

Due Date: Dec 12
Length: 7 pages, 12 pt, double-spaced

Throughout this course, we have been reading about several different historical case studies that illustrate the myriad ways that “culture” has been a means by which people have challenged social and racial segregation, asserted class, gender, sexual, and racial identity, and defied social norms. For this paper, you will be exploring these themes by researching a “case study” of your own choosing. Your case study should involve a countercultural practice or creative production that has challenged, redefined, or helped create new categories of social identities. What do I mean by “countercultural practice,” “creative production,” or “social identity”? Below is a list of just a few broad categories to get you thinking.

Social Identity	Practice/Production
Race	Musical genres, Songs, Concerts
Gender	Comedy, Stand-Up, Jokes
Class	Style, Dress, Dance
Sexuality	Slang, Transgressive Speech
Age	Poems, Memes

While your first paper dealt with a specific event, cultural object, or practice that embodied a form of “cultural resistance,” this paper will provide you with the opportunity to research and investigate an aspect of counterculture in much greater depth. Choosing a topic you’re interested in is the first challenge of this assignment. Once you choose the topic, you will have to narrow down and find a question you want to pursue about this topic. Say you’re interested in the development of hip-hop in the Bronx in the ‘70s. You should start by reading various chronicles about hip-hop, and begin to narrow down what element of hip-hop culture you want to investigate as an example of defining racial and class identity: Is it graffiti? Lyrics? The new use of old technologies? Perhaps you’re interested in a figure instead of a broad genre, and are intrigued by the actress and transgender activist Laverne Cox. You might begin to research the history of transgender and LGBT activism in the US, and consider how Cox’s social identity and performances constitute an example of “disidentification” as Jose Muñoz describes it. There are countless possibilities, and think broadly. You might write about something that occurred in the distant past (like the ‘60s counterculture), or you might want to look at very contemporary phenomena like socially-conscious gaming or hashtag activism. This part is totally up to you.

This research project is broken up into five component parts, with the final paper due on December 12. Each of the component assignments are ways for you to develop the paper as we go, and they will also give you a chance to get critical feedback as you continue with the project.

Topic Statement (Due: Nov 7, 5pm) - 2%

- Email the professor with one paragraph explaining what you would like to research. It is okay, during this stage, to present various options you might like to pursue to receive feedback, but in each case, you must explain what about that particular topic interests you (in other words, don't just send me a one-liner that says you're "writing a paper about Jimi Hendrix.")

Précis (Due Nov 12) – 5%

- One-paragraph assignment, which presents a more elaborated version of the "topic" assignment. The précis should begin to map out the specific questions that you want to understand about your topic, and begin to formulate an argument about the topic. This précis should also indicate that you have done some research on the topic, and are basing your research questions on knowledge rather than just hunches.

Annotated Bibliography (Due: Nov 19) – 24%

- This assignment involves putting together a bibliography of secondary materials that help you do research on your topic. Under each bibliographic entry, you should have a short paragraph (no less than three sentences) that provides a summary of the text. Your bibliography should include at least 7 sources.

Secondary materials include articles, chapters, and other writing that provides commentary on your subject, as opposed to primary materials which are the source material. (For instance, if I was writing a paper about Richard Pryor, a DVD of his stand-up specials would be considered a primary text, whereas an essay about Pryor or about African-Americans in comedy by a journalist or academic would be a secondary text.)

Outline and 4-page Draft (Nov 26) – 24%

- For this assignment, you will be providing an outline of the entire paper as well as a draft, which includes four full pages of prose. This is an opportunity for me to provide one last round of critical feedback as you develop your final paper.

Final Draft (Dec 12) – 45%

- Submit the final draft at the latest by Dec 12 in the Dropbox portion of Ctools. Please name the word doc Yourlastname_FinalPaper.doc. If you do not have Word, upload it as a PDF.