LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY

Cultural Identities

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

2010-11
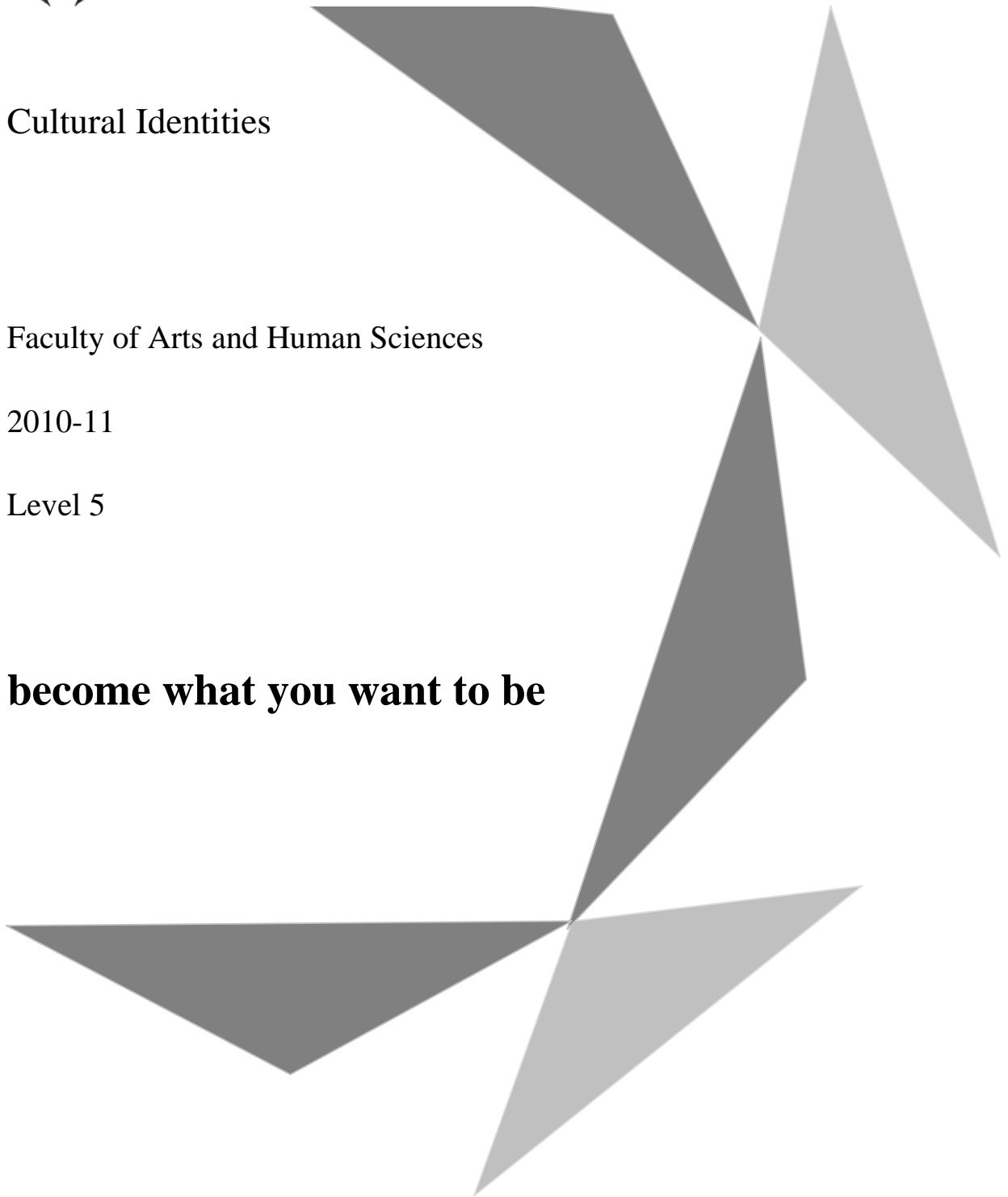
Level 5

become what you want to be

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1. UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title:	Cultural Identities
Unit Level:	Level 5
Unit Reference Number:	[Click and replace]
Credit Value:	20 credits
Student Study Hours:	200 hours
Contact Hours:	36 hours
Private Study Hours:	164 hours
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	N/A
Co-requisite Units (If applicable):	N/A
Course(s):	BA Media and Cultural Studies
	BA English and Media Studies
	BA Film Studies and Media Studies
	BA Media Studies and English Studies
Year and Semester	2010-11, Semester 1
Unit Coordinator:	TBC
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	TBC
Teaching Team & Contact Details (If applicable):	[Click and replace]
Subject Area:	Culture, Writing and Performance
Summary of Assessment Method:	Presentation: 40%
	Essay: 60%

