

ANTHROPOLOGY 305
Introduction to Expressive Culture
Fall 2013



Lectures:

Monday and Wednesday, 11:00AM in CLA 0.112

Sections:

31240 Friday, 11:00AM in SAC 4.118

31250 Friday, 10:00AM in SAC 4.118

31245 Friday, 9:00AM in SAC 5.118

31255 Friday, 12:00PM in SAC 4.118

Instructor

Calvin Johns

Office: SAC 4.114

Office Hours: MW, 12:00-2:00PM, By appointment

Teaching Assistants

Dominique Batiste

Ernest Alba

Course Description

This course is an introduction to expressive cultural practices, with emphases on representation (including narratives such as film and folktales) and material culture (including fashion, technology, food, and art). Readings from popular culture and journalistic sources will come alongside texts that exemplify solid, critical anthropology. Many theories of cultural meaning will be discussed with the goal of teaching students how to analyze and critically engage their own cultural contexts and everyday life.

The course is broken up into three units: **Signs & Stories**, which will introduce key concepts of expressive culture and the role of narrative in Texas/US culture specifically; **Everyday Life** which will explore broader, societal areas of expressive culture; and **Cultural Analysis**, a unit which will focus on making sense of contemporary expressive culture in a few specific forms.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, the responsible student will be able to:

- Discuss several theories of culture and language
- Recognize and analyze arguments made in everyday popular culture
- Apply theories of culture to courses in other academic disciplines

Assigned Readings

Required readings will be made available on Blackboard. These should be printed out, read carefully, and brought to discussion sections each week along with your notes and comments.

Course Requirements and Grading

Students will succeed in this course by digesting a series of engaging anthropological texts, by providing short written responses to films and cultural texts, and by attending the scheduled classes ready to participate in exercises and the play of culture.

Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Final Paper	25%
Written Exercises	20%
Attendance & Participation in Sections	15%

EXAMS (20% EACH)

Students will take two mid-term exams this semester. Students will need to bring their own BLUE BOOKS to class on those dates: 10/2 and 11/6.

FINAL PAPER (25%)

This course requires one academic paper that will analyze an artifact of expressive culture. The topic will be more fully explained during the final weeks of class.

Papers Must Be/Include:

- 4 Pages
- 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, Double-spaced, Printed on only one side
- 1" Margins on all sides (**WARNING: Microsoft Word has 1.25" defaults**)
- Submitted printed, in person, NO cover page, Stapled in upper-left corner

WRITTEN EXERCISES (20%)

Students will complete several written exercises during the semester. These will be short responses to prompts given in lecture or to additional reading/viewing assignments. None will exceed one page (300 words) in length, and the purpose is to give students space to arrange ideas and think through material before starting the discussion that week. Most of these exercises will be reflective and personal in nature, asking the student to bring the material of the course into their everyday lives, amounting to a catalog of the students' engagement with the class within the context of college life.

THESE MAY INCLUDE OTHER VIEWING/READING ASSIGNMENTS

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN SECTIONS (15%)

This class requires verbal and nonverbal participation. Attendance is the beginning of participation, so be here on time and with assignments completed on the day they are to be discussed. Participation is not only making constructive comments but also listening respectfully and attentively. **It is the responsibility of each member of this class to create an ongoing conversation that can challenge, stimulate, and accept each participant.**

Academic Misconduct

Each student is responsible for honoring high standards of academic integrity. Students are encouraged to be familiar with the rules concerning academic misconduct, concerning what will be viewed as plagiarism, cheating, or "securing any unfair advantage" (e.g. seeing course materials early).

Any instances of suspected academic misconduct are reported to the Committee for Academic Misconduct and from that point out of the instructor's hands. It is not the instructor's duty to judge misconduct but to pass all suspicions on to an overseeing committee. This is to protect students' rights and standardize consequences across the University.

Remember, what you can find on the Internet the instructor can find (probably more easily) on the very same Internet.

Students with Disabilities

Please let us know if you have a disability or medical condition that might affect your performance in the class. Contact the Office of Disability Services immediately and inform the instructor as soon as possible so any necessary arrangements can be made. Without the proper forms from ODS, you will not be able to get extra time or special accommodations on exams. Any correspondence with the instructor will be kept confidential, but the nature of a discussion course puts significant amounts of attention on individual students. Please think about and communicate to the instructor or TA what he or she can do to make class participation more comfortable for you.

Schedule and Responsibilities

UNIT I: SIGNS & STORIES

WEEK 1: Introduction

8/28 Wednesday: Syllabus, “What is Expressive Culture?”

Reading Due: Hebdige PDF

WEEK 2: Meaning & Style

9/2 Monday: LABOR DAY - NO CLASSES

9/4 Wednesday: “The Meaning of Style”

Reading Due: Barthes PDF

WEEK 3: Beyond Language

9/9 Monday: “Semiotics”

9/11 Wednesday: “Metaphors We Live By”

Reading Due: *Metaphors We Live By* PDF

WEEK 4: Telling Stories

9/16 Monday: “Who Are The Folk?”

9/18 Wednesday: “Affect & Storytelling”

Reading Due: TBD

WEEK 5: National Identities

9/23 Monday: “Imagined Communities”

9/25 Wednesday: “Aesthetics vs. Politics”

Reading Due: Hamilton PDF

WEEK 6: Holidays and Histories

9/30 Monday: “Remember The Alamo?”

10/2 Wednesday: EXAM I

NO SECTIONS

UNIT II: EVERYDAY LIFE

WEEK 7: Living In The Material World

10/7 Monday: “Material Culture”

10/9 Wednesday: “Non-Human Agency”

Reading Due: *Generation Sell* PDF, Social Network Review PDF

WEEK 8: Food & Art

10/14 Monday: “Art Worlds”

10/16 Wednesday: “Food as Sign”

Reading Due: Marvin Harris *PDF*

WEEK 9: Social Construction of Gender

10/21 Monday: “Social Construction of Gender”

10/22 Wednesday: “Patriarchy & Sexuality”

Reading Due: *Truth About Guys* PDF, *Gender Insubordination* PDF

WEEK 10: Social Construction of Race

10/28 Monday: “Social Construction of Race”

10/30 Wednesday: “White Privilege”

Reading Due: *Possessive Investment in Whiteness* PDF, *UTexas* PDF

WEEK 11: Class & Social Hierarchies

11/4 Monday: “Marx on Capitalism”

11/6 Wednesday: EXAM II

NO SECTIONS

UNIT III: CULTURAL ANALYSIS

WEEK 12: Film

11/11 Monday: “How To Analyze A Cultural Artifact”

11/13 Wednesday: “*The Wire*”

Reading Due: TBA

WEEK 13: The Media

11/18 Monday: “What Ads Do”

11/20 Wednesday: “American Media Bias”

Reading Due: TBA

WEEK 14: Gaming I

11/25 Monday: “Ludology 101”

11/27 Wednesday: “Sports”

Reading Due: Traditional Gaming PDF

WEEK 15: Gaming II

12/2 Monday: “Persuasive Games”

12/4 Wednesday: “Pervasive Games”

Reading Due: Experimental Gaming PDF

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Friday 12/13, 5:00PM