

Communication 206: Communication and Culture

Fall 2016

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 pm – 1:50 pm

ANN L105A

Professor Robeson Taj Frazier

Office Hours: Tuesday(s) 2-4 or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to **Cultural Studies**, an interdisciplinary area of critical analysis, ideas, concepts, and research that is essential to the academic discipline of **Communication**. Communication(s) refers to the various practices and technologies we use to convey and share information and feelings, and to connect people, places, ideas, things and products. Culture, however, is a more complex and elastic concept, its definition more difficult to establish firmly. To some degree, it denotes both the history and legacies of such systems of communication, and even more systems of meaning making. But it also indicates how such systems of information, communication, and meaning are negotiated, articulated, constrained, and transformed within a society. Culture consequently describes the totality of all communication practices, terms, and systems of information and meaning. It signifies what people actually “**do**” (their thinking and practices of social life and meaning-making), as well as the “**social context**” (the rules, conditions, and conventions that structure, influence, and demarcate their activity) where these practices and processes are shaped and enacted.

In this class we will explore the above ideas, giving close attention to the relationship between **culture** and **power** (the organization, management, regulation, domination, and contestation of social life) – a relationship that scholars describe and categorize through the idiom “**the politics of culture.**”

At the start of the course we will commit ourselves to learning, discussing, and situating within history and contemporary times various concepts, theories, models and paradigms relating to communication and culture. Some of our attention will go to considering several paradigms/schools of thought and critique on culture – Marxism, culturalism, postcolonialism, decolonial thought, critical race theory, feminism, the Frankfurt School of Marxism, and postmodernism. Mainly, we will interrogate these paradigms’ general approaches, key concepts, and overarching questions and interventions.

We will also explore distinct units/subfields of study—these include gender, race, sexuality, subculture, movements of resistance, mass culture, globalization, and others. And we will pay particular attention to how notions of culture and cultural study have changed over time. We will examine how the legacies of thinking and talking about culture influence contemporary debates.

But most importantly, we will interrogate and identify how the theories and concepts learned throughout the course tie into our lives and the lives of others. Thus, our personal and collective experiences, and, even more, the historical and cultural forces that shape these experiences, will be a priority. You will be called upon to situate the theories and concepts learned in class and readings in relation to your lives and your experiences, and to identify and construct new categories, concepts, and modes of analysis that best resonate with the challenges, realities and phenomena of that we and others encounter on a daily basis.

In the end, this class's purpose is to strengthen and nuance your understanding of the historical and cultural moment in which we live, and increase your confidence and ability to critically think, talk, write, and communicate this understanding in a manner that conveys rigor, openness, honesty, and compassion.

Required Texts for the Course

- Stephen Duncombe, ed. *Cultural Resistance Reader*. New York: Verso, 2002 (available at the bookstore)
- Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983. (available at the bookstore)
- Jeff Chang, *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014. (available at the bookstore)
- Naomi Klein, *No Logo*. New York: Picador, 2000. (available at the bookstore)
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016. (available at the bookstore)
- Other Readings on Blackboard

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend class and section regularly, to contribute to class discussions and section discussions, and to do weekly reading. Attendance in lecture is important: there is significant material covered in lecture that is not in the reading and you cannot pass the course if you do not attend most of the lectures. In addition, there will be frequent screenings in lecture for which you will be responsible. There are several writing assignments for this class, and because the lectures, discussions, reading assignments and course assignments are all vitally linked, it is critical that you keep up with the schedule.

Students who miss more than **three lectures and/or two section discussions** will have their grades reduced and risk failing the course.

The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:

Weekly Reading Response Posts: 40%

Midterm: 20%

Final Assignment: 25%

Section grade (not based solely on attendance): 15%

Weekly Reading Posts: Every week from weeks 2-15 you are required to submit a reading response online at the course Tumblr page. These response posts are designed to have you think deeply about the issues and arguments about culture and power put forth in the readings, and to additionally situate these arguments and ideas in conversation with your own experiences and insights. While these response posts will call on you to analyze

readings, your job is not to simply summarize the readings or regurgitate ideas put forth by Prof. Frazier in lecture or your discussion instructors in discussion section; instead these posts serve as an opportunity for you to think about cultural practices that have some meaning to you within the context of the course readings. **Specific details about the response posts will be given to you via email and in class by the second week of class.** It is also important that all posts be checked for grammar and spelling, with proper citation practices.

Midterm Examination: There will be a midterm assignment, tentatively scheduled to be due on Friday, October 14th. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. It will cover the main themes, debates, and theories covered up to that point. More information about the midterm will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard.

Final Assignment: There will be a final assignment, tentatively scheduled to be due on Friday, December 12th. This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. It will cover the main themes, debates, and theories covered up to that point. More information about the midterm will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard.

Section Assignments: The 15% section grade will be determined by participation and section assignments. TAs will distribute the section assignments in class.

Annenberg School for Communication Academic Integrity Policy:

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed as a major.

