

CUL 610: INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MANOA - FALL 2017

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nandita Sharma

E-MAIL: nsharma@hawaii.edu

OFFICE: Saunders 205

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 2:15-3:15PM or by appointment

OFFICE TEL.: 956-8438

CLASS SCHEDULE: Wednesdays 3:30 – 6:00 PM

Location: SAKAM B101

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"Culture" is one of the most elusive concepts for understanding social life. It is often (mis)used to identify something that is said to be external or outside of power. Something that "just *is*," akin to the air we breathe. Cultural Studies has revolutionized such understandings of culture by emphasizing that "culture" is not a singular, fixed, static, natural or eternal "way of life" but that, instead, culture is effected and reshaped by people's participation in it. That is: culture is *socially produced* and culture is always *political*. At the same time, Cultural Studies also posits that "culture" is not a possession of supposedly distinct, separate - and often separated – people. Culture is not something that can be automatically written onto or read off of our bodies or off the land we live on. Instead, all of us are active participants in the shared culture(s) we inhabit; although we do not all have the same power within it or the same power to affect it. Moreover, we are not all identified as "belonging" to the cultures we are an integral part of. Thus, a Cultural Studies approach regards culture not only as a socially produced way of life but also as a key aspect of political and social control. At the same time, Cultural Studies scholarship also points to culture as the location of political criticism and action. Thus, culture is fluid and always in flux. In short, Cultural Studies seeks to understand how the *meaning* we give to our everyday social practices – and to our sense of self within these practices - is generated, disseminated and contested from within interconnected social, political and economic relations of power.

This course provides students with an understanding of the key terms, concepts, analytical techniques, and interpretive strategies commonly employed by Cultural Studies scholars. We focus our investigation on how cultural processes, knowledge, and artefacts have been historically produced, continuously reinforced, reinscribed and resisted.

REQUIRED READINGS:

ES Edward Said, 1993, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books.

MR Marcus Rediker, 2008, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, NYC: Penguin.

ST et al. Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, 2013 (35th Anniversary Edition), *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, NYC: Palgrave Macmillan.

MA Michelle Alexander, 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, New York: New Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation (preparation and level of active engagement)	10%
Discussion Questions (each class)	20%
Short Papers on Readings (2 in term = 15% each)	30%
Final Research Paper (22-25 pp)	40%

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Your attendance is expected. Attendance is usually a good indicator of your participation in this course (i.e. interest, commitment and enthusiasm) and it accounts for 10% of your grade. Just as importantly, you are expected to come *fully prepared* for each class by having completed all of your assigned readings and by having developed questions and comments that will allow you to be *actively* engaged in class discussions.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS: All assignments must be submitted on the day they are due. A late paper will incur a penalty of 10% off the grade for each day past the due date.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

Students will develop their critical learning skills by: examining the historical origins of key ideas, concepts and categories shaping human experience today; examining the relations or ruling that organize dominant ideas, concepts and categories and; examining how people have variously contested these ideas, concepts and categories. Students will also develop their reading, writing and oral presentation skills in order to become clear thinkers and articulate communicators of theoretically informed empirical research.