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

Who am I? How do I understand my own identity and the identity of others? Has a sense of identity and self-hood always been the same or are ideas about the self historically and culturally determined? How is identity located socially and communicated symbolically through representation systems such as film, TV, video games, photography etc? This unit will explore the various ways in which identity matters to us and how our identities are shaped by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and place and then represented in film, video games and photography. The unit will explore these markers of 'difference' and how they are articulated in a variety of case studies.

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

The aims of this unit are to:

- Examine techniques for understanding meaning and representation in a range of media forms across a range of topic areas
- Enable students to develop knowledge and understanding of key critical and analytical tools for analysing visual culture.
- Develop students' skills in applying theoretical approaches to visual culture to a range of real world media and cultural examples.
- Explore key concepts such as essentialism, discourse, performativity, subjectivity, moral panics

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

Knowledge and Understanding:
- Define 'difference' and 'otherness' as defined by cultural theorists such as Fanon and Foucault
- Explain the multiple ways in which contemporary mass media construct individuals
- Identify the challenges for media and cultural theorists in exploring ideas of difference and otherness

Intellectual Skills:
- Formulate hypotheses regarding difference and otherness in relation to contemporary mass media and culture
- Advance strategies for testing such hypotheses

Practical Skills:
- Use online sources, library resources and media resources to construct visual analysis case studies and research for essay.

Transferable Skills:
- Deliver clear, confident and persuasive oral presentations to an audience.
- Employ appropriate ICT skills to produce visual presentations.
- Work effectively as part of a group

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The pass mark for this unit is 40%.

Assessment 1
- Group presentation of visual analysis case study
- Weighting: 40%
- Presentation in groups of 3-4
- Case study paper – the work of individual student (sample marked) – 500 words plus images

Assessment 1 is due in Week 9 or 10 of the unit

Assessment 2
- 2,000 word essay
- Weighting 60%

Assessment 2 is due in Week 14 of the unit

Your essay should demonstrate:

- An understanding of how media representations make meaning
- A critical analysis of a range of media texts
- A critical awareness of some of the different methods and rationales for discursive media analysis
- Clear communication skills in written English

Please read recommended key texts (Cultural Identity Reader) as a starting point as well as relevant texts from the Unit Guide. In your essay, you must refer clearly to relevant academic work addressed during this unit, summarising the main arguments in your own words. You must utilise the Harvard system of referencing at all times (see 9.1 Core Materials in Unit Guide).

In your essay use concrete media examples to clarify your argument - you may draw explicitly on your visual analysis case study which you gave for your presentation . In addition, there are plenty of academic studies in the field of media analysis to help you shape your own discussion.

Your essay is only 2000 words long so be succinct and structure and edit your work carefully.

The essay must be submitted to the Faculty Office (FAHS), Borough Road, Room B266 in the assessment period in January 2011. Precise submission dates will be announced nearer the time.

NB: Two copies of the essay are required. One will be returned to you with tutor's comments; one is for our records. If you do not submit two copies you will only get the feedback sheet and not the essay.

Essay writing check list

Essay writing is a complex juggling act

Writing the essay will test many different skills:

- Your use of language
- Your ability to present your work clearly
- Your ability to research your topic
- Your mastery of academic writing
- Your ability to think critically
- Your levels of knowledge about the subject

General advice on academic essay writing:

http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/essay/html

N. Williams (2004) *How to get a 2:1 in Media, Communication, Cultural Studies*, London, Sage

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

What we expect from your essay

(1) 2000 words – word processed – with bibliography…NO plastic folders

(2) 2 copies handed in by the deadline.

(3) Each essay should contain a reference to at least ONE key text; at least ONE text from the 'useful reading' list; at least ONE text chosen by you from your own research activities; and at least ONE case study researched by you - this should be drawn from your visual analysis case study.

