

CLMD 6101-T – Perspectives on Interdisciplinarity in Cultural Theory
Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art, and Culture

Course description

This course addresses the theory and practice of interdisciplinarity in relation to the studies of culture. It engages with a range of issues in cultural theory that inform interdisciplinary work today, across literature, film, music, art, and new media.

Detailed objectives and format

As a core requirement in the Cultural Mediations PhD program, CLMD 6101 is designed to prepare first-year students for their first comprehensive exam (CLMD 6907). To this end, it follows a two-semester sequence, with the first half devoted to situating interdisciplinarity in relation to key texts and thinkers of twentieth and twenty-first century cultural theory.

We will initially focus on a series of concepts (culture, modernity, postmodernity) fundamental to engaging critically with cultural theory. We will then explore how a set of critically influential perspectives (from early structuralism to media theory) have informed transdisciplinary scholarly approaches to culture and cultural practices. We will be attentive to how intellectual projects have shifted and challenged disciplinary boundaries as they relate to culture and the arts. Readings will encompass both a range of seminal texts in cultural theory and a limited number of case studies that locate transdisciplinary perspectives within specific critical approaches to particular art forms and cultural practices.

The course is structured as a scholarly reading group. Each week we will attempt to frame a collective approach to the texts at hand, identify key arguments, issues, and concepts, and relate weekly readings to previous perspectives and your individual research interests. The method of assessment is geared to that format and the interplay of autonomy and shared responsibility it entails. Over the course of the semester, each student will submit 5 written reading synopses based on the weekly course material and deliver one seminar presentation. To ease into these assignments, students will also be asked to share, and comment on, a short reading response in weeks 2, 3 and 4.

Weekly topics and readings (all readings available through ARES)

Week No.	Topic
1	Introduction
2	key concept: Culture
3	key concept: Modernity
4	key concept: Postmodernity
5	theoretical perspectives: Marxism and Western Marxism
6	theoretical perspectives: Structuralism

7	theoretical perspectives: Poststructuralism, Knowledge, Power
8	theoretical perspectives: Psychoanalysis
9	theoretical perspectives: Feminism and Queer Theory
10	theoretical perspectives: Postcolonialism
11	theoretical perspectives: World(-)Literature, World(-)Culture
12	theoretical perspectives: Media and Technology Theory

Week 1, Introduction

Readings:

The course outline. No other assigned readings.

Week 2, Key Concept: Culture

Readings:

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Distinction and the Aristocracy of Culture." *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed., edited by John Storey, Harlow, Pearson International Limited, 2006 [1984], pp. 466-476.

Eagleton, Terry. "Versions of Culture." *The Idea of Culture*, Malden, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 1-31.

Jameson, Fredric. "On 'Cultural Studies,'" *Social Text* No .34, 1993, pp.

Yúdice, George. "Culture." *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, New York, NYU Press, 2007, pp. 71–76.

Some further readings:

Benjamin, Walter. "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt, Mariner Books, 2019 [1955, trans.1968], pp. 1–10.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," *Poetics* 12, 1983, pp. 311-356

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception." *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*, edited by Randal Johnson, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, pp. 1-27.

Clifford, James. "On Collecting art and culture." *The Predicament of Culture: twentieth century ethnography, literature, and art*, London, Harvard University Press, pp. 215-251.

Hall, Stuart. "The Question of Cultural Identity." *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, edited by Stuart Hall et al., London, Wiley-Blackwel, 1996, pp. 596-618.

Williams, Raymond. "Culture." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2015 [1976, rev. ed. 1983], pp. 49–54.

Week 3, Key Concept: Modernity

Readings:

Baudelaire, Charles. "Heroism of Modern Life" and "Painter of Modern Life".

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken Books, 1968 [1936], pp. 217-52.

Berman, Marshall. "Modernity – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Penguin, 1988 [1982], pp. 5-36 & pp. 131–171.

Some further readings:

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, Belknap Press, 2002.

Harootunian, Harry. *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 2000.

Harvey, David. "Modernity as Break," *Paris, Capital of Modernity* [2003], Routledge, 2006, pp. 1–20.

Jameson, Fredric. *A Singular Modernity*, Verso, 2002.

Lefebvre, Henri. "What is Modernity?" *Introduction to Modernity* [1962], Verso, 1995, pp. 168–238.

Massimiliano Tomba, *Insurgent Universality: An Alternative Legacy of Modernity*, Oxford University Press, 2019.

Week 4, Key Concept: Postmodernity

Readings:

Habermas, Jürgen. "Modernity versus Postmodernity." *New German Critique*, 1981, vol. 8, no. 22, pp. 3-14.

Jameson, Fredric. "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, pp. 1–54.

Lyotard, Jean-François. "An answer to the Question, What Is the Postmodern?," "Apostil on Narratives." *The Postmodern Explained. Correspondence 1982-1985*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992 [1976], pp. 2-21.

Some further readings:

Anderson, Perry. *The Origins of Postmodernity*, Verso, 1998.

Eagleton, Terry. "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism," *New Left Review*, no. 152, July/August 1985, pp. 60-73.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Wiley-Blackwell, 1992.