In addition to the formal academic integrity policy, our pedagogical policy is based on mutual respect; all students are encouraged to use the classroom as a space in which to speak and to voice their opinions. Our expectation is that you will respect not only the professors but also your fellow classmates when they are participating in discussion.

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg [Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that **use of computer in the classroom is a privilege**. You may use a computer in the classroom ONLY for taking notes or for class presentations. If you abuse this privilege by checking email or going on the Internet, updating Facebook profiles, IM-ing friends, or playing solitaire, you will be marked as absent for that class period. All other electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, etc.) must be turned off and put away during class time. If this kind of activity gets to be a problem, laptop computers will not be allowed in the classroom.

Plagiarism

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the

obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators. In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Sexual Assault Resource Center

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

Schedule of Classes, Topics & Readings

HOW DID WE GET HERE? THE CHARACTER OF RACIAL CAPITALISM

Week One: Culture, Ideology and Racial Capitalism

Tuesday, Aug. 23

- ❖ Stephen Duncombe, "Introduction" from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 1-9] (also on Blackboard)
- ❖ Raymond Williams, "Culture" from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 35-41] (also on Blackboard)

Thursday, Aug. 25

- ❖ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, from “The German Ideology,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 41-49]
- ❖ Meyer Weinberg, “Introduction to *A Short History of American Capitalism.*” (Blackboard)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Raymond Williams, “The Analysis of Culture.” (Blackboard)

SOUNDTRACK

- The Dils, “Class War.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnE97BwPeTI>

Week Two: Labor, Class, Race, Capital, and Ideology

Tuesday, Aug. 30

- ❖ Robinson, *Black Marxism* (Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2)

Thursday, Sept. 1

- ❖ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” (Blackboard)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Christopher Hill, “‘Levellers and True Levellers’ from *The World Turned Upside Down*” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 17-34]
- ❖ C.L.R. James, “From *Beyond a Boundary,*” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 205-215]

SOUNDTRACK

- Coldplay, “Viva La Vida.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oncmL69ZEJ8>
- Dolly Parton, “9 to 5.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-gqMpZroy8>

Week Three: Power, Representation, Discourse, Knowledge Production, & Empire

Tuesday, Sept. 6

- ❖ Robinson, *Black Marxism* (Chapters 4 and 5)

Thursday, Sept. 8

- ❖ Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” (Blackboard)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ “Huge Mob Tortures Negro: Lynching Account from 1920,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 131-134]

SOUNDTRACK

- Hugh Masekala, “Vasco Da Gama (The Sailor Man),” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4eKTPWpnHo>
- Jay-Z ft. Frank Ocean, “Oceans.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22KtLzHNhLA>
- Fela Kuti, “Sorrow, Tears, & Blood.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_ODwq7jm3E

Week Four: Resistance, Subjugated Knowledge, & Hegemony/Counter-Hegemony
Tuesday, Sept. 13

- ❖ Robinson, *Black Marxism* (Chapters 6 and 7)

Thursday, Sept. 15

- ❖ Antonio Gramsci, “from ‘The Prison Notebooks,’” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 58-67]
- ❖ Robin Kelley, “from Race Rebels,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 96-99]
- ❖ James Scott, “Weapons of the Weak,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 89-96]

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Lawrence Levine, “Slave Songs and Slave Consciousness,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 215-231]

SOUNDTRACK

- New Birth, “African Cry” – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzMy9hL0dlg>
- Nina Simone, “Pirate Jenny” – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB_mz4KGC8
- Sam Cooke, “Chain Gang.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBn5aIfZEIE>

Week Five: Gender, The Body, Patriarchy, and Feminist Politics

Tuesday, Sept. 20

- ❖ Susan Bordo, “Introduction: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body.” (Blackboard)
- ❖ bell hooks, “Understanding Patriarchy.” (Blackboard)

Thursday, Sept. 22

- ❖ Gloria Anzaldúa, “*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan.*” (Blackboard)
- ❖ Roxane Gay, chapters from *Bad Feminist* (Blackboard)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Virginia Woolf, “From *A Room of One’s Own*” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 240-248]

SOUNDTRACK

- Tracie Chapman, “Behind the Wall.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9BM6VsTNYg>
- Lesley Gore, “You Don’t Own Me.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNb-8gLcXLs>
- Janis Ian, “At Seventeen.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhFnOAw96o>
- Erykah Badu, “Cleva.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIT9-VQvUgo>

WHO ARE WE? THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

Week Six: The Rise of Multiculturalism, 1963-1979

Tuesday, Sept. 27

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 & 4)

Thursday, Sept. 29

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Chapters 3 & 5)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," (*The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 185-192])
- ❖ Michelle Alexander, "The New Jim Crow." (Blackboard)
- ❖ Stuart Cosgrove, "The Zoot-suit and Style Warfare," from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 157-165]