(4) You will need to summarise and analyse these texts in relation to your chosen question and explore your case study in relation to the question and the academic texts.
(5) Make sure you refer to the texts you have read by citing their bibliographical details

(6) You might find the following webpage helpsheets useful:

On referencing: http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/hs30.pdf

On plagiarism: http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/hs4.pdf

What we DO NOT want from your essay

(1) Heavy use of web sources.

(2) Over-dependence on lecture material.

(3) Over-dependence on case studies used in lectures. You may make reference to case studies referred to in lectures but we will also expect to see reference to examples researched by you.

(4) Journalistic type rants with no reference to any of the reading.

Essay Questions

The essay will assess the extent to which you have understood the key concepts, and have absorbed and processed the content of this unit. The assignment will test the learning outcomes of this unit and relate to the broader criteria for Level Two units.

Choose **ONE** essay from the following list. The notes in italics are designed to give you some ideas of how you might like to approach the essay.

NB:
Regardless of which essay question you choose to answer your essay you should aim to include (as a minimum requirement) a reference to one key text, one 'useful reading' text, one text that you have researched for yourself and at least one, usually two case studies.

Q1. To what extent do stereotypes contribute to the representation of a cultural Other? Critically analyse the concept of the 'other' in reference to either the representation of Islam or black identity in contemporary media.

Q2. Critically analyse the ways in which the figure of the dangerous youth is produced in the mediascape. Discuss in relation to examples from film, TV, photography, games or music lyrics or pop videos you have studied.

Q3. *Butler argues that all gender is drag. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to specific examples.*

Q4. In what ways do the media reproduce essentialist gender identities? Discuss with a critical analysis of specific media representations (in film, TV, photography, games or music, lyrics or pop videos).

Q5. Masculinity is in crisis. Critically analyse the ways in which masculine identity is contested and constructed in contemporary culture.

Q6. Considering the representation of terrorism in contemporary culture, in what ways does the media construct notions of the 'Other' and 'evil', and how has this changed over time?

Q7. "If it is now recognized that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places. Moreover, such multiple identities can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both." Considering this quotation, in what ways can the notion of Britishness be seen as they either a source of richness or conflict?

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 20 working days after the submission of an assignment.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

- Academic narratives of the self and identity
- Contrasting notions of subjectivity and the subject
  (enlightenment subject, sociological subject, postmodern subject)
  The importance of identity and media in contemporary society – the performance of 'extraordinary subjectivity'

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

The unit will be delivered over 12 weeks.

- 3 hour lecture/seminar for 10 weeks, delivering key content and case studies. Lecture materials will be available through a Blackboard portal. Lectures and seminars are delivered by the Unit Coordinator.
- 2 weeks of assessed presentations of visual analysis case studies in weeks 9 and 10

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

Managing your own study is a central part of undergraduate life. To help you do this you must make every effort to attend the lectures and to read the key texts which are provided for you in the Unit Reader. The key texts have been chosen to complement the lectures and as core reading to help you prepare for writing your presentation and essay. We will expect to see reference to the key texts in your essays, as well as references to other reading outlined in the unit guide.

You will need to read the key texts carefully, taking notes and underlining key passages. You will also need to decide which media texts you will want to use to illustrate your essay; you can choose from film, TV, photography, journalism, video game, music/soundscape etc.

There are also a range of journals that you might find helpful in researching your essay: *New Formations, Cultural Studies, Media, Culture and Society, Popular Music, Convergence* and *Screen*.

Most of this material will be available in the Perry Library; however, you may have to venture elsewhere for further research. Information on London university libraries can be found at the Perry Library and on the LIS web page: http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/~lis/opacs/index.htmil . The British Film Institute Library is also available to students. Passes are available to all Arts and Media students and can be collected from the Perry Library.

In addition to the Unit Reader you are advised to make regular visits to the Blackboard site. Blackboard is a virtual classroom that you can access to exchange information with staff and other students. The unit guide, lectures and information relating to writing the essay will all be posted on Blackboard for you to access. To do this successfully you will need your LSBU username and password. Please check the Blackboard announcement page regularly as this is the main way in which staff can communicate with students during term-time.