Jameson, Fredric. "The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Postmodernism Debate," *New German Critique*, 1984, no. 33, pp. 53–65.

Waugh, Patricia (ed.), *Postmodernism: A Reader*, Hodder Arnold, 2009.

Week 5, Theoretical Perspectives: Marxism and Western Marxism

Readings: (read in the order listed)

Marx, Karl. "Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*," [1859] *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 424–428.

Althusser, Louis. "Contradiction and Overdetermination," [1965] in: Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster, London: Verso, 2007, pp. 87–128.

Jameson, Fredric. "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture." *Social Text*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1979, pp. 130-148.

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *The Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Simon During, New York, Routledge, 1999 [1944], pp. 31-41.

Some further readings

Adorno, Theodor. "On Popular Music." In: *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 5th edition, edited by John Storey, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 57–68.

Adorno, Theodor et al. *Aesthetics and Politics*, Verso, 1986.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed., edited by John Storey, Harlow, Pearson International Limited, 2006 [1970], pp. 336-346.

Anderson, Perry. *Considerations on Western Marxism*, Verso, 1976.

Anderson, Perry. *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, Verso, 1983.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken Books, 1968 [1936], pp. 217-52.

Dowling, William C. *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to The Political Unconscious*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Eagleton, Terry. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Routledge, 2002.

Gramsci, Antonio. "Hegemony, Intellectuals, and the State." *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed., edited by John Storley, Harlow, Pearson International Limited, 2006 [1970]. pp. 85-91

Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form*, Princeton University Press, 1971.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Cornell University Press, 1981.

Marcuse, Herbert. *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, Boston, Beacon, 1978.

Williams, Raymond. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." *New Left Review*, 82, 1973, pp. 3–16.

Raymond Williams on culture & society: Essential writings, edited by J. McGuigan, London: Sage, 2014.

Week 6, Theoretical Perspectives: Structuralism

Readings:

Saussure, Ferdinand de. "The Linguistic Sign." *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, edited by in Robert Innis, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985 [1959], pp. 28-39.

Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." *Image, Music, Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977, pp. 32-51.

Anderson, Perry. "Structure and Subject." *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, Verso, 1983, pp. 32-55.

Eagleton, Terry. "Structuralism and Semiotics," *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, University of Minnesota Press, 2008 [1983], pp. 79-109.

Some further readings:

Austin, John L. *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962.

Benvéniste, Émile. "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign." *Problems of General Linguistics*, Miami, University of Miami Press, 1971 [1966], pp. 43-48.

Culler, Jonathan. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, London, Routledge, 1975.

Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979 [1976].

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London, Routledge, 2002 [1966].

Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton University Press, 1975.

Macksey, Richard and Donato, Eugenio. *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972.

Peirce, Charles Sanders. "What is a Sign?" *The Essential Peirce*, Vol. 2, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998 [1894], pp. 4-10.

Week 7, Theoretical Perspectives: Poststructuralism, Knowledge, Power

Readings:

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image, Music, Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977, pp. 142–148.

Derrida, Jacques. "The Exorbitant. Question of Method." *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Johns Hopkins UP, 2016, pp. 171-178.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In: *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, edited by K. M. Newton, 2nd ed., New York Macmillan Education, 1997, pp. 115–120.

Foucault, Michel. "Lecture: 7 January 1976." In: *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, edited by K. M. Newton, 2nd ed., New York Macmillan Education, 1997, pp. 129–135.

Some further readings:

Baudrillard, Jean. "The Precession of Simulacra." *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1994, pp. 1-42

Chomsky, Noam. "A Philosophy of Language?" *Language and Responsibility. Based on Conversations with Mitsou Ronat*. Trans. John Viertel. New York, Pantheon, 1979, pp. 63–80, esp. 74–80. [a succinct critique of Foucault]

Culler, Jonathan. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism*. Routledge, 25th anniversary edition, 2007.

Derrida, Jacques. "Plato's Pharmacy." [1968] *Dissemination*. Trans. Barbara Johnson, London, Athlone Press, 1981.

Eagleton, Terry. "Post-Structuralism." *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, University of Minnesota Press, 2008 [1983], 110–130.

Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" *Partisan Review*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1975, pp. 603–614.

Foucault, Michel. "Introduction.", "Discursive formations." *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge, 2002 [1984], pp. 3-22, 34-43.

Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry*, summer 1982, 8:2, pp. 777–795.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, New York, Random House, 1977.

Said, Edward W., "Criticism Between Culture and System." *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 178–225.

[an illuminating comparative essay on Derrida and Foucault]

Week 8, Theoretical Perspectives: Psychoanalysis

Readings:

Eagleton, Terry. "Psychoanalysis." *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 131-154.

Freud, Sigmund. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, translated by J. Strachey, New York, Norton, 1949 [1940], pp. 34-35, 37-39.

Freud, Sigmund. *New Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, translated by J. Sprott, New York, Norton, 1961 [1933], pp. 104-112.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror-phase as formative of the function of the I." *New Left Review*, vol. 51, Sept.-Oct. 1968, pp. 63-77.

