LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

Critical Cultures

AME_4_CRC

Academic Year 2009—2010

become what you want to be

Unit co-ordinator: Andrew Dewdney

Tel: ext 5765

Email: dewdnea@lsbu.ac.uk

Room b342b

Table of Contents

UNIT STATEMENT

Unit Title	**Critical Culture**
Level	Level 4
Ref No:	AME_4_CRC
Credit Value	20 CATS
Student Study hours	Contact hours: 48 Student managed learning hours:152
Pre-requisite learning	None
Co-requisites	None
Excluded combinations	None
Unit Coordinator [Name + e mail address]	Staff from Department of Arts, Media & English (to be confirmed)
Parent Department	Department of Arts, Media & English
Parent Course	BA (Hons) Arts Management
Description [100 words max]	Critical Culture introduces students to some of the ways in which theorists and philosophers have attempted to define art and culture and how artists and practitioners have worked within, responded to and challenged those definitions. The unit provides an introductory framework for considering how artistic, cultural and media 'objects' and 'images' make meaning, including consideration of key signifying representations of identity, race and gender, by combining elements of media studies, cultural theory, art history and arts criticism. The unit also examines the ways in which digital media technologies can create new opportunities for production, representation and engagement.
Aims	The aims of this unit are to: • Introduce students to the range of contemporary arts, cultural and media activities in London • Provide an introductory framework for the theoretical analysis of art, cultural and media production and practices • Develop students' artistic, cultural and media literacy through critical engagement with the many different ways of considering artistic, cultural and media production as 'texts' which can be 'read' and analysed • Explore the potential for digital media technologies to expand and create new opportunities for production, representation and engagement.

Learning outcomes	On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:
	Knowledge and Understanding
	• Recognise the range and diversity of contemporary arts, cultural and media traditions, practices and activities
	• Describe selected historical and contemporary theoretical frameworks for analysing art, cultural and media production and practices
	• Display cultural and media literacy by understanding a variety of methods for analysing artistic, cultural and media production.
	• Provide examples of the ways in which signifying representations such as race, gender, and identity inform contemporary arts, cultural and media management and production.
	• Explain the role of digital media technologies in creating new opportunities for production, representation and engagement.
	Intellectual Skills:
	• Relate contemporary art, cultural and media practices and production to a range of major theoretical frameworks
	• Undertake close analysis of selected artistic, cultural and media 'texts'
	• Demonstrate basic skills in analysis, synthesis and evaluation of key texts, arguments, ideas and concepts.
	Practical Skills:
	• Use a range of IT platforms to access a variety of arts and media production, including film, photography, image and sound.
	Transferable Skills:
	• Employ effective reading and note taking techniques
	• Use written communication skills appropriate to the discipline, using appropriate academic conventions.
Employability	This unit aims to enhance students' employability by ensuring that they have a solid foundation for academic study and critical thinking. This includes the ability to carry out research, analyse information, synthesise arguments and present findings. In this unit, this is fostered through student development of an academic essay and case study analysis. Seminar discussions promote oral communication skills, a further key skill for employability.
	In addition, the unit provides sector specific employability skills by providing students with the introductory knowledge and understanding of critical culture that is required to engage with artists and practitioners in the presentation and dissemination of their work.

Teaching & Learning Pattern	2 hour lecture for 12 weeks 2 hour seminar for 12 weeks. Visits to relevant cultural or media organisations • 152 hours of independent study, reading, seminar preparation and coursework preparation
Indicative content	• Early theories of art and culture, such as art as ritual, spirituality and mimesis, and their relevance to a range of contemporary art practices • Major Western aesthetic traditions of emotion and expression, taste, beauty, form and the universal • New art histories and alternative canons; cultural relativism • Theories of culture: high and low culture, popular culture, mass culture • Ways of looking: patterns of participation and modes of engagement. • Decoding the image • Representation: self, gender, race, nation and cultural identity. • Digital domains
ASSESSMENT METHOD [Please give details – elements and weightings]	1,500 word case study analysis Weighting 40% Week 5 2,500 word critical essay Weighting 60% Week 13
Indicative Reading	See (9). of Unit guide

Other Learning Resources	**Blackboard** - PowerPoint slide presentations, the unit guide and other relevant materials will be available through Blackboard, a web-based integrated teaching and learning environment, which is part of the University's Virtual Learning Environment
	
	Indicative websites
	  Art Theory & Criticism
	http://www.zeroland.co.nz/art_theory.html
	  Ballet.co **http://www.ballet.co.uk/**
	  Barbican **http://www.barbican.org.uk/index.asp**
	  British Museum **http://www.britishmuseum.org/default.aspx**
	  Dance UK **http://www.danceuk.org/metadot/index.pl**
	  Flickr **http://www.flickr.com/**
	  National Gallery **http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/**
	  National Theatre **http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/**
	  Royal Opera House **http://www.roh.org.uk/**
	  Royal Shakespeare Company
	http://www.rsc.org.uk/home/default.aspx
	  Saatchi Online **http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/yourgallery/**
	  Sadler's Wells **http://www.sadlerswells.com/**
	  Tate **http://www.tate.org.uk/**

1. **INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT**

This unit will provide you with an introductory theoretical framework for understanding the major ways in which culture has been understood in Europe since the 19th Century. It will also introduce you to the diversity of cultural organisation in London. It will do this through a combination of lectures, seminars, visits and self-study.

