

## History 901: Cultural History/Cultural Studies

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### Course Description

This course explores the connections between the “cultural turn” in history (of the past 10-15 years) and cultural studies, broadly defined. We will examine different methodological foci in cultural history, including visual culture, sound culture, space and spatial analysis, textual and/or discursive analysis, etc. We'll also look at emerging foci of analysis in both fields, such as “empire” and “corporations/global capitalism”. We'll spend time thinking about the ever-vexing questions of “what is culture?” (and what isn't culture), as well as discussing the relationship between interdisciplinary cultural studies and historical analysis, methods and perspectives. This will be accomplished most weeks by examining a central reading in cultural history in the context of cultural studies readings that illuminate the some of the historiographic debates or traditions that underlie its innovations. A number of people have recently argued that we are at a moment of sea change in both history and cultural studies, and that new paradigms are emerging to address new questions. We'll assess the history of the field and try to anticipate what future shift might occur.

### Required Texts

The following books are on sale at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative at 426 W. Gilman Street. Turn right on Gilman from State when walking toward the capitol.

Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (1999)  
Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism* (2000)  
Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of US Imperialism* (2000)  
David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (2006)  
Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* (2004)  
Penny Von Eschen, *Sachmo Blows Up the World* (2006)  
Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays* (2004)  
Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes* (2007)  
Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space and Feminist Activism* (2007).  
Kathy M. Newman, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism 1935-1947* (2004.)  
Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (2004)

There is also a *Packet* of required readings on informal reserve in the Historical Society Reading Room, SE Corner. Packet contents are listed near the end of the syllabus.

### Course Requirements

1) Participation in Seminar Discussions (10%).

2) Context Readings (10%)

Students will sign up for two weeks in which they are *extra*-responsible for context readings. (Sometimes students will sign up for the entire week's context readings; sometimes the readings will be split between different students.) This responsibility entails two things. First, prepare a one-page single-spaced summary of the reading(s) and make 16 copies to bring to everyone in the class. This

summary should clearly state the main argument and points of the reading and, if possible, suggest links to the central reading of that week. In addition to the written format, you will briefly (no more than five minutes) present the summary to the seminar. Second, provide leadership in seminar discussion by posing questions and making linkages between central and context readings.

2) Historical and Historiographical Questions (5%):

Students will sign up for two weeks in which they will be responsible for writing two discussion questions for the class: one historical and one historiographical. These questions must be well crafted to prompt students to engage central themes, debates or methods in the scholarship for that week. Students who write questions should also take responsibility to facilitate quality discussion that week. (No one will write discussion questions for 9/18; 10/16; 11/13; 12/11.) For further information, see "Creating Historical and Historiographical Discussion Questions."

3) Thesis/Analysis Papers (60%) Six total. *Five* of these are three page, *maximum*, 12 point, double-spaced essays focused primarily on the week's central readings. Everyone will write weeks two and four (9/11; 9/25). For the remainder of the semester, everyone will sign up for 4 times to write. *One* of these is a five page paper that links the central readings with the context readings. NOTE: Neither the 3-page nor 5-page thesis/analysis papers may be written on 9/18; 10/16; 11/13; 12/11. In addition, you may *\*not\** write your five-page paper for a week in which you prepare a written summary of context readings for the class. For further information, see "Writing Thesis/Analyses Papers." Thesis/Analysis papers for each week are always due at the beginning of class. No late papers will be accepted

4) For class periods held on 9/18; 10/16; 11/13; 12/11 no one will write papers or discussion questions. Instead, *everyone* will write one paragraph in response to that week's reading that they post to the class listserve history901-1-f07@lists.wisc.edu by noon on Monday, the day before class. Paragraphs may pose a question, compare with another reading or discussion we've had, or present a thoughtful critique (positive or negative). Please be substantive-- do not simply tell us whether you liked the book or not or whether you found it well written. Everyone will be responsible for reading the paragraphs of all other class members before the seminar meeting. This aspect of the course will be counted within the participation grade.

5) Final Essay (15%):

This is an 8-10 page paper on a topic of your choice due at the end of the semester. Use this essay to explore a theoretical or methodological issue, read more widely in a subfield, or investigate a bounded set of primary sources. Papers are due by 5pm 12/18 in my box—5002 Humanities.

**Course Schedule:**

*Week 1 9/4 Introductions*

*Week 2 9/11 Defining America*

Central Reading:

Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (1999).

Context Reading:

Henry Nash Smith, "The Myth of the Garden and Turner's Frontier Hypothesis" from *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950).

Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies" *American Quarterly* 24 (Fall 1972):435-50.

*Week 3 9/18 What is Culture and How do we Study It?*

Central Reading:

William H. Sewell, Jr. "The Concept(s) of Culture" Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn* pp 35-61 (1999).

