



**COMM 206: Communication and Culture**  
**4.0 units**

**Summer 2022 – MWF – 9.30am - 12.20pm**

**Section: 20388**

**Location: ANN 309**

**Instructor: Jessica Hatrick**

**Office: ANN 309**

**Office Hours: Wednesdays: 12.30-1.30pm or by appointment**

**Contact Info: [hattrick@usc.edu](mailto:hattrick@usc.edu)**

**Land Acknowledgement:** The University of Southern California's (USC) University Park campus is located on the unceded land of the Tongva People. Unceded means that the Tongva people have never negotiated a treaty with México or the U.S. government. Today, the five Tongva/Gabrielino tribes continue to struggle for their sovereignty. You can visit <https://mila.ss.ucla.edu/> to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples in Los Angeles and read stories shared by the Tongva community. Or to learn more about how universities benefit from stolen Indigenous land I recommend reading Land-Grab Universities by Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone or A Third University is Possible by la paperson.

**Labor Acknowledgement:** Many thanks to Olivia González, Dr. Alison Trope, and Dr. Hajar Yazdiha whose syllabi contributed to the modeling of this class.

### **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**” or “**structures**” they live and operate within (the rules, conditions, and conventions that regulate, 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.**” The first half of the course will be devoted to general approaches, key concepts, and overarching questions, with a particular emphasis on the study of media, popular culture, and communication. The second half will focus more specifically on distinct units of study—that you’ll get to choose—as individual case studies of cultural analysis. We will examine further 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. The class also serves as a gateway to upper division electives with a cultural emphasis, covering themes such as identity and representation (gender, race and ethnicity, LGBTQ identities, youth, etc.), visual culture, popular culture, media and entertainment industries (music, fashion, celebrity, games, sports), social change and resistance.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Every student comes into our class with different abilities, passions, priorities, lived experiences, and ways of learning. I invite you to begin where you are—to listen and learn from course content and discussions, to critically contemplate, question, and critique. To that end, the learning outcomes below are fluid, and work in collaboration and dialogue with my teaching (as well as that of your Teaching Assistants), course content, and class discussions. What students take away will depend on where they start, how they engage, and how they tap into their capacities to learn and grow. It is my hope that this course provides an opportunity for you to:

- Understand and be able to articulate the relationship between culture and power as explored by a range of cultural and communication theorists
- Apply historical and theoretical legacies of the study of culture to contemporary debates around cultural production, identity, and change
- Discern and distinguish the role of individual critique and practice in relation (and contrast to) collective approaches to cultural structures, institutions, and industries
- Critically analyze cultural artifacts in broad social contexts as well as personal lived experiences
- Critically communicate (write, curate, create, collate) based on engagement with course themes

### **Course Notes**

My pedagogy is invested in co-constructing the classroom with students and diverting from the assumed teacher/student power hierarchy. This means you will be asked to make decisions in the classroom you may not be used to making, as together we figure out what practices allow us to divert from the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) towards a culture of learning. As this is a summer course, it may seem particularly intense compared to previous courses.

### **Creating a Respectful and Inclusive Classroom Environment**

Be respectful. Some of the topics we discuss may be sensitive. It is okay for you to disagree with me or each other, but please do so respectfully. One of our goals is to make the class a place where we can explore topics that are at times difficult with respect, openness, and empathy for others who may not share your views or experiences. Our notion of respect in this classroom will follow Robert James Jr.'s belief that "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."

### **Basic Needs**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to review the resources listed on this syllabus and contact the Associate Dean of Student Affairs for support (Vince Gonzalez can be contacted at [vince.gonzales@usc.edu](mailto:vince.gonzales@usc.edu)). Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to connect you with resources.

### **Communication with Instructor**

If you have any questions about the course, please reach out to me via email and/or attend office hours. I am available via email ([hatrick@usc.edu](mailto:hatrick@usc.edu)). I should reply to your emails within 48 hours. If I have not responded within that period, please resend your email.