Culture is one of the most complex ideas in Western thought, with no single agreed definition. Stuart Hall draws our attention to the two major ways in which culture is considered, drawing upon the work of Raymond Williams (1961). The first definition, originating from the study of literature and the arts, defines culture as the sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences. The second tradition of thinking about culture arises from anthropology in which culture is thought of as the sum of (social) relationships in a whole way of life. The key difference is evident in that the first definition limits the idea of culture to how social life is reflected, represented and expressed, whilst the second definition extends the idea of culture to social relationships, habits, customs and practices of everyday life. The first definition of culture gives rise to the tradition of thinking about culture as the best which has been thought and spoken, whilst the second definition focuses culture upon the customs, habits and rituals of any given society or group.

This unit explores the complexity of thought around and between these two ways of thinking about culture and considers how they relate to contemporary art, media and popular culture as well as to identity and cultural difference. In doing this it will also discuss the concept of the critical and trace some of its operative meanings.

2.   **AIMS OF THE UNIT**

The aims of this unit are to:

2.1.   Introduce students to the range of contemporary arts, cultural and media activities in London

2.2   Provide an introductory framework for the theoretical analysis of art, cultural and media production and practices

2.3   Develop students' artistic, cultural and media literacy through critical engagement with the many different ways of considering artistic, cultural and media production as 'texts' which can be 'read' and analysed

2.4   Explore the potential for digital media technologies to expand and create new opportunities for production, representation and engagement.

3.   **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

3.1   Recognise the range and diversity of contemporary arts, cultural and media traditions, practices and activities

3.2   Describe selected historical and contemporary theoretical frameworks for analysing art, cultural and media production and practices

3.3   Display cultural and media literacy by understanding a variety of methods for analysing artistic, cultural and media production.

3.4   Provide examples of the ways in which signifying representations such as race, gender, and identity inform contemporary arts, cultural and media management and production.

3.5   Explain the role of digital media technologies in creating new opportunities for production, representation and engagement.

Intellectual Skills:

3.6   Relate contemporary art, cultural and media practices and production to a range of major theoretical frameworks

3.7   Undertake close analysis of selected artistic, cultural and media 'texts'

3.8   Demonstrate basic skills in analysis, synthesis and evaluation of key texts,arguments, ideas and concepts.

Practical Skills:

3.9   Use a range of IT platforms to access a variety of arts and media production, including film, photography, image and sound.

Transferable Skills:

3.10   Employ effective reading and note taking techniques

3.11   Use written communication skills appropriate to the discipline, using appropriate academic conventions.

4. TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Students have the opportunity to further develop:

4.1   Concise and clear written communication

4.2   Analytical skills in making critical judgements

4.3   Organisational and methodological skills in undertaking case studies

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING PATTERN

Lectures

The unit is primarily designed around the delivery of the traditional lecture format in which I will give a prepared lecture in two parts linking each lecture to the previous one in a developing overall narrative. I will encourage participation in the lecture through questions and answers and students will be invited to contribute comments at appropriate points. The lectures will be recorded and made available as downloadable files and students may make their own recordings. The accompanying Powerpoint slides will be posted on Blackboard

Seminars

The lecture will be followed by a seminar of varying length, depending upon the length of the lecture. Seminars will support the material delivered in the lectures through the use of relevant texts, articles and examples. Through analysis and discussion students will explore the key issues and debates in greater detail. All students are expected to participate fully in seminars and to come prepared each week with questions and comments on the readings and subject matter.

Visits

There will be two visits during the course of the unit in which I will give a lecture at the venue and introduce you to arts professionals in the institution.

Self managed study

It is essential for the successful completion of this unit that all students acknowledge the responsibility they have for self-managed learning. Students will be expected to read widely and follow up areas of interest through independent screenings and visits to art galleries.

6.   **INDICATIVE CONTENT**

This unit is structure roughly into two parts, which correspond with the assessment assignments.

Weeks 1 – 5 explore the contemporary dimensions of culture as it is lived and organised personally and socially. For convenience it emphasises the cultures of London and the way in which this global city contains a multiplicity of official and unofficial, dominant, residual and emergent cultures.

Weeks 6-12 change gear to consider the analytical tools to analyse culture and to define some of the key problems, which have been identified by cultural policy makers, artists and communities. In this part of the course we will consider the main ways in which culture has been theorised and discuss the value of theory to practice.