7.4   Employability

A sensitivity to ideas of identity is a crucial aspect of life for the contemporary media worker. In portraying identity, media producers will be required to think careful about the implications of their actions, either by their employers or with regard to legislating bodies or pressure groups. Cultural Identities provides a thorough grounding in how contemporary cultural and media theory has attempted to deal with ideas of subjectivity and identity.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Week 1 – Friday 1st October *2010*

Title: *What Difference Does It Make? Similarity, Difference and Cultural Identity*

Screening: *Mad Men* – series 1, episode 8.

An introduction to the main issues that will be addressed throughout the module, focusing in particular on notions of the self, the political construction of the body, and the manner in which identity is shaped through both individual and collective processes and experiences

Key Text:

Woodward, K. (2002) "Embodying Identity" in *Understanding Identity,* London: Arnold

Useful reading:

Catherine Belsey (2002*) Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press

Anthony Easthope and Kate McGowan (eds) (2004) *A Critical and Cutlural Theory Reader*, Maidenhead, Open University Press

Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds) (1999) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage

J.Lechte (2002) *Key Contemporary Concepts*, London, Sage – useful supplement to your dictionary

K.Woodward (ed) (1997) *Identity and Difference*, London, Sage.

Kath Woodward (2002) *Understanding Identity*, London, Arnold.

M. Sturken and L. Cartwright (2001) *Practices of Looking*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

C.Weedon (1992) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell

Will Wright (1994) 'The structure of myth and the structure of the western film' in John Storey (ed) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Useful websites

www.theory.org.uk
This site is maintained by David Gauntlett of Bournemouth Media School. It is a fun and creative site, with an engaging approach to poststructuralist ideas (with particular reference to Foucault, Butler, queer theory, identity etc). Also gives loads of links to related sites.

www.popcultures.com – lots of cultural studies related essays

www.arasite.org – cultural studies related essays and also student work.

Week 2 – Friday 8th October 2010

Title: *Gender 1 – Typical Girls: The Construction of Femininity*

Case study: Women in Popular music and Riot Grrrl
Using the position of women in popular music as a case study, we focus on the construction of femininity in popular culture, exploring the impact this has upon female conceptions of self. In particular, there is a consideration of the performative aspect of gender, with   reference to the various works of Wolf, Mulvey and Butler.

Key Text:
Coates (1997) "(R) Evolution Now? Rock and the political potential of gender" in Swiss, Sloop and Herman (eds) (1998) *Mapping The Beat: Popular Music and Contemporary Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell*

Useful reading
Judith Butler (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the discursive limits of sex*, NY, Routledge.

S. Cohen and I.R. Hark (editors) *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities   in Hollywood Cinema* (1993) London: Routledge

Jude Davies and Carole R. Smith Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in contemporary American film (1997) Keele University Press

Rosalind Gill (2007) *Gender and the Media*, London, Routledge.

Chris Holmlund (1993) 'Masculinity as multiple masquerade: The 'mature' Stallone and the Stallone clone' in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (eds) Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, London, Routledge.

Wendy Holloway (2001) 'Gender difference and the production of subjectivity' in Margaret Wetherall et al (eds) *Discourse theory and practice*, London, Sage.

Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in <u>The Sexual Subject</u>

Steve Neale (1993) 'Masculinity as spectacle: Reflections on men and mainstream cinema' in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (eds) Steven Cohan and Ina   Rae Hark, London, Routledge.

Maran Sarup (1993) *An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism*, second edition, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Jackie Stacey <u>Star-gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship </u>(1998) London: Routledge

Yvonne Tasker <u>Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the action cinema </u>(1993) London: Routledge

Matthew Tinkcom and Amy Villarejo <u>Keyframes: popular cinema and cultural studies</u> (2001) London: Routledge

Chris Weedon (1992) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist theory*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Chris Weedon (1994) 'Feminism and the principles of poststructuralism' in John Storey (ed) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Gail Weiss (1999) *Body Images: Embodiment as Corporeality*, NY, Routledge.

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

Die Hard (1988, 1990 etc)
Lock Up (1989)
Beverly Hills Cop (1984 and 1989)
Tango and Cash (1989)
Boyz in the Hood (1990)
Terminator (1984, 1991 etc)
Lethal Weapon (1997, 1999 etc)

Week 3 – Friday 15th October 2010

Title: *Gender 2 – Is That What A Man's Supposed To Look Like? Masculinity, the Male Body and* Fight Club

Screening: *Fight Club*

Without a mobilising movement to define it in the same way in which feminism has helped to redefine women's roles, masculinity is argued to be in crisis. This week's lecture will explore the concept of masculinity, focusing on notions of patriarchy, the appearance of the body and, through Fight Club, the function of violence in asserting dominant male identities. We ask, then, is masculinity in crisis?