SOUNDTRACK

- Ry Cooder, "Onda Callejara." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXZF57qiaJ0>
- John Coltrane, "My Favorite Things." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH3JpqhpkXg>
- Almanac Singers, "Which Side Are You On?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1gX0SxtidI>
- Pete Seeger, "Where Have All The Flowers Gone." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y2SIIeqy34>

Week Seven: Identity Politics and the Culture Wars, 1980-1993

Tuesday, Oct. 4

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Chapters 6-8)

Thursday, Oct. 6

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Chapters 9 & 10)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Robin Kelley, "OGs in Postindustrial Los Angeles: Evolution of a Style" from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 149-156]
- ❖ Vinay Harpalani, "Ambiguity, Ambivalence, and Awakening: A South Asian Becoming Critically Aware of Race in America." (Blackboard)

SOUNDTRACK

- Public Enemy, "Fight the Power." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PaoLy7PHwk>

Week Eight: Sexuality, Queer Theory, and Intersectionality

Tuesday, Oct. 11

- ❖ Michel Foucault, "'We 'Other Victorians'" from *The History of Sexuality*." (Blackboard)
- ❖ Tamsin Spargo, "Foucault and Queer Theory, pg. 3-42." (Blackboard)

Thursday, Oct. 13

- ❖ Jose Munoz, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag." (Blackboard)
- ❖ bell hooks, "Is Paris is Burning?" (Blackboard)

SOUNDTRACK

- Le1f, “Wut.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDo4SJU9hiM>

MIDTERM, DUE OCT. 14th

Week Nine: Postrace or the Rise of a New Cultural Majority? 1993-2013

Tuesday, Oct. 18

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Chapters 11-13)

Thursday, Oct. 20

- ❖ Chang, *Who We Be* (Chapters 13-Epilogue)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ George Lipsitz “Immigration and Assimilation,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 231-239]

SOUNDTRACK

- Mos Def, “Hip Hop.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IISBme_Jy28

WHO ARE WE? THE RISE OF BRAND CULTURE

Week Ten: Culture Industries and the Marketing of Cool

Tuesday, Oct. 25

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Introduction-Chapter 2)

Thursday, Oct. 27

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Chapters 3 & 5)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.” (Blackboard)
- ❖ Richard Hoggart, “From *The Uses of Literacy*,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 303-311]
- ❖ Malcolm Gladwell, “The Coolhunt.” (Blackboard)

SOUNDTRACK

- Fela Kuti, “Zombies.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj5x6pbJMyU>
- Kanye West, “New Slaves.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT3swdCJrrg>

Week Eleven: Higher Learning, Superbrands, and Commercial Utopias

Tuesday, Nov. 1

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Chapters 4, 6, 7)

Thursday, Nov. 3

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Chapters 9 & 10)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Malcolm Cowley, “From *Exile’s Return*,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 312-316]

SOUNDTRACK

- Dead Prez, “Turn off the Radio.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5MRQO-ExVk>

Week Twelve: Culture Jamming

Tuesday, Nov. 8

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Chapters 11-13, & 17)

Thursday, Nov. 10

- ❖ Klein, *No Logo* (Chapters 18, 19, & Afterword)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” from *The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 67-81]
- ❖ E.J. Hobsbawm, “Selections from *Primitive Rebels*,” (*The Cultural Resistance Reader* [pg. 135-149])

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR: THE STRUGGLES OF/FOR NOW

Week Thirteen: From the Border to Black Lives Matter

Tuesday, Nov. 15

- ❖ Gloria Anzaldúa, “The Homeland, Aztlán/*El otro México*,” (Blackboard)
- ❖ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Introduction & Chapter 1)

Thursday, Nov. 17

- ❖ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chapters 4 & 5)

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Geoff Manaugh, “How Aerial Surveillance Has Changed Policing – and Crime – in Los Angeles.” (Blackboard, or go to: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/magazine/panopticons.html?_r=0)

THIS WEEK’S SOUNDTRACK

- Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Web007rzSOI>
- Nas, “One Love.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qjd7EbUUds8>

Week Fourteen: The Rise of New Coalitions

Tuesday, Nov. 22

- ❖ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chapters 6 & 7)

- ❖ Ethan Earle, “A Brief History of Occupy Wall Street.” (Blackboard or go to: http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/wp-content/files_mf/earle_history_occupy.pdf)

Thursday, Nov. 24

THANKSGIVING

Additional Suggested Readings

- ❖ Michael Levitin, “The Triumph of Occupy Wall Street.” (Blackboard)

Week Fifteen: Memory and The Remix

Tuesday, Nov. 29

- ❖ Jay-Z, “One Eye Open.” (Blackboard)
- ❖ Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, “Mo Meta Blues” excerpt.” (Blackboard)

Thursday, Dec. 1

- ❖ TBD

THIS WEEK'S SOUNDTRACK

- Nitin Sawney, “Sunset.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X21Ax9fxl4>
- Mos Def, “Fear Not of Man.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BEg38-bWY8>
- Jill Scott, “Wanna Be Loved.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebXWjM3dDnA>

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE, FRIDAY DEC. 12TH