Topics covered will include:

Week One: Introduction to the Unit. Celebrity Culture
Popular culture
Media and culture
Social status and social change
Youtube
Web 2.
X Factor
Big Brother
Britain's got Talent

Week Two: Art and Culture – (Visit to Tate Britain)
High Culture
Elite cultures
Aesthetics
Consumerism
Modernism
Chris Ofili

Week Three: Art and Social Change
Art and Reproduction
The Function of Art
The Information Age
Aura of the work of art

Week Four: Culture and Everyday Life
Body
Space city/
Home private space
Travel
Hegemony

Week Five: Culture and Difference (visit to Theatre Peckham)
Identity
Race and ethnicity
Tate Encounters
Food and Music
The 'Other'
Alterity
The body

Week Six: Politics and Culture
Capitalism v Socialism
Ideology
Knowledge and power,
Cultural democracy
Cultural policy

Cultural institutions
Pierre Bourdieu

Week Seven: Media Cultures
Representation
Cultures of consumption
Material culture
Television
Advertising
Audiences

Week Eight: Critical Culture
Theory
Knowledge production
Documentation and record
British Cultural Studies
Raymond Williams
Stuart Hall
Jean Francois Lyotard
Week Nine: Theory and Culture
Structuralism
Claude Levi Strauss
Michel Foucault
Roland Barthes
Jacques Lacan

Week Ten: Global Cultures
Time and Space compression
Neo Liberalism
Post Fordism
Diasporas and migration
David Harvey
Fredric Jameson
Edward Said

Week Eleven: Post-modern Cultures
End of History
Recycling
Return of tradition
Urbanism
Environmentalism
Jean Baudrillard
Jacques Derrida

Week Twelve: Cyber Cultures
Simulation
Social Media
Virtual Reality
Remediation

7. ASSESSMENT METHOD

The pass mark for this unit is 40%. In addition students must obtain at least 35% in each separate assessment.

8. WEEKLY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students are expected to spend approximately 10 hours a week on independent reading, research and seminar preparation.

8.1 ASSESSMENT

There are two assessment assignments for this unit.

The first is a 1,500 word case study analysis of a London based arts organisation of your own choice. You will discuss the organisations in terms of its position in culture and the philosophy and outlook of the organisation. The case study will carry 40% of the overall mark. **The case study deadline is Week 6, Thursday 4th March 2010**

The second assignment is a 2,500 word critical essay based upon a choice of **one** from the following essay questions. The essay will carry 60% of the final mark. **The essay deadline is Week 12, Thursday 6th May.**

8.2 Essay Questions

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ONLY
1. In what ways can it be said that contemporary art has been dominated by consumerism and what strategies have artists adopted to resist this pressure?
2. What problems are associated with the ways in which cultural diversity policy has been conceived and implemented over the period of the current Government?
3. High Culture versus Low Culture, is this an outdated division? Discuss with reference to contemporary thinking bout the production of art and media
4. The digital revolution has fundamentally altered our ways of seeing and thinking about art and has created new possibilities for cultural expression. Discuss with reference to arguments for and against this proposition.

8.3   PRESENTATION OF COURSE WORK

Essays should be word-processed. Type or write on one side of the paper only. All work should be line spaced at 1.5 with enough space in the left and right margins for comments and corrections

Carefully proof read your work before submission. Grammatical and spelling errors make the work appear careless and will reduce your overall mark.

8.4   SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

All work must be handed in by the deadline. When you hand in your work you will be given a receipt, which you must keep. If the office or lecturer loses your essay your receipt is proof that you handed it in. It is a good idea to keep a hard copy of your work.

8.5   COURSEWORK EXTENSIONS

If you are unable to complete the coursework by the deadline due to extenuating circumstances you must follow the given procedure:

i) Talk to the unit co-ordinator as soon as possible and get the agreement of the Unit co-ordinator to an extension of the deadline of submission

ii) Get a late submission form from the Undergraduate Office, Room, complete Part A and ask the course director to sign the form agreeing to the extension

iii) Hand in the form with the coursework on the agreed extension date

iv) If you request an extension for medical reasons you must supply a medical certificate Applying for an extension does not guarantee getting one

v) The maximum extension of the deadline date is two calendar weeks. Coursework submitted with this extended deadline will be marked in the normal way.

8.6 RETURN OF COURSEWORK AND FEEDBACK

Work will be returned within three weeks of the submission date. The work will carry a provisional grade, which remains advisory until the Examination Board in July and written comments from the lecturer. Any student who would like to discuss their essay in more detail should make an appointment to see the unit co-ordinator

8.7 MARKING CRITERIA

Coursework will be marked following the generic criteria found in your

course handbook

8.8 MARKS FOR COURSEWORK SUBMITTED LATE

The maximum marks for any coursework submitted up to two weeks after the deadline date (including the late submission date if agreed by academic staff) is 40%. Coursework submitted more than two weeks after the deadline will not be marked. The Examination Board will decide whether the student is to be given the opportunity to redeem failure, provided that the students has submitted a claim for mitigating circumstances has been accepted by the Board.

8.9 UNIT EVALUATIONS

Students will be asked to complete an anonymous unit evaluation in Week 10,11 or 12. Unit evaluations are an important part of the University's quality assurance systems and provide a valuable mechanism for obtaining student feedback and identifying ways in which the unit can be improved and updated. Unit evaluations are proce4ssed outside the University and

summaries are distributed to the Unit Co-ordinator, Course director and Head of Division and Head of Faculty. In addition, students may ask the student representative to raise specific issues regarding units at the course board meetings.