Key Text:
Friday, K. (2003) ""A Generation of Men Without History": Fight Club, Masculinity, and the Historical Symptom", *Postmodern Culture*, Vol. 13, No. 3*

OR

Tasker, Y. (2000) "The Body In Crisis or the Boby Triumphant?" in *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, London: Routledge

Useful reading as week 2

Week 4 – Friday 22nd October 2010

Title: *All Out In The Open: Sexuality, Foucault and Katy Perry*

Case Study: Katy Perry – "I Kissed A Girl"

What are the dominant representations of sexuality in our society and how do they become conditioned as 'natural' or 'deviant'? The answer to these questions is rooted in the distinction between the cultural and the natural. Making reference to the notions of biopower and discourse theory, Foucault shows us there is no such thing as the 'natural' in human behaviour and social interaction. Therefore, if discourse lies at the root of behaviour, then the question should be not if certain manifestations of sexuality are 'natural' or 'deviant', but why it would be necessary to deem them as such.

Key Text:
Gauntlett (2002/8) "Queer Theory and Fluid Identities" in *Media, Gender and Identity*, London: Routledge

Useful Reading

Chris Barker (2000) 'Sex, Subjectivity and Representation', pp 244-248 in
Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice, London, Sage.

Carol Bigwood (1998) 'Renaturalising the body (with the help of Merleau-Ponty' in Don
Welton (ed) *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical Reader*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Blackwell.

Judith Butler Gender Trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity (1990) London:
Routledge

Judith Butler Bodies that Matter: on the discursive limits of 'sex' (1993) London: Routledge

Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (2001) 'Putting the Body's Feet on the Ground:
Towards a sociological reconceptualization of gendered sexual embodiment'
in *Constructing Gendered Bodies* (eds) Kathryn Backett-Milburn and Linda
McKie, London, Palgrave.

Judith Butler (1993) 'Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire' in Simon During (ed) *The Cultural
Studies Reader*, London, Routledge.

Jeffrey Weeks Against Nature: Essays on Sexuality, History and Identity (1991) London:
Rivers Oram Press

Week 5 – Friday 29th October 2010

Title: *Who Are You? Ethnicity, The Other and A Sense of Self*

Case study: Wale – "The Kramer"

The dominant group in the Western world is usually the white heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class English-speaking male. By extension, this marginalises those that do not conform to these indices of identity, creating various degrees of 'Otherness'. The Other is, thus, defined by negation – that which we are not. What power is invested in the notion of the 'Other' and how does this relate to perceptions of ethnicity and a sense of self?

Key Text:
Olaoluwa, S. (2007) "The Author Never Dies: Roland Barthes and the Postcolonial Project in *International and Interdisciplinary Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sound, Text and Image*, Volume 4, April 2007*

Week 6 – Self-Managed Study Week

Task: You will be expected to complete some work during this week that relates directly to the module. At the end of teaching in week 5, you will be given a handout listing some questions and reading you need to consider.

Week 7 – Friday 12th November 2010

Title: *A Place of One's Own: Nationality, Nationhood and A Sense of Belonging*

Case Study: Should Mikel Arteta play for England?

Globalisation and, in particular, Americanisation, is said to have eroded the relevance of the nation state, yet nationality persists as one of the dominant means by which we define who we are. We must therefore question how significant our place of birth is to constructing personal and collective identities. More to this, in what ways do we experience our nationality and is it something that we are able to change at will?

Key Text:
Highmore, B. (2005) "Colonial Spacing – Control and Conflict in the Colonial and Neocolonial City" in *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbiotic City*, London: Palgrave

Week 8 – Friday 19th November
Title: *Prole Art Threat: Status, Crime and Articulations of Class Identity*
Screening: *This Is England/This Is England '86*
Marx argued that class difference was at the heart of all social change. However, long-standing distinctions between classes are said to be eroding. Nevertheless, there still persist very clear gaps between the rich and poor in society, with certain prejudices attached to these distinctions. That noted, in what ways is class articulated in society today and can it still be understood as a relevant means of understanding both who we are and how society functions as a whole?

