

**Cultural Studies**  
**SOC225, Three credits – Spring 2025**  
**Sociology Department, Arts and Sciences Faculty**  
**Gaziantep University**

**\*\*\*Course syllabus is subject to change at the Professor's discretion.**

**Instructor: Dr Semra Akay**

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**Office Hours: Tuesday (12:00- 15:00)**

**\*\* Please craft e-mails that are professional in style and nature. It may take up to 36 hours to respond. I will not respond to emails after 7 p.m. \*\***

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Cultural Studies has always been an academic discipline with strong ties to political activism, especially the politics and battles of the oppressed. Several turning points, phases, and pauses have defined previously unrecognised cultural areas, shed light on previously hidden relationships, and pushed forward political involvement techniques. Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field that uses methods from other academic fields to analyse and make sense of the relevance of cultural practices. Cultural Studies emerged at the end of the 1950s out of literary studies and is concerned with the study of culturally shared meanings, practises, and habits as they are manifest in the things, events, and representations that make up everyday life. However, the definitions and methods of these analyses remain contentious: what exactly constitutes culture, and how should it be analysed? Some of the fundamental notions that have defined constructive discussions in Cultural Studies will be the focus of this module. This module's overarching goal is to present a thorough introduction to cultural studies. This module is designed to delve into the intersection between power and culture via the lens of cultural studies.

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## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course aims for students to:

1. Understand the root of cultural studies and why it has been an interdisciplinary subject.
2. Identify how cultural practices play a role in forming personal and social identities.
3. Critically investigate the role of media and media technology in contemporary culture and the ways in which they shape our understanding of the world.
4. Investigate the relationship between culture and power.
5. Analyse the ways in which cultural practises can reinforce and challenge dominant power systems from various theoretical viewpoints that have influenced cultural studies.
6. Analyse and participate in major cultural studies debates.

7. Make sense of various cultural phenomena, such as those found in popular culture, art, literature, and social media, from the perspective of cultural studies.
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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Using the theoretical and conceptual tools acquired during the classes, students will be able to understand cultural politics and political activism.
  2. Students will
    1. learn about the historical development of cultural studies as an area of study and
    2. become familiar with the major theoretical and methodological issues that have shaped the subject.
  3. Students will learn how media, popular culture, and everyday life are all places and forms of cultural production and consumption that intersect with larger social, political, and economic institutions.
  4. Using various theoretical frameworks and concepts, students will be able to analyse and examine cultural texts critically and practises.
  5. Students will acquire the skills necessary to work in groups, including reviewing the work of others and providing constructive criticism.
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## REQUIRED TEXTS

### Compulsory Readings

- Barker, Chris (2016). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. 4th ed. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.
- Lewis, Jeff (2008). *Cultural Studies: The Basics*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

### Optional Readings

- Ogden, Daryl (2000). *Introduction to Cultural Studies*. New York: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Ryan, Michael (2010). *Cultural Studies: A Practical Introduction*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- During Simon (2005). *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Said, Edward (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage Books.
- Additional readings will be provided via Gauzem.

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## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

### 1. Evaluation

Mid-term exam: 40%

Final exam: 60%

Extra 10 points: Participation and active engagement in (online) classes

### 2. Grading Scale

AA+	100-95	4.00
BA+	90-94	3.75
BA	85-89	3.50
BB+	80-84	3.25
BB	75-79	3.00
CB+	70-74	2.75
CB	65-69	2.50
CC+	60-64	2.25
CC	55-59	2.00
DC	50-54	1.50
DD	45-49	1.00
FD	40-44	0,50
FF	40	00

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## SCHEDULE

**Week 1: Introducing the module.**

**No reading is required.**

**Week 2: An Introduction to Cultural Studies**

- (a) Definition of Culture (Lewis 18-22) and Cultural Studies (Barker 6-7)
- (b) Meanings of the Key Concepts in Cultural Studies (Barker 7-12)

(c) From British Cultural Studies to International Cultural Studies (Barker 28-30)

**Key Concepts:** Multiple Definition of Culture, Culture and Signifying Practices: Language-Game, Representation, Cultural Materialism and Non-Reductionism: Political Economy, Articulation, Power, Popular Culture: Ideology and Hegemony, Texts and Readers (Active Audiences): Polysemy, Anti-Essentialism: Subjectivity and Identity, Positionality.