Raymond Williams, "The Analysis of Culture" *The Long Revolution* pp. 57-70. (1961).

Dick Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony," *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979).

George Lipsitz, "Learning from New Orleans: The Social Warrant of Hostile Privatism and Competitive Consumer Citizenship" *Cultural Anthropology* 21:3 (2006) pp 451-68.

NOTE: If possible, please attend George Lipsitz' lecture, "Why American Studies Matters: Speaking Truth to Power in the Midnight Hour," Th 9/20 3:30 p.m. in 6191 H.C. White.

*Week 4 9/25 The Twentieth-Century City*

Central Reading:

Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration and Black Urban Life* (2007)

Context Reading:

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Hanna Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* pp. 217-251. (1936)

Vanessa Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians" *American Historical Review* 106:5 (Dec 2001): 1721-1743

*Week 5 10/2 Consumerism, Sound Culture*

Central Reading:

Kathy Newman, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism 1935-1947* (2004.)

Context Reading:

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944)

Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular" (1981)

*Week 6 10/9 Empire*

Central Reading:

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism* (2000)

Context Reading:

Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone With America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture" Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. (1993).

*Week 7 10/16 Empire and Visual Culture*

Central Reading:

Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of US Imperialism* (2000)

Context Reading:

Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" from *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. (1998).

Elsbeth Brown, "Reading the Visual Record" in Ardis Cameron ed., *Looking for America: The Visual Production of Nation and People* (2005).

*Week 8 10/23 Visual Culture and the Public Sphere*

Central Reading:

Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago 2007) chapters 1,2,3,5,9.

Context Reading:

Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, "What is Visual Culture?" Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall eds., *Visual Culture: The Reader*. (1999)

Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (1992).

*Week 9 10/30 Whiteness and Immigration*

Central Reading:

David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (2006)

Context: E.P. Thompson, "Introduction," *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966)  
Herbert Gutman, "Introduction," *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (1976).  
Joan Scott, "Women in The Making of the English Working Class" in *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988).

*Week 10 11/6 Empire and the Politics of Sound*

Central Reading:

Penny Von Eschen, *Sachmo Blows Up the World* (2006)

Context Reading:

Paul Gilroy, "'Jewels Brought From Bondage': Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity" from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1981).

Ron Radano, "Hot Fantasies: American Modernism and the Idea of Black Rhythm" Ron Radano and Philip V. Bohlman eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination*. (2000).

*Week 11 11/13 Empire and Tourism*

Central Reading:

Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays* (2004)

Context Reading:

James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late Twentieth Century* (1997; essay orig. 1990)

*Week 12 11/20 Business Culture*

Central Reading:

Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection* (2004)

Context Reading:

James Livingston, "Corporations and Cultural Studies," *Social Text* 44 (Autumn-Winter, 1995), 61-68.

Christopher Newfield, "Corporation" in Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (forthcoming Fall, 2007).

Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling" from *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

*Week 13 11/27 Space*

Central Reading:

Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* (2004)

Context Reading:

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference" *Cultural Anthropology* 7:1 (Feb 1992): 6-23.

*Week 14 12/4 Sexuality and Space*

Central Reading:

Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space...*(2007).

Context Reading:

Martha Vicinus, "Lesbian History: All Theory and No Facts or All Facts and No Theory," *Radical History Review* 60(1994): 57-75.

Michael Warner, "Introduction," *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (1993).

*Week 15 12/11 The Future of Cultural History?*

Central Readings:

Michael Millner, "Post Post-Identity" *American Quarterly* 57:2 (June 2005) pp. 541-554

Daniel Wickberg, "Heterosexual White Male: Some Recent Inversions in American Cultural History," *Journal of American History* (June 2005): 136-157.

James W. Cook and Lawrence Glickman, "Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural

History," in James W. Cook, Lawrence Glickman, and Michael O'Malley, eds., *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History* (expected Fall, 2008).

PACKET CONTENTS:

