

## Cultural Studies and Cultural Production: Knowledge Sensed

### Otherwise

ETHN 241 (W 2011) UCSD  
T: 2-4:50 SSB 253  
Department of Ethnic Studies

**Professor Roshanak Kheshti**

Office Location & Hours:  
SSB 231, W: 1-3; TH: 1-2

### **Introduction**

Cultural Studies formed gradually through the merging of New Left and anti-racist organizing and scholarship. It's coincidence with post-colonial nation-building projects and diasporic community formations as well as the post-modernization of popular forms like music and art is not to be overlooked. For it is this coincidence, this emerging from and forming by the same historical processes, that informs cultural studies methodologies. Thus, nation, television, cinema, music and racism—themes that characterize cultural studies scholarship—should not be understood simply as objects or archives but also as the forms through which thinking takes place.

As an inter-disciplinary reading and interpretive practice, Cultural Studies employs any and all methodological tools that fit the job. Though historically rooted in literary analysis and sociology, contemporary Cultural Studies projects run the methodological gamut. One way of understanding Cultural Studies scholarship is to imagine works as choreographies between the scholar, the medium/object, the historical moment of writing and the analytical tools of analysis. Rather than being pre-determined at the moment of a project's hypothesis, there is often a dynamic, improvised unraveling, which comprises the dance or the final, written (or sounded or imaged) product. It is for this reason that we will be studying a host of quite varied texts that can be described as cultural studies, reading for the symbiosis between site, scholar and analysis. As we would for any class, we will be reading the text holistically but will also be paying particular attention to the interpretive methods employed, innovated and produced by the text.

### **Coursework**

#### 1 Response Blogs:

If you don't already have one, begin by creating a blog at [blogger.com](http://blogger.com) or any site of your choosing and practice with blog entries during the break. Each student will produce one blog entry (350-500 words) by 2:00pm beginning Monday, January 10, 2011 and on subsequent Mondays before each class meeting synthesizing the readings, bringing them into conversation with each other and/or with the student's own work. Response papers can also offer readings influenced by the articles/books read for class that day. Your reflection blog should extract and examine the interpretive methods employed in each week's readings. Every effort should be made to tie readings together under the interpretive theme of

your choosing. Each student is also responsible for commenting on a classmate's blog before class (a different one each week; you will have 24 hours to do so). You will be evaluated for your blog entries and your responses. Feel free to publicly publicize your blog.

#### II Presentations:

Each student is responsible for presenting and facilitating discussion during one class meeting. Presentations are first and foremost **close-readings of the text**. Presentations should facilitate discussion and offer interpretations of the text(s), preferably bringing ideas into conversation across class meetings. In keeping with the course theme on cultural studies students can incorporate texts, archives and practices (videos, images, music, sculpture, fashion, dance, etc.) into their presentations. Objects might reflect, complicate, interpret or interrogate the ideas raised in the reading ideally putting the object into conversation with the reading.

#### III Papers:

Each student will produce one 12-16-page paper employing a methodology or interpretive practice exemplified by a text from the syllabus. You must identify an object/text/event that will function as a case study.

#### **Books for Purchase**

*Fantasy Production* Neferti Tadiar

*In the Break* Fred Moten

*Culture, Media, Language* Stuart Hall, et. al.

*Question of Method in Cultural Studies* Mimi White and James Schwoch

*Witch's Flight* Kara Keeling

#### **Books for Reference**

*Life and Times of Cultural Studies* ebrary book Richard E. Lee for reference

#### **Visual Texts**

*Cornered* Adrian Piper

*Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* Trinh Minh Ha

*Set it Off* Gary Gray

*Representation and the Media* Sutt Jhally

#### **Audio Texts**

TBD

#### **Web Texts**

<http://www.adrianpiper.com/index.html>

<http://www.almalopez.net/>

Sharon Daniel on vectors <http://vectors.usc.edu/issues/4/publicsecrets/>

<http://www.socialtextjournal.org/periscope/queer-suicide-a-teach-in/>

## Reading Schedule

**Week 1** January 4, 2010: Introduction to Cultural Studies Methods I

- Introduction, Part I, Part II in *Culture, Media, Language*
- "Introduction" & Ch. 4 "Read Thy Self" in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch

**Week 2** January 11, 2010 Introduction to Cultural Studies Methods II

- Part III, Part IV in *Culture, Media, Language*
- Micaela Di Leonardo Ch. 8 "Mixed and Rigorous Cultural Studies Methodology—An Oxymoron?" in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch
- Walter Benjamin "The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*

Presentations:

**Week 3** January 18, 2010 Historical Cultural Studies

- "Introduction," Ch. 4 *Love and Theft* Eric Lott
- Tim Anderson Ch. 11 "For the Record" in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch
- Mark M. Smith "Introduction" and Ch. 6 "Listening to Bondage" in *Listening to Nineteenth Century America*

Presentations:

**Week 4** January 25, 2010 Reading Representations of the Other

- Stuart Hall "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" and "The work of Representation" in *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, Stuart Hall, ed.
- Roshanak Kheshti "Musical Miscegenation and the Logic of Rock and Roll" *American Quarterly* 60 (4): 1037.
- Freya Jarman-Ivans "Queer(ing) Masculinities in Heteroexist Rap Music" in *Queering the Popular Pitch* Sheila Whitely ed.
- Recommended: Gini Gorlinski "Engagement Through Alienation" in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch

Presentations:

**Week 5** February 1, 2010 The Poetics of Sonic Cultural Production

- Fred Moten *In the Break* "Resistance of the Object," Ch. 2 "In the Break" and "Resistance of the Object"

Presentations:

**Week 6** February 8, 2010 Black Popular Culture

- Gina Dent "Black Pleasure, Black Joy" in *Black Popular Culture*, Gina Dent ed.

- Stuart Hall “What is this Black in Black Popular Culture” in *Black Popular Culture*, Gina Dent ed.
- “Hearing Sonic Afro-Modernity” in *Phonographies* Alexander G. Weheliye
- John Caldwell “Cultural Studies of Media Production” in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch

Presentations:

**Week 7** February 15, 2010 Synesthetic Reading Practices

- *Visceral Cosmopolitanism* Mica Nava Part I & V
- Mark M. Smith “Listening to Make Sense” in *How Race is Made* Mark M. Smith
- Grace M. Cho “Voices from the *Teum*” in *The Affective Turn* Patricia Clough ed.
- Anna McCarthy “From the Ordinary to the Concrete” in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch

Presentations:

**Week 8** February 22, 2010 Methodological Mash-ups: Fantasy & Desire I

- Neferti Tadiar “Introduction” and Part I in *Fantasy Production*

Presentations:

**Week 9** March 1, 2010 Methodological Mash-ups: Fantasy & Desire II

- Neferti Tadiar Part II and “Conclusion” in *Fantasy Production*

Presentations:

**Week 10** March 8, 2010 Now what?

- Jose Munoz “Introduction” *Feeling Utopia* Jose Esteban Munoz
- Kara Keeling *The Witches Flight* “Introduction”, Ch. 1, 6
- Joke Hermes “Feminism and the Politics of Method” in *Questions of Methods in Cultural Studies* White & Schwoch
- Sharon Daniel on vectors

<http://vectors.usc.edu/issues/4/publicsecrets/>

Presentations:

**Week 11**

- Final Papers Due by 2pm Tuesday March 15, 2010