9. **Complete Indicative Reading List**

Adorno. T. (1991) <u>The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture.</u> London. Routledge

Barker. C. (2008) <u>Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice</u>. London. Sage

Barthes, R. (1977) <u>Image-Music-Text</u>, London: Fontana Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1983<u>) Simulations</u>, Translation. Foss. New York,

Benjamin. W. (1939) 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction'. In Evans.J. and Hall. S. Eds. (1999) Visual Culture: the reader. London. Sage

Berger, J. (1972). <u>Ways of Seeing.</u> London: BBC and Penguin Books Semiotexte

Bell. D. (2001) <u>Introduction to Cybercultures</u>. Routledge. London

Bender, G. Druckery.T (Eds) (1994<u>) Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology</u>, Seattle. Bay Press

Bolter.J.D and Grusin, R (2000) <u>Remediation</u>. MIT Press. Massachusetts. London

Castells. M, (2001) <u>The Internet Galaxy.</u> Oxford. Oxford University Press

Chanan, M (1999) <u>From Handel to Hendrix: The composer and the public</u>. London: Verso

Crimp. D. (1993) <u>On the Museum's Ruins</u>. Massachusetts. MIT

De Certeau. M. (1988) <u>The Practice of Everyday Life</u>. Berkeley. University of California

Derrida.J. (1998) <u>Deconstruction.</u> Basingstoke. Mcmillan

Dewdney. A & Ride. P. (2006) <u>The New Media Handbook</u>. London: Routledge.

Eagleton. T. (2000) <u>The Ideology of the Aesthetic.(1990)</u>. Oxford. Blackwell.

Eagleton. T. (2000) <u>The Idea of Culture</u>. Oxford. Blackwell.

Eagleton.T (1991) <u>Ideology: An Introduction. London. Verso</u>

Edgar, Andrew and Sedgwick, Peter (2007) <u>Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts. 2nd edition.</u> New York: Routledge

Evans.J & Hall, S. (Eds) (1999) <u>Visual Culture: the reader.</u> London. Sage.

Foucault, M. (1971) <u>The order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences</u>. New York. Vintage Press

Freeland, C (2001) <u>But is it art? An introduction to art theory</u>. Oxford: University Press

Foster. H. .(1983) <u>Postmodern Culture.</u> London. Pluto.

Gilroy. P. (2004) <u>After Empire: melancholia or convivial culture</u>. London Routledge

Griswold. W. (2008) <u>Cultures and Societies in a Changing World</u>. Sage. London

Hall, S. (1997) <u>Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices</u>. London: Sage.

Harvey. D. (2006) <u>A Brief History of Neoliberalism</u>. Oxford University Press

Harvey. D. Heartney. E (2002) <u>Postmodernism</u>. London: Tate Publishing

Hebdige, D. (1979) <u>Subculture: The Meaning of Style</u>. New York: Routledge

Held. D. (1990) <u>Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas.</u> Cambridge. Polity

Highmore.B. (2002) <u>Everyday life and cultural theory: an introduction</u>. London. Routledge

Highmore. B. (2002) <u>The everyday life reader</u>. London. Routledge

Inglis. D. ((2005) <u>Culture and Everyday Life</u>. London. Routledge

Jameson,F.(1984) <u>Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism'</u>, New left Review, 146,pp.53-92

Jameson, F. (1985) 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in H. Foster (ed.) <u>Postmodern Culture.</u> London: Pluto Press.

Jencks, C. (1999) <u>The Postmodern Reader</u>. London: Academic Editions.

Lister,M. (2003) (ed) <u>New Media: A Critical Introduction</u>. Routledge

Lovejoy, M. (2004) <u>Digital Currents: art in the electronic age</u>

London, Routledge

Mackay, H & O'Sullivan. T (1999) <u>The Media Reader</u>. London. Sage

Lyotard, J-F. (1984) <u>The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge</u>.

Manchester. Manchester University Press

Mirzoeff, N. (1999) <u>An Introduction to Visual Culture</u>. London. Routledge

Mitchell (1992) <u>The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-</u>

<u>Photographic Era,</u> Cambridge MSA. MIT Press

Morley. D. & Robins. K. (2001) <u>British Cultural Studies: Geography,</u>

<u>Nationality, and Identity</u>. Oxford University Press

Morely, D. & Robins, K. (1995) <u>Spaces of Identity: Global Media,</u>

<u>Electronic Landscape and Cultural Boundaries.</u> London. Routledge

Paul.Christiane (2003) <u>Digital Art</u>, London, Thames and Hudson

Rush, M (1999), <u>New Media in Late 20th Century Art,</u> London, Thames

and Hudson

Neill, A and Ridley, A (eds) (2002) <u>Arguing About Art</u>. London: Routledge

Rose, G (2001) <u>Visual Methodologies</u>. London: Sage Publications

Said. E. (2003) <u>Orientalism. </u>London. Penguin

Salvemini, J. P. (2002) *The Benetton Campaigns, United Colours*.
London, Scriptum Editions / Thames and Hudson.