Some further readings:

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, translated by J. Strachey, New York, Norton, 1961 [1930], pp. 11-32.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of An Illusion*, translated by J. Strachey, New York, Norton, 1961 [1927], pp. 5-14.

Metz, Christian. "Photography and Fetish." *October*, vol. 34, fall 1985, pp. 81-90.

Sontag, Susan. "Against Interpretation." *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, New York, Dell Publishing, 1961, pp. 4-14.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry. An introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Cambridge (Mass), MIT Press, 1991, pp. 48-56.

Week 9, Theoretical Perspectives: Feminism and Queer Theory

Readings:

Alderson, David. "Queer Theory, Solidarity and Bodies Political," *For Humanism: Explorations in Theory and Politics*, edited by David Alderson and Robert Spencer, Pluto, 2017, pp. 163-209.

Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 3–44.

Butler, Judith. "Bodies that Matter," *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 27–55.

Moi, Toril, "What Is a Woman?" in *What Is a Woman? and other essays*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 3–120

Some further readings:

Beauvoir, Simone de. "Introduction" and Chapter 14: "The Independent Woman", *The Second Sex* [1949] trans. Constance Borde & Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage, 2009, pp. 3–17, 721–751.

Butler, Judith. "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex", *Yale French Studies*, No. 72 (1986), pp 35-49.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, summer 1976, pp. 875-893.

Angela Davis, "The Meaning of Emancipation According to Black Women," *Women, Race, & Class*, Vintage, 1983, pp. 87–98.

Haraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1987, pp. 1-42.

Huyssen, Andreas. "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other." *After the Great Divide. Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 44-64.

Simon, Sherry. "Taking Gendered Positions in Translation Theory." *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, London, Routledge, 2006, pp. 1-28.

Week 10, Theoretical Perspectives: Postcolonialism

Readings:

Fanon, Frantz. "On Violence." *The Wretched of the Earth*, [1963] trans. Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2004, pp. 1–62.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism* [1993] Vintage, 1994, pp. 1–20, 35–50.

Lazarus, Neil. *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 1–20, 161–182, 183–203.

Parry, Benita. “Countercurrents and Tensions in Said’s Critical Practice” in Adel Iskandar and Hakem Rustom (eds.), *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010, pp. 499–512.

Some further readings:

Bhabha, Homi K., *Location of Culture*. London, Routledge, 1994.

Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism* [1955], trans. Joan Pinkham, New York, Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Césaire, Aimé. "Culture and Colonization." *Social Text*, vol. 28, no. 2, summer 2010 [1933]), pp. 127–144.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, [1952] trans. Richard Philcox, New York, Grove Press, 2008.

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. “Critical Fanonism,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, No. 3, 1991, pp. 457–470.

hooks, bell. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, New York, New Press, 1995.

Parry, Benita. *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, London, Routledge, 2004.

Parry, Benita. “Signs of Our Times: A Discussion of Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*,” *Third Text*, 28/29, 1994, pp. 5–24.

Lazarus, Neil. *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, Cambridge, CUP, 1999.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, London, Penguin, [1978], 1995.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the subaltern speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313.

Week 11, Theoretical Perspectives, World(-)Literature, World(-)Culture

Readings:

WReC: Warwick Research Collective, “World-Literature in the Context of Combined and Uneven Development,” *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2015, pp. 1–48

Harlow, Barbara, et al. "First Responses." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 53 no. 3, 2016, pp. 505–534.

WReC: Warwick Research Collective. "WReC's Reply." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 53 no. 3, 2016, pp. 535–550.

Further readings:

Brouillette, Sarah, Mathias Nilges & Emilio Sauri (eds.), *Literature and the Global Contemporary*, Palgrave, 2017.

Etherington, Ben & Jarad Zimbler (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to World Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Ganguly, Keya. "World Cinema, World Literature, and Dialectical Criticism," in *The Cambridge Companion to World Literature*, edited by Ben Etherington and Jarad Zimbler, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 211-226.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World-System*, Indiana University Press, 1992.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism* [1993] Vintage, 1994, pp. 50–72.

Week 12, Theoretical Perspectives: Media and Technology

Readings:

Hall, Stuart. "Introduction to Media Studies at the Centre." *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, edited by Stuart Hall et al., London, Routledge, 1996 [1980], pp. 117–27.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The Medium Is the Message." *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Toronto. McGraw-Hill, 1964, pp. 1-18.

Williams, Raymond. "The Technology and the Society." *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, London. Fontana, 1974, pp. 35-50.

Some further readings:

Carey, James W. "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph." *Prospects*, vol. 8, 1983, pp. 303-325.

Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam*. New York: Pantheon. 1981.

Sontag, Susan. "In Plato's Cave." *On Photography*, New York, Doubleday, 1977, pp. 3-24.

Tomlinson, John. "Mediated Communication and Cultural Experience." *Globalization and Culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 150-180.

Williams, Raymond. "Media.", "Mediation." *Keywords*, London, Fontana, 1983, pp. 72-3, 203-207.