacts on present day “Chinese” music.

Music making in the Western way has started to be prevalent in Chinese churches and schools since late nineteenth century. Western music has gradually become an emblem of modernity and progress in the eyes of a majority of Chinese intellectuals. As a result, Western art and popular music became something to which the general Chinese population aspires. The kind of musical language Communist China inherits from Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe which once deterred the PRC from the West musically, inevitably leads to a desperate hunger for the relatively “newer” and more “exotic” tastes

from the US and Western Europe when China started its “reform and open” era in the 1980s. How we understand “Chinese” music in its cultural-political context in the 21st Century depends, to a great extent, on the degree of how we are able to relate present day “Chinese” music to its history.

Nevertheless, this is not a Chinese music history course per se as it is impossible to cover the entire history of Chinese music in one semester. The students do not have to be musically trained but they should be prepared to open up their ears and eyes to music and its related genres. The course aims to expose to the students some fundamental issues of Chinese music history from the perspectives of cultural politics. Examining a wide range of music works and historical events, this course tries to inspire the students to read into the deeper historical, social-cultural, as well as political meanings of “Chinese” music. It also tries to enhance the student’s sense of music history with respect to the intricate politics behind, within and beyond musical context.

b. CUS512T Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation : Film and the Global 1960s

This elective course takes the production of meaning and ideology as a fundamental issue in Cultural Studies. Through case studies, it examines how specific forms of representation help shape and reconstruct aspects of our social reality, our experience of the world, and indeed our view of others and of ourselves. Students will analyze the modes of cultural production involved, and attempt to understand how cultural practices generate, fix and deliver meaning for us in particular social contexts. The question of interpretation will be raised in relation to the generic formation of the “Text’ at issue, so that we can approach the plurality of textual functions and effects in terms of the contextual issues involved.

c. CUS512R Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation - Music and Popular Culture in Hong Kong

The course focuses on music and the “popular” culture of Hong Kong. It aims to develop students’ critical insight from a wide spectrum of perspectives. Taking a multi-disciplinary approach, the course incorporates concepts from literature, history, anthropology, sociology, ethnomusicology, musicology, cultural studies and politics to the study of music. In order to nurture students’ cultural sensitivity in their understanding of music, be it popular or traditional, the course is designed to provide a solid foundation in critical perspective instead of covering Hong Kong popular culture exhaustively. Students are strongly advised to be active in identifying update examples in their presentations and papers. Watching movies and reading books are absolutely necessary. Going to cinema, concerts and shows of all kinds are highly recommended. Suggestions on topics that one would like to be covered in the course are always welcome.

d. CUS512X Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation: Media, City and Citizen: Rethinking the Mediated Politics of Urbanisation

This course is designed to help students grasp core theories and concepts in media and urban studies. We explore the politics of media practices and urbanisation in Hong Kong and other global cities, and the two-way relationship between media and urban policies/politics in these highly urbanised landscapes. Students will acquire the analytical tools to analyze the mediated politics of urbanisation.

Urbanisation has created and conquered cities and mega-cities. Everyday life is deeply entangled with urban issues such as dislocation, placelessness, commodification of space and environmental destruction. Increasingly, political claims are articulated in and through urban spaces.

How do urban citizens of today make sense of the contested, complex and multi-layered urban landscape? On one hand, the media informs people's sense of place and articulates their spatial needs and imagination. On the other hand, the prevalence of media in our everyday life points towards the entanglement of media practices and the politics of urbanisation. While media practices are part and parcel of today's "messy urbanism", technology and social media have also democratised communication on an unprecedented scale.

This course focuses on the politics of urbanisation, media practices, the two-way relationship between these ubiquitous phenomena, and their interaction with everyday life. Topics covered include heritage conservation, public space, new town development and urban renewal.

e. CUS512Y Topics in Cultural Representation and Interpretation: Animals and Ecological Humanities

How does our modern living shape the animal kingdom?

How does the postmodern media construct our imaginary of ecology?

How does the wildlife sense human tensions with nature and environment?

Cultural studies and other disciplines in humanities have raising concern in nature and animal. One of the reasons certainly is related to the social concern of the deteriorating environment; and another reason is more about the linkages of cultural studies to the issues of minorities and other problems resulted from capitalism, mass production and urban development. Therefore, issues of animal right and abuse, environmental protection, factory farming, legislature and media portrayals of animals are the hot topics in the field; and the study of animal with the perspective of cultural studies and other humanity disciplines can explore the possibilities of an advanced human-animal relationship. This course is designed with an empathic concern of other-than-human animals. By exploring different issues of human-animals' relations, this course looks for a harmonious balance of nature and modern culture.