### **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. USC students can apply to rent a laptop or internet hotspot from The Student Basic Needs department (<https://studentbasicneeds.usc.edu/resources/technologyassistance/>). Your active participation and attentive engagement will be an important part of this course, especially during

speeches. Please be mindful of your technology use and avoid utilizing laptops and other technologies for non-course purposes during class time.

### **Accommodations**

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS formerly DSP) provides support and services for students with disabilities. Students seeking academic accommodations should register with OSAS (<https://osas.usc.edu/>) and obtain a letter of verification for accommodations. Please share your letter with me as early in the semester as possible. I will do my best to provide accommodations regardless of whether you have a letter of verification with OSAS. Please communicate with me any accommodations you need throughout the semester.

## **V. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

**CO-LEARNING COMMITMENT (15%):** As this is a praxis-orientated class, part of your grade will be dependent on what kind of commitment you show to co-learning within the classroom. During the first week of class we will collectively come up with co-learning guidelines. 15% of your grade at the end of the semester will reflect your commitment to these guidelines throughout the semester.

### **CULTURAL OBJECT RESPONSE (5%)**

This assignment offers an opportunity for you to write a short (2-3 paragraphs) analysis of a “cultural object” you engage with over the summer. Options may include a film, tv show, book, song, album, play, zine, or other cultural object you engage with. The response is an opportunity for you to relate your own interests to the discussions about culture we will be having in class, and where relevant, to the readings (no citations of readings are required). You will submit your assignment via Blackboard by or before session 14. If you have questions (or suggestions) about events, please email.

### **LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION (10%)**

Every student will be responsible for leading class discussion for one hour at some point during the course. During this time you can go over a close reading, critical analysis, or a set of questions to direct our further inquiry. You can also bring in relevant cultural events or media items to that session’s topic.

### **CULTURAL PRODUCTION PROJECT (60%)**

This assignment asks you to produce a series of cultural objects that resist hegemonic culture and/or constitute an expression of social change, liberation, abolition, or revolution. These objects will be displayed in a culminating exhibition, website, or zine. In producing your objects, you will (1) choose one problem/topic to focus on that is relevant to this course, (2) find relevant media/DIY media you wish to emulate, and (3) consider which community/ies you want to reach. You will produce five cultural objects throughout the semester. Each cultural object should help build the audience’s awareness of that problem/topic, and provide them with steps for enacting or supporting change.

Two of the objects must be critical essays, the other three can be in any of the following forms:

- Art (e.g., digital or analog drawing/painting/collage, sculpture)
- Audio or video recording
- Creative writing, e.g., story, poem, song, comic book
- Critical essay
- Media pitch/proposal for a film, show, performance piece, art installation
- Recorded/mediated performance
- Screenplay
- Written manifesto

Make sure the messaging and communication you want to convey is clearly encoded in relation to your goals for the final zine/website/exhibit. You will also be asked to share the culminating project with your desired community/ies. Each cultural object is worth 10% of your grade, and the final project is worth an additional 10%. You will be given feedback on each object by your instructor and one peer, you will be

expected to incorporate this feedback, as well as write an introduction/reflection on the pieces for the final project.

### **FEEDBACK ON CLASSMATE'S CULTURAL PRODUCTION PROJECT (10%)**

You will give critical feedback (one paragraph) on a different classmate's cultural object each week. This is due five days after the object is submitted (three for the object #5).

## **VI. Grading**

### **a. Breakdown of Grade**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
Co-Learning Commitment	15	15%
Cultural Event Response	5	5%
Leading Class Discussion	10	10%
Cultural Production Project	60	60%
Feedback On Classmate's Cultural Production Project	10	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

### **b. Grading Scale**

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

### **c. Grading Standards**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.</b>

#### d. Grading Timeline

Given the tight timeline of summer classes, all grading and feedback will be given within one week of submission. You are responsible for notifying the Instructor **within one (1) week** of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate.

#### VIII. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are due on the dates specified and should be submitted via Blackboard. If you need an extension on an assignment please notify your instructor at least 24 hours before the submission is due.

#### IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

During the first week of classes, students will vote on which of the following topics they wish to learn about, these will then be added to the syllabus for sessions 9-17:

- Abolition, Anarchism, and Revolution
- Activism & Activist Media
- Celebrities & Reality TV
- Class & Classism
- Colonialism & Imperialism
- Disability & Ableism
- Education
- Environmental Justice
- Fashion
- Gender & Patriarchy
- Globalization & Multiculturalism
- Journalism
- Los Angeles
- Migration & Immigration
- Militarism
- Music
- Police, Prisons, and the Law
- Race & White Supremacy
- Science, Technology, & Health
- Sexuality
- Social Media
- Sports
- Student/Youth Activism
- Video Games
- Other (per student requests)

**Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
<b>1: Wednesday, June 29th</b>	What is Culture? What is Cultural Studies?	- Excerpt from Ursula Le Guin <i>The Dispossessed</i> - Raymond Williams "Culture Is Ordinary" - James Carey "A Cultural Approach to Communication" - Ben Carrington "Decentering the Centre"	
<b>2: Friday, July 1st</b>	Ideology & Power	- Excerpt from Antonio Gramsci <i>The Prison Notebooks</i> - Audre Lorde "The Masters Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House"	

		- Excerpt from Michel Foucault <i>Discipline and Punish</i>	
<b>Monday, July 4th</b>	NO CLASS	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
<b>3: Wednesday, July 6th</b>	Space, Place, & Location	- Excerpt from Benedict Anderson <i>Imagined Communities</i> - Excerpt from Gloria Anzaldua <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> - Excerpt from Edward Said <i>Orientalism</i>	
<b>4: Friday, July 8th</b>	Intersectionality & Coalition Building	- The Combahee River Collective Statement - Kimberlé Crenshaw Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex - Cathy Cohen Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens	Cultural Production Object #1 Due July 8 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>5: Monday, July 11th</b>	Labor & State Apparatuses	- Excerpt from Sarah Jaffe's <i>Work Won't Love You Back</i> - Excerpt from Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> - Louis Althusser's "State Apparatus"	
<b>6: Wednesday, July 13th</b>	Mass Media	- Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" - Stuart Hall "The Television Discourse—Encoding and Decoding" - Excerpt from John Molyneux <i>Will the Revolution be Televised? A Marxist Analysis of the Media</i>	Feedback on Cultural Production Object #1 Due July 13 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>7: Friday, July 15th</b>	Popular Culture	- Stuart Hall Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular' - Angela McRobbie "Girls and Subcultures" - Corinne Mitsuye Sugino "Multicultural Redemption: Crazy Rich Asians and the Politics of Representation"	Cultural Production Object #2 Due July 15 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>8: Monday, July 18th</b>	Subcultures & Resistance	- Excerpt from Dick Hebdige <i>Subculture: The Meaning of Style</i> - Excerpt from Clyde Barrow <i>The Dangerous Class</i> - <u>Lowriding: Everything Comes from the Streets</u>	
<b>9: Wednesday, July 20th</b>	Topic #1		Feedback on Cultural Production Object #2 Due July 20 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>10: Friday, July 22nd</b>	Topic #2		Cultural Production Object #3 Due July 22 <sup>nd</sup> @ 11.59pm

<b>11: Monday, July 25th</b>	Topic #3		
<b>12: Wednesday, July 27th</b>	Topic #4		Feedback on Cultural Production Object #3 Due July 27 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>13: Friday, July 29th</b>	Topic #5		Cultural Production Object #4 Due July 29 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>14: Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup></b>	Topic #6		Cultural Event Response Due August 1 <sup>st</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>15: Wednesday, August 3rd</b>	Topic #7		Feedback on Cultural Production Object #4 Due August 3 <sup>rd</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>16: Friday, August 5th</b>	Topic #8		Cultural Production Object #5 Due August 5 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
<b>17: Monday, August 8th</b>	Topic #9		Feedback on Cultural Production Object #5 Due August 8 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.59pm
			<b>Final Cultural Production Project Due August 10th</b>

## X. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### a. Academic Conduct

#### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards.” Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to 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 be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and

Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

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, without approval of the instructor.

#### **b. Support Systems**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplcity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplcity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*

[osas.usc.edu/](http://osas.usc.edu/)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](http://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.