Smith. P. (2001<u>) Cultural Theory: An Introduction</u> Blackwells. Oxford

Nicholson. L. (2008) <u>Identity Before Identity Politics</u>. Cambridge

University Press. Cambridge.

Stallabrass. J. (2004) <u>Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art.</u>

Oxford University Press

Stone, Roseanne. 1995.<u>The War Between Desire and Technology at the</u>

<u>Close of the Mechanical Age</u> Washington. MIT

Storey. J. (2003) <u>Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture</u>.

University of Georgia

Storey, J. (1993) <u>An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture</u>

(Second Edition). London: Prentice Hall.

Thompson. J. (1990) <u>Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory</u>

<u>in the Era of Mass Communication.</u> Stamford University Press

Thompson. A (2006) <u>Adorno: A guide for the perplexed</u>. London. Continuum

Turner.G. (2002) <u>British Cultural Studies: An Introduction</u>. London. Routledge

Urry. J. (2002) <u>The Tourist Gaze</u>. London. Sage

Warburton. N. (2003) <u>The Art Question</u>. London: Routledge

Williams.R. (1976) <u>Culture and Society</u>. London. Chatto & Windus.

Williams. R. (1961) <u>The Long Revolution.</u> London. Chatto & Windus.

Wolin. R. (2006) <u>The Frankfurt School Revisited: And Other Essays on Politics and Society</u>. London. Routledge

•

10.   Course Readers

If you are going to buy books to support this unit I would suggest the following.

1.   **Dewdney, A. and Ride, P. (2006) <u>The New Media Handbook</u>. London. Routledge.**

I wrote this book with Peter Ride, the Creative Director of the Digital Arts Development Agency. The book is a mixture of short explanatory essays by me, covering key ideas of culture, technology and meaning together with edited interviews with contemporary new media artists and practitioners.

2. **Highmore. B**. (**2002) <u>The everyday life reader</u>. London. Routledge**

This book, edited by Ben Highmore will last you a long time and be useful to your studies in year's two and three. It includes the seminal original texts of thinkers on culture.

3.   **Hall. S. (1997) <u>Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices</u>. London, Sage/OU**

This is a brilliant book for showing how theory can be a really useful set of tools for understanding how meaning is made in culture and contains many relevant examples which relate to the topics covered in this unit.

11   Study Skills

Throughout your university career your work will be assessed on your ability to write a clearly expressed, cogent and analytical essay.

The University Learning Development Centre, based in Caxton House, offers some very useful courses that you should investigate. You may also consult a variety of study skills publications. Here is a short list of some that you will find useful:

Cottrell, S (1999) *The Study Skills Handbook*. London: Macmillan.

Greetham, B (2001) *How to Write Better Essays*, London: Palgrave.

Strunk, W and E.B. White (1979) *The Elements of Style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Information for students with disabilities / dyslexia

The Learning Support Unit provides services for students with disabilities and dyslexia at both the pre-entry stage and while studying at London South Bank University. Advice and support is available for all students with a disability / dyslexia to enable you to manage your specific academic and practical needs. This includes:

An initial screening and full assessment if you think you may have dyslexia

One-to-one advice and guidance

Arrangements for examinations, assessments, and on course provision (e.g. extra time in exams, possible extensions)

Advice and training for staff

Disability and dyslexia workshops

One to one tutorials

Student focus groups

Disability access across campus

Technical support and access

Support worker service

If you are a student with a disability or dyslexia or think you might need to be assessed for dyslexia, please contact the LSU as soon as possible. The sooner any arrangements you need can be made, the better equipped you will be to succeed on your course.

Learning Support Unit, Caxton House
Tel: 020 7815 6400
Web: www.lsbu.ac.uk/caxton

1. **Week One: Surveillance and Celebrity Culture**

Our discussion of critical cultures starts in the here and now, in the chaotic multiplicity of organised human activity, which can be described under the banner of culture or cultural activity. On some definitions what we are engaged in here, though formally distinguished as education, is a central part of culture in that we are striving to actively transmit and receive meaning. So we start our journey to understand the title of this unit, 'Critical Cultures', here in this room, with all that we collectively bring with us and all that we do and can experience of the lives and communication of other peoples. Of course we will only touch upon a fraction of what counts as human culture, but the aim is to delineate our field of enquiry, set out some of the questions that arise and to establish a framework in which we begin to define the problems and arguments made.

In this first lecture we start by considering a topical aspect of culture with the ubiquitous rise of Simon Callow and the phenomenon of celebrity culture. We will also look at Reality Television which is a relatively recent phenomenon; a hybrid between older forms of television drama, documentary, game show and variety programme. This lecture looks at *Big Brother* as typical of post-modern media and asks whose and what interests *Big Brother* addresses. We are looking at these examples in the context of beginning to account for differences in and judgements about cultural value.