**Critical thinkers:** Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart.

**Week 3: Culture and Ideology: The Relation between Culture and Economy according to Marx, followed by a critique of Marxism.**

**Read** Barker 64-67, 71-72, 75-80, 163-169, 186-192.

**Key Concepts:** Class, Marxism, Ideology, Base-Superstructure, Hegemony, Ideological State Apparatus, Social Formations.

**Critical thinkers:** Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci.

**Week 4: Approaching culture like a language: the concept and method of structuralism (Saussure on the sign and Barthes on myth).**

**Read:** 85-94, 122-124

**Key Concepts:** Structuralism, Semiotics, Signifier-Signified, Sign, Denotation-Connotation, Myth, Polysemic Signs, Discourse.

**Key thinkers:** Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes.

**Week 5: Culture & Mass Media: The impact of Television on Culture (and the creative way we tend to consume and interpret television)**

**Read** 59-60, 400-407, 428-432, 439-441, 445-448.

**Key Concepts:** Active Audience Paradigm, Creative Consumption, manipulative model, pluralist model, hegemonic model.

**Critical thinkers:** Stuart Hall.

**Week 6: From news narratives to soap operas, the Popularity of soap operas, globalisation of soap operas**

**Read: Barker 417-421, 435-439**

Jin, D. Y., & Yoon, K. (2016). The social mediascape of transnational Korean pop culture: Hallyu 2.0 as spreadable media practice. *New media & society*, 18(7), 1277-1292.

KARLIDAĞ, S., & Bulut, S. (2014). The transnational spread of Turkish television soap operas. *İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi | Istanbul University Faculty of Communication Journal*, (47), 75-96.

**Week 7: Culture, Globalisation & New Media**

**Read:** Barker 457-462, 485-486, 498-500.

**Key Concepts:** Digital Revolution, Web versions, Cyberspace, Digital Dualism, Digital citizenship, Techno utopias and dystopias, The ordinary internet, Information overload, and Information deficit.

## **Week 8: Economy, technology and Social Class & Globalisation**

**Read:** Barker 163-176, 185-194

**Key Concepts:** Fordism, Post-Fordism, Neo-Fordism, Post-Fordism Cultures, Globalisation, Global cultural flows, Post-Industrial society.

## **Week 9: Mid-term exam**

## **Week 10: Culture and Identity & Ethnicity, Race and Nation**

**Read:** Barker 259-270, 295-304, 313-320

**Key Concepts:** Cultural Identity, Subject and Subjectivity, racialisation, ethnicity and power, national identities, race, nations and representation.

## **Week 11: Identity, Feminism and Representation 1**

**Read:** Barker 342-360

**Key Concepts:** patriarchy, equality and difference, feminist waves, many feminisms, sex, gender and identity.

## **Week 12: Identity, Feminism and Representation 2**

**Read:** Barker 374-398

**Key Concepts:** men and masculinity, gender, representation and media culture, images of women, gender in cyberspace

## **Week 13: Mass Media and Resisting Mainstream Culture: Subculture of Youth.**

**Read** Barker 549-560, 567-568, 573-577, 598-599.

**Key Concepts:** Youth Culture, youth sub-culture, the resistance of youth, global rap and rave, digital youth culture

## **Week 14: Culture, Globalisation and Urban Space**

**Key Concepts:** Information Society, the Informational City, Convergence Culture, Space versus Place, Gendered Space, Global Cities, Privatizing Public Space, Creative Industry, Urban Culture.

**Read** Barker 513-517, 524-526, 531-533, 540-541.

## **Week 15: Final Exam**