Reading:
Wykes, M. (2001) "High Jinks: Youth, Crime and Community" in *News, Crime and Culture,* London: Pluto

Week 9 – Friday 26th November
Presentation 1 (in small groups).
All students are expected to attend the presentations for each week. An important transferable skill is to be able to give and receive feedback on your work. You will also learn valuable skills of listening and analysis.

Week 10 – Friday 3rd December
Presentation 2 (in small groups).
All students are expected to attend the presentations for each week. An important transferable skill is to be able to give and receive feedback on your work. You will also learn valuable skills of listening and analysis.

Week 11 – Friday 10th December 2010

Title: *Kidulthood: Subcultures, Style and Representations of Youth*

Screening: *Heavy Metal In Baghdad*
A subculture is a term generally applied to the analysis of young people that suggests that certain groups of individuals have interests, beliefs and values that they share with each other but not with the rest of society. In this session, we focus on the various means by which subcultures generate these values, considering tribal affiliations and group identification. More to this, how is youth represented and articulated in our contemporary society?

Reading:
Hebdige (1979) "The Function of Subculture" in During (ed) (1999) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 2nd Edition, New York: Routledge, pg 441-50*

Useful reading

Chris Barker (2008, 3rd Edition) *Cultural Studies*, London, Sage

Week 12 – Friday 17th December 2010

Title: *Anti-Bodies: Online Identity and the Posthuman Subject*

Case study: Anonymity in music: dubstep and the bedroom auteur
Introducing the interrelated concepts of posthumanism and poststructuralism, we look at the shifting role of the body in online environments and the implications this has on the construction of identity. We question how identity is formed, reformed and problematised through technology, alongside considering the new practices and values that emerge from digital cultures.

Key Text:
Davey and Kennedy (2006) "Bodies and Machines: Cyborg Subjectivity and Gameplay" in *Game Cultures: Computer Games as New Media*, OUP

Useful reading

Barbara Creed The Monstrous Feminine: Feminism, Film and Psychoanalysis (1993) London: Routledge

Thomas Csordas Embodiment and Experience: the existential ground of culture and self (1994) Cambridge University Press

Kelly Hurley "Reading Like an Alien" in Halberstam, J and Livingstone, I, Posthuman Bodies (1999) Bloomington Press

Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingstone Posthuman Bodies (1999) Bloomington Press

Judith Halberstam Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the technology of monsters (1998) Duke University Press

Donna Haraway Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature (1991) London: Free Association

Steve Neale (1990) 'You've got to be fucking kidding!' Knowledge, belief and judgement in Science Fiction' in *Alien Zone* (ed) Annette Kuhn, London, Verso.

Margrit Shildrick Leaky Bodies and Boundaries:Feminism, Postmodernism and Bioethics (1997) London: Routledge

Margrit Shildrick Embodying the Monster: encounters with the vulnerable self (2001) London: Sage

Donna Haraway (1991) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The reinvention of nature*, London, Free Association.

N. Katherine Hayles (1999) 'Prologue' in *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Jean Baudrillard (1983) *Simulations*, NY, Semiotexte

Francis Fukuyama (2002) *Our Posthuman future: Consequences of the biotechnology revolution*, London, Profile Books

E. Graham (2002) *The representation of the posthuman*, Manchester, MUP

Stuart Sim (2001) Lytotard and the inhuman, Cambridge, Icon Books.

B. Stafford (1993) *Body Criticism*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press.

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

AI (Steven Spielberg, 2001)
Gattaca (Andrew Niccol, 1997)
Robcop (Paul Verhoeven, 1986)
Bladerunner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
The Matrix (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999, 2003)
Lara Croft – film and video game
Johnny Nmemonic (Robert Longo, 1995)
Terminator (James Cameron, 1984)
X-Men (Bryan Singer, 2000)

9.   STUDENT EVALUATION

The university operates a system of Unit Evaluation at the end of each Unit. The questionnaire provides the student with the opportunity to feedback on the learning and teaching process, with ideas for improvement which might be adopted in the future. Unit Evaluations are monitored carefully by the Head of Department and the Course team and external examiners – and student feedback treated seriously so that we can continuously improve the learning and teaching experience.

10.   LEARNING RESOURCES

10.1 Core Materials
[Click and replace]

10.2 Optional Materials
[Click and replace]

NOTES