While cultural studies is interdisciplinary, it has always been a key component of Communication Studies. This approach broadly focuses on the everyday intersections of social relations, cultural practices, and the construction of meaning. Culture is primarily a site of enjoyment and pleasure. But cultural practices also normalize and represent the world around us, in turn reproducing uneven relations of class, gender, race, sexuality, and so on. This course takes seriously student’s everyday cultural practices, from watching *The O.C.* to downloading ring tones, to visiting MySpace. It is not a question of what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ but of understanding the complex relations therein which allow us to form meaning and our identities. This course will introduce foundational concepts and approaches to culture that will enable critical research in communication studies. We will begin by asking a simple question: what is culture and how does it relate to communication? We will then consider a number of key approaches to cultural studies and communication. For example, we will examine the relationship between producers and consumers through the shifting lenses of the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture. We will also consider the concept of ‘cultural capital’ to better understand the relationship between identity and what is ‘cool’. We will look at the concept of hegemony to better understand the political and economic dimensions of culture in relation to dominant power formations. We will critically unpack the process by which meaning is constructed through an introduction to semiotics, structuralism and poststructuralism. Finally, we will apply our new ‘theoretical toolkit’ to two case studies.

**ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three short papers (2 pages each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Based on readings and key concepts; topics provided on course blog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper/project (6 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Topics to be provided on course blog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEXTS**

*John Hartley. Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts,*
London: Routledge, 2002
Custom Courseware
Both books will be available at the McMaster Titles bookstore.
Week 1: Course Introduction  
8 Sept

Readings: None

Week 2: What is Culture?  
11, 13, 15 Sept

Readings:

Judy Giles and Tim Middleton. ‘What is Culture’, Studying Culture: A Practical Introduction pp. 9-29

Stuart Hall. ‘The Centrality of Culture: Notes on the Cultural Revolutions of Our Time’, Media, Cultural Regulations, pp. 220-236

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Culture
- Modern/Modernism/Modernity
- Popular/Popular Culture

Week 3: Culture and Meaning: Semiotics and Structuralism  
18, 20, 22 Sept

Readings:


Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Diachronic
- Referent
- Semiotics
- Sign
- Signification
- Structuralism
- Synchronic
Week 4: Frankfurt School—Culture Industry
25, 27, 29 Sept

Readings:

Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer. ‘Selections form “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”’, in Keith Negus, Production of Culture/Cultures of Production pp. 105-111

Keith Negus. ‘The Culture Industry’ Production of Culture/Cultures of Production pp. 70-83

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
• Class
• Frankfurt School

First short paper due 29 Sept

Week 5: Cultural Studies/Communication Studies
2, 4, 6 Oct

Readings:


Michele Martin and Graham Knight. ‘The Canadian School of Communication Model’, Communication and Mass Media: Culture, Domination, and Opposition, pp. 39-45

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
• Communication
• Cultural Studies
Week 6: Power and Culture: Hegemony and Ideology  
11, 13 Oct

Readings:


Michele Martin and Graham Knight. ‘Ideology, Culture and Opposition in Mass Media’, Communication and Mass Media: Culture, Domination, and Opposition, pp. 66-82

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
• Bias
• Hegemony
• Ideology
• Objectivity

Week 7: Discourse, Power, and the Subject  
16, 18, 20 Oct

Readings:


Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
• Discourse
• Postmodern/Postmodernism/Postmodernity
• Power
• Subjectivity

Second short paper due 20 Oct

Week 8: Representation: Race, Gender and Sexuality  
23, 25, 27 Oct

Readings:


Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Gender
- Race
- Representation

**Week 9: Culture, Markets and Globalization**
30 Oct, 1, 3 Nov

Readings:

Don Slater and Fran Tonkiss, ‘Commerce and Culture’, Market Society, pp. 149-173


Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Anti-globalisation
- Consumer Sovereignty
- Globalisation
- World Trade Organization

**Week 10: The Audience and the Construction of Meaning**
6, 8, 10 Nov

Readings:

Janice Radway, ‘Reading “Reading the Romance”’ The Audience Studies Reader, ed. Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn, pp. 219-225.


Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Audiences
- Polysemy/Polysemic
- Subculture

Third short paper due 8 Nov
Week 11: Cultural Reproduction
13, 15, 18 Nov

Readings:


Chris Jenks. ‘Bourdieu and Cultural Reproduction’, Culture: Key Ideas, pp. 116-117; 128-133

The Merchants of Cool (in class video)

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Bricolage
- Cultural Capital
- Customisation
- Lifestyle

Week 12: Case Study1: Pirates in Popular Culture—Pirates of the Caribbean
20, 22, 24 Nov

Readings:

Maximilian C. Forte, ‘Boycott Disney, Pirates of the Caribbean’

Grant McCracken, ‘Johnny Depp and the dead men’s chest called Hollywood’, This Blog Sits at the Intersection of Anthropology and Economics,
http://www.cultureby.com/trilogy/2006/07/it_is_now_clear.html

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film/scopearchive/filmrev/filmreviews_nov04.htm

Privateering (1899 Encyclopaedia entry)
http://www.econlib.org/LIBRARY/YPDBooks/Lalor/l1Cy862.html

Piracy (1899 Encyclopedia entry)
http://www.econlib.org/library/YPDBooks/Lalor/l1Cy831.html#V.3,%20Entry%2061,%20PIRACY
Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age: A Video Interview with Marcus Rediker (in class video)

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Content Industries
- Deregulation

**Week 13: Case Study 2: Pirates in Cultural Practices—The Case of the Swedish Bit Torrent Server ‘Pirate Bay’**
27, 29, 31 Nov

Readings:

‘How The Pirate Bay Raid Changed Sweden’
http://torrentfreak.com/how-the-piratebay-raid-changed-sweden/

Pirate Party International


‘How the RIAA Sues People’
http://info.riaalawsuits.us/howriaa.htm

Key Concepts from Communication, Cultural and Media Studies to read:
- Copyright
- Intellectual Property (pirates)
- Network Society
- Online Music Distribution

**Term paper/project due 27 November**

**Week 14 (4 Dec)**
Course Summary
Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: ?Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty?), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g. style guide) 2. Improper collaboration in group work on assignments unless otherwise stated. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.