Core Reading

Inglis.D. (2005) Culture and Everyday Life. London. Routledge
(Chapter 3."high', 'Popular' and "Low' cultures of everyday life. Pges 76 - 109)

Background Reading

Adorno. T. (1991) <u>The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture.</u>
London. Routledge

Andrejevic, M. (2004) <u>Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched.</u> Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bignell, J. (2005) <u>Big Brother : Reality TV in the Twenty-First Century.</u> Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Biressi, A. (2005) <u>Reality TV : Realism and Revelation</u>. London: Wallflower Press.

2.   **Week Two: Art and Culture – (Visit to Tate Britain)**

This week's lecture contrast's last week's discussion of popular culture, by holding the lecture at Tate Britain, a traditional institution of High Culture. Demographic evidence shows that the overwhelming majority of visitors to Tate Britain and other art museums are highly educated and drawn from the professional and middle classes. Attendance at the museum does not reflect the demographic composition of society and research has shown that those less formally educated and in routine and manual work do not in general regularly attend the organised arts. It is also the case that people defined in terms of racial and ethnic minorities are also less represented in museum attendance. Why is the case? Is it a problem and what are museums doing if anything about it? This day gives you the opportunity to see at first hand what goes on at Tate Britain. The visit includes a free pass to see the Chris Ofili exhibition and you are welcomed to stay on for the Late at Tate event. Transport: Bus C10 from outside Salvation Army building at Elephant straight to Tate, John Ruskin Street. Or 25 minute walk over Lambeth bridge.

Meet in the entrance to the Claw extension wing (in the right hand corner facing the front of the building).

Required Reading
Stallabrass. J. (2004) Art Incorporated:The Story of Contemporry Art. Oxford. Oxford University Press (Chpter 3. Consuming Culture. Pges 73 – 99)

Further Reading
Adorno. T. (1991) The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture. London. Routledge
Berger, J. (1972). Ways of Seeing. London: BBC and Penguin Books Semiotexte
Crimp. D. (1993) On the Museum's Ruins. Massachusetts. MIT
Dewdney. A & Ride. P. (2006) The New Media Handbook. London: Routledge.
Freeland, C (2001) But is it art? An introduction to art theory. Oxford: University Press
Warburton. N. (2003) The Art Question. London: Routledge

Other Resources
www.tateencounters.org and www.tate.org.uk

3. **Week Three: Art and Politics**

Following our visit to Tate Britain and Stallabrass's writing on Art and consumerism this lecture is based upon Walter Benjamin's seminal essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1939). The reason for focusing upon this essay is because it will allow us to discuss the ways in which the function of art has been considered historically, from mimesis, magic, ritual and the cult of beauty, leading up to the 20th C. emphasis upon Art for Art's sake. Although not an easy text rereading it several times will pay dividends in helping you think about the relationship of art to society and how theory illuminates issues and problems. We will return to the question of the function of art in weeks 11 and 12, when we consider how the function of art may be changing again in the Internet Age. One of the important points of Benjamin's essay is where he suggests that with mechanical reproduction art came closer to the masses. In the 20th C. there were a number of radical art movements, which strove to make art closer to society and we can see in these the basis for today's community art movement.

Required Reading

Benjamin. W. (1939) 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction'. In Evans.J. and Hall. S. Eds. (1999) <u>Visual Culture: the reader</u>. London. Sage

Further Reading

Berger, J. (1972). <u>Ways of Seeing.</u> London: BBC and Penguin Books

Semiotexte

Bucks-Morrs. S. (1991) <u>The dialectics of seeing: Wlater Benjamin and the Arcades project.</u> Cambridge. Mass. Mit Press

Gilloch. G. (1997) <u>Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City</u>. Oxford. Polity

Williams.R. (1976) Culture and Society. London. Chatto & Windus.

Said. E. (2003) <u>Orientalism. </u>London. Penguin

4.   **Week Four: Culture and Everyday Life**

The cultures of everyday life are a major theme of this unit and our understanding about the significance of everyday life in establishing a realm of personal freedom and agency is important to grasp as we look at different facets of organised culture. This session explores our ideas of space and in particular the city, using London as an example. It will discuss the difference between public and private space and the importance of the public realm in the maintenance of civil society. It will also discuss the related idea of public art and spectacle. In discussing private space it will look at the ways in which home and domestic worlds are distinguished from but related to the spaces of work, As part of the discussion of the city it will also focus upon travel and tourism as forms of cultural consumption. Finally the lecture will touch upon the importance of the body as a sign in public space, most notably through fashion.

Required Reading

Highmore.B. (2002) Everyday life and cultural theory: an introduction. London. Routledge

Highmore. B. (2002) The everyday life reader. London. Routledge

Urry. J. (2002) the Tourist Gaze. London. Sage

Further Reading

Rose, G (2001) Visual Methodologies. London: Sage Publications

Williams.R. (1976) Culture and Society. London. Chatto & Windus.