- Henry Nash Smith, "The Myth of the Garden and Turner's Frontier Hypothesis" from *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950).
- Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies" *American Quarterly* 24 (Fall 1972): 435-50
- William H. Sewell, Jr. "The Concept(s) of Culture" Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn* pp 35-61 (1999).
- Raymond Williams, "The Analysis of Culture" *The Long Revolution* pp. 57-70. (1961).
- Dick Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony," *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979).
- George Lipsitz, "Learning from New Orleans: The Social Warrant of Hostile Privatism and Competitive Consumer Citizenship" *Cultural Anthropology* 21:3 (2006) pp 451-68.
- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Hanna Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* pp. 217-251. (1936)
- Vanessa Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians" *American Historical Review* 106:5 (Dec 2001): 1721-1743.
- Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944)
- Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular" (1981)
- Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone With America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture" Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. (1993).
- Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" from *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. (1998).
- Elsbeth Brown, "Reading the Visual Record" in Ardis Cameron ed., *Looking for America: The Visual Production of Nation and People* (2005).
- Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago 2007) chapters 1,2,3,5,9.
- Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, "What is Visual Culture?" Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall eds., *Visual Culture: The Reader*. (1999)
- Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (1992).
- E.P. Thompson, "Introduction," *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966)
- Herbert Gutman, "Introduction," *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (1976)
- Joan Scott, "Women in The Making of the English Working Class" in *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988).
- Paul Gilroy, "'Jewels Brought From Bondage': Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity" from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1981).
- Ron Radano, "Hot Fantasies: American Modernism and the Idea of Black Rhythm" Ron Radano and Philip V. Bohlman eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination*. (2000).
- James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late 20th Century* (essay 1990)
- James Livingston, "Corporations and Cultural Studies," *Social Text* 44 (Autumn-Winter, 1995), 61-68.
- Christopher Newfield, "Corporation" in Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (forthcoming Fall, 2007).
- Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling" from *Marxism and Literature* (1977).
- Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference" *Cultural Anthropology* 7:1 (Feb 1992): 6-23.
- Martha Vicinus, "Lesbian History: All Theory and No Facts or All Facts and No Theory," *Radical History Review* 60(1994): 57-75.
- Michael Warner, "Introduction," *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (1993).
- Michael Millner, "Post Post-Identity" *American Quarterly* 57:2 (June 2005) pp. 541-554
- Daniel Wickberg, "Heterosexual White Male: Some Recent Inversions in American Cultural History," *Journal of American History* (June 2005): 136-157.
- James W. Cook and Lawrence Glickman, "Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History," in James W. Cook, Lawrence Glickman, and Michael O'Malley, eds., *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History* (expected F 2008).

### Writing Thesis/Analysis Papers

Thesis/analysis papers may not exceed three pages, typed, double spaced, 12 pt.

As their name indicates, thesis/analysis papers have two parts. First, write the thesis of the main book or article in your own words, without using quotations from the book. *This should take up no more than 1/2 of the first page of your paper.* Being specific, complete and succinct in stating the thesis or main argument of the work is the goal of this part of the assignment.

Second, write an analysis of the book and/or articles. Since you have already stated the thesis of the central piece, there is *no reason for further summary*. Rather, here YOU critically engage the works and tell me your analysis of it/them. You do not need to "cover" each reading or part of the reading but should focus on what most interests you. Your analysis can take a number of forms. You may ask questions about and discuss the author's purpose or guiding research questions, method, use of sources, particular innovations, and problems or shortcomings. In doing so, you may critically consider historical phenomenon raised by the work. It is often useful to ask yourself what this work contributes to historical studies, and what problems remain. Make sure that this part of the paper is analysis (defined as your thoughts/opinions + reasoning/evidence), not summary. (Another useful definition of "analysis" likens it to taking apart a clock to reveal its mechanisms and explain how it works. You might think of "taking apart" a book's argument to reveal its components and their functions. Then tell me what you think about this and why.)

### Creating Historical and Historiographical Discussion Questions

A crucial part of becoming skilled at critical thinking and analysis is learning to ask good questions. Because of this, I will ask you to write TWO questions for two different weeks of the semester (sign up the first week). When you write questions, you should come to class early to put them up on the board. Discussion will begin with question writers explaining what motivated their questions. Question writers should also take responsibility for facilitating discussion that week by being ready with follow-up questions and by relating student comments to each other.

The two questions: The purposes of the questions are to direct the class to delve into the central issues and concerns in the reading for that week. They will be graded by how well they do so. One question will engage the **historical** material presented by the author. For example, for Eric Foner's *A Short History of Reconstruction*, the historical question will engage some aspect of Reconstruction that he talks about (e.g. questions about the effects of Black political participation). The other question will engage **historiographical** concerns, that is, it will engage not the history itself per se, but how the history was crafted and written. Again, using Foner's book as an example, historiographical questions will engage some aspect of how Foner shaped his book, analyzed his sources or intervened in the established historical debates about Reconstruction, African American history or other fields (e.g. questions about the difference between Foner and the Dunning School, or the place of African Americans in his study, or how he integrates considerations of culture with considerations of politics, or the implications of his study for future studies of reconstruction, etc.).

Some tips: Questions that begin with "who" "what" "where" and "when" can often be answered with specific information. For this reason, they often do not make good discussion questions. Questions that begin with "how" or "why" ask for explanations. They are usually the analytical questions and tend to make for better discussion questions. If you have identified an issue that interests you but do not have a question, try asking "how" and "why" about it and see what happens.

Questions that identify controversies or ambiguities or paradoxes tend to work well.

Make sure that you do not ask a "more information" question that can only be answered with knowledge outside of that in class readings. Perhaps someone will have that information, but it will not make for a good discussion.