Mirzoeff, N. (1999) An Introduction to Visual Culture. London. Routledge

Sheller. M. & Urry. J. (2004) Tourism mobilities: place to play, places in play. London. Routledge

De Certeau. M. (1988) The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley. University of California

Derrida.J. (1998) Deconstruction. Basingstoke. Mcmillan

5.   **Week Five: Culture and Difference**

The lecture will be held at Theatre Peckham and Beccy Allen, the Creative Director of Southwark Theatres Education Partnership will discuss her educational background, the work of STEP and the role of an arts agency working between education, theatre and community. This week's lecture builds upon our discussion of personal cultures in order to expand upon the importance of the concept of difference when considering who defines the culture of others. The question arises here of how is cultural value established. It will focus upon a discussion of the development of the post colonial critique of Eurocentrism and think more about how identity relates to heritage. It will discuss race and ethnicity in relationship to Diaspora and migration. Understanding these ideas and concepts has a direct relationship to the management of the arts, in its most obvious form through cultural diversity policy

Required Reading

Naidoo. R. (2008) 'Fear of Difference/Fear of Sameness', in Shire. G. (2008) Race, Identity and Belonging. London. Lawrence and Wishart

Further Reading

Gilroy. P. (2004) After Empire: melancholia or convivial culture.
London Routledge
Said. E. (2003) Orientalism. London. Penguin
Nicholson. L. (2008) Identity Before Identity Politics. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
Morley. D. & Robins. K. (2001) British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity. Oxford University Press

6. **Week Six: Politics and Culture**

This lecture marks the start of part two of the unit in which we focus more fully upon what is meant by the term 'critical' What is the critical in culture and why has this unit been titled critical cultures? The beginning of an answer to this question can be hinted at in understanding that critical refers to a questioning outlook and wanting to know more than is at first obvious. A more developed critical position is one which sees society not only as unified whole but as conflicting parts, containing contradictions which are played out in the cultural sphere. Critical positions are also associated with active engagement in culture.

Weeks 6-12 will outline a set of historical perspectives on culture based upon a conflict view of society. derived from the influence of the work of Karl Marx and to a lesser extent Sigmund Freud, and the intellectual movements which developed from their writing. This week's lecture will outline the main arguments of Marx and Freud, comparing and contrasting their positions nd the problems they sought to find answers to.

Required Reading

Marx.K. & Engels.F. (1888)The Communist Manefesto. London. Reeves Bookseller.

Further Reading

Adorno. T. (1991) <u>The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture.</u> London. Routledge

Eagleton. T. (2000) <u>The Idea of Culture</u>. Oxford. Blackwell.

Eagleton.T (1991) <u>Ideology: An Introduction. London. Verso</u>

Williams. R<u>. (1961 The Long Revolution.</u> London. Chatto & Windus.

7. **Week Seven: Media Cultures**

We can start by taking the basic idea of ideology and apply it to the role and function of media, in that in a Marxist view the media makes dominant or ruling ideas in appear natural through what is represented and what is not. However, this simple model of the role of media soon breaks upon closer inspection, since audiences and consumers are not passive in the process and exercise considerable critical judgement. In addition, media products are a source of acknowledged pleasure, which the psychoanalytic model of analysing objects suggest. This week we look at the complexities involved in how Western cultures represent themselves in communicative forms and how these have changed with changes in technologies and markets. It will discuss the idea of cultures of consumption and that of material culture.

Required Reading

Hall. S. (1999) Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage.

Further Reading

Evans.J & Hall, S. (Eds) (1999) Visual Culture: the reader. London. Sage.

Mackay, H & O'Sullivan. T (1999) The Media Reader. London. Sage

Mirzoeff, N. (1999) An Introduction to Visual Culture. London. Routledge

8. **Week Eight: Cultural Theory**

This lecture focuses directly upon the role of intellectuals, scholars and researchers working in the academy to produce theoretical and analytical knowledge of culture. It outlines the two major traditions or schools of thought, which brought about cultural studies. The first is British Cultural Studies, which developed from the study of English Literature and was focused upon the development of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University founded by Richard Hoggart in 1964 and closed by the university in 2002. Stuart Hall took over the Directorship in 1968 and his work building upon that of Raymond Williams was highly influential for a younger generation of scholars who studied there including, Richard Johnson, Paul Willis, David Morley, Paul Gilroy, Charlotte Brundson as well as many others. The second tradition derives from French intellectual institutions and is focused upon Structuralism, founded upon the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Levi Strauss, and subsequently developed by Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault.

Core Reading
Lyotard, J-F. (1984) <u>The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge</u>. Manchester. Manchester University Press

Background Reading
Turner.G. (2002) <u>British Cultural Studies: An Introduction</u>. London. Routledge

Branston, G. and R. Stafford (1999) <u>The Media Student's Book, Second Edition.</u> London: Routledge. (Chapter 1)

Culler, J. (1985) <u>Saussure.</u> London: Fontana.

Fiske, J. (1990) <u>Introduction to Communications Studies</u>, Second Edition. London: Routledge. (Chapter 3)

Hawkes, T. (1997) <u>Structuralism and Semiotics</u>. London: Routledge.

Storey, J. (2001) <u>Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction,</u> Third Edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall. (Pages 58—61)

-

9.   Week Nine: Cultural Mythologies

This week's lecture follows up upon the structuralist tradition of thinking about culture by looking at the French literary critic Roland Barthes who was one of the first people to extend Saussure's structuralist linguistics to a broader analysis of media and culture. In the process, Barthes also sought to combine structuralist theory with an exploration of the ideological meaning of signs. This lecture examines one of Barthes's most influential and popular works, *Mythologies*, in which he develops a theory of 'myth' and uses it to analyse the signification of everything from wrestling to steak-and-chips. Whilst semiology has received considerable criticism as a 'closed' form of analysis it remains a valuable tool for investigating material cultural objects and as such provides a good illustration of how theory can be practically employed.

Required Reading

Barthes, R. (1973) Mythologies. London: Paladin, pp.26—28 ('The Romans in Films'); pp.41—42 ('Operation Margarine'); and pp.100—102 ('The Great Family of Man').

Barthes, R. (1998) 'Myth Today' (extracts) in J. Storey, (ed.) Cultural Theory and Popular Cultur*e: A Reader*, Second Edition. London: Prentice Hall, pp.109—118.

Further Reading

Barthes, R. (1993) A Roland Barthes Reader. London: Vintage.

Bignell, J. (1997) Media Semiotics: An Introduction. Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Chapter 1)

Culler, J. (1990) Barthes. London: Fontana.

Fiske, J. (1990) Introduction to Communications Studies. London: Routledge. (Chapter 5)

Storey, J. (2001) Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction, Third Edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall, pp.64—71.

Strinati, D. (1995) An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture. London: Routledge. (Chapter 3)

10.   Week Ten: Global Cultures

As we move towards the conclusion of the unit the last two lectures focus upon the ideas associated with post-modernism, which became a major intellectual preoccupation from the late 1980s.The lecture is careful to draw the distinction between what was understood the be the condition of post modernity and that of the intellectual and artistic movements of post-modernism. Most scholars agreed that the world was changing rapidly in the last two decades of the 20th C., making it hard to understand any one place or culture without reference to the increasing globalisation of economic and social activity. This lecture revisits one of the main ideas of the period, which can be found in David Harvey's development of the concept of time –space compression as one of the cultural consequences of global economic change. The lecture discusses a number of cultural examples of what could be described as continuing effects and affects of time-space compression

Required Reading

Harvey, D. (1989) The Condition of Post-modernity. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.284—95.

Further Reading

Jameson, F. (1985) 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in H. Foster (ed.) *Postmodern Culture*. London: Pluto Press.

Jencks, C. (1999) *The Postmodern Reader*. London: Academic Editions.

11.   Week Eleven: Postmodern Cultures

What is postmodernism and why is it important to the study of media? This lecture introduces the key ideas of post-modernism by contrasting them with the project of Modernism and its historical continuity with the European Enlightenment. The lecture draws a key distinction between postmodernist theory and the 'condition of postmodernity', which is a way of discussing common aspects of our contemporary experience.

The lecture starts by characterising Modernism before going on to map out the significant aspects of social, economic and cultural change which have been cited by various theorists and scholars as signalling the end of modernity and ushering in the condition of postmodernity. The second part of the lecture looks at how this broader set of changes has been interpreted as affecting our way of thinking about and looking at media in general and the image in particular. It introduces the idea of the collapse of 'the real' with what is represented, and the death of the author.

Core Reading
*   Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Post-modernity.* Oxford: Blackwell, pp.284—95.

Background Reading
Morely, D. & Robins, K. (1995) Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscape and Cultural Boundaries. London. Routledge
Lyotard, J-F. (1979) The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Translated by G. Bennington, and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University   of Minnesota Press.
Jameson,F.(1984) Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism', New left Review, 146,pp.53-92

12.   Week Twelve: Cyber Cultures

In this lecture we look at one logical extreme of the postmodern argument which uses semiology to claim that the image no longer refers to the real, but only to other signs within a system of signs. Making matters worse the argument continues that we have no way of distinguishing the real from the hyper-real and that our 'realty' is in fact immersed within this system of signs.   The key exponent of this argument is Jean Baudrillard, who articulated this view forcibly in a very dense and difficult essay entitled 'The Ecstasy of Communication'.   This lecture attempts to make this argument simple and to relate it to the previous lectures on semiology, looking at virtual and immersive environments in computer games as examples.

Core Reading

- Baudrillard, J. (1983) 'The Ecstasy of Communication', in H. Foster (ed.) *Post-modern Culture*. London: Pluto Press, pp.126—33.

Background Reading

- Clarke, D. B. et al., eds. (2009) Jean Baudrillard: Fatal Theories. London: Routledge.

- Hall, S., et al. (1992) Modernity and its Futures. London: Polity/OU.

- Hall, S. (1997) Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage/OU.

- Lane, R. (2000) Jean Baudrillard. London: Routledge.

- Merrin, W. (2005) Baudrillard and the Media. Cambridge: Polity.