

**Trent University  
Cultural Studies PhD Program**

**CUST 6100Y: Intellectual Traditions in Cultural Studies  
Fall and Winter 2024-25**

Tuesdays 7:00-9:30 p.m.  
Scott House 208

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### **Course Description**

A year-long seminar concerned with questions, problems and traditions in Cultural Studies. The syllabus constitutes the materials for the Comprehensive Examination (CUST 6125). The seminars will help students prepare for the exam and integrate their research into the field of Cultural Studies.

### **Course Structure**

The course will meet once a week throughout both the Fall and Winter terms to engage in a combination of lecture and discussion. In early April, the course coordinator will meet with the students to discuss the structure of the exam.

### **Evaluation**

#### **Term essays (2)**

Weight: 30% x 2 = 60%

Date: Dec 10 and Apr 8

Students are expected to submit two writing assignments of 5,000 words each, at the end of the fall and the winter term, respectively. The first essay, due Dec 10, should offer a concise summary and critique of at least one of the weekly themes, including all readings assigned for that week (see below). An additional focus of the assignment will be on defining a subject area within Cultural Studies that is closely aligned with your own research, exploring how your work fits in the subject area and vice versa.

The essay should generally include the following:

1. An elaboration of the **main arguments** of the readings in your own words. Here you are asked to distill the readings into their most essential parts, and to connect the readings as essential texts of a coherent field of study.
2. An **evaluative response** which discusses the relevance and significance of the arguments presented and how they relate to other ideas in the course. Are the arguments

compelling? Why or why not? Is there anything unexpected in the argumentation? Do the authors offer a new way of seeing a topic? Are there assumptions which need to be taken apart?

3. An effort to **situate your own work/research interest** in relation to the field as you have defined it. How might you apply the ideas put forward in these readings relate to your own work or proposed work? Will your research advance existing contributions in the field and/or explore an underdeveloped aspect? What are some readings, authors, concepts, or debates that you want to highlight in your future work that is not featured in the assigned texts?

The second essay, due Apr 8, should be a comparison of two weekly themes. These can be from either the fall or winter term, but they should be different from the theme explored in your first paper.

Your paper should offer a concise summary and critique of at least two of the weekly themes, including all the readings assigned for those weeks (see below). An additional focus of the assignment will be on defining a subject area within Cultural Studies that is closely aligned with your own research, exploring how your work fits in the subject area and vice versa.

The essay should generally include the following:

1. An elaboration of the **main arguments** of two subject areas based on the weekly assigned readings. What are the major differences in the approach taken by each?
2. A **comparative assessment** of the fields based on a set of criteria. Take an example and consider how they would be approached or perceived by researchers in the subject area. What are the specific watersheds between the two? Where are the potential moments where the two fields could offer opposing and/or complementary perspectives? What is missing in both?
3. An effort to **situate your own work/research interest** in relation to the fields as you have defined them. How might you apply the ideas put forward in these readings relate to your own work or proposed work? Will your research advance existing contributions in the field and/or explore an underdeveloped aspect? What are some readings, authors, concepts, or debates that you want to highlight in your future work that is not featured in the assigned texts?

### **Counter-syllabus (presentation)**

Weight: 15%

Date: November 26

Because of the interdisciplinary and amorphous nature of Cultural Studies, any attempt to define the field's "intellectual traditions" is liable to contain many gaps. In this assignment, students are expected to deliver a short (10-minute) presentation that focuses on an article of their choice. The article, circulated no later than November 19, will 1) be on a subject that the student feels passionate about, and/or 2) address gaps in the syllabus.

### **Participation**

Weight: 25%

Date: Ongoing

Students are expected to attend every seminar and to actively participate in the conversation. In addition, students are expected to attend Salon Seminars, six of which are scheduled on Thursday evenings throughout the year (see schedule).

### **CUST 6125 Comprehensive Examination**

The materials in the course constitute the materials covered in CUST 6125 Comprehensive Examination, which is written in the middle of April (written portion), and concluded with a defense in later April or early May (oral portion). It will be managed by an examining committee of at least three faculty including the Director. We will discuss the exam throughout the year.

### **Texts**

Most readings are available through the CUST 6100 folder, accessed through Office360 Sharepoint, unless otherwise indicated.

### **Access to Instruction**

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (BH Suite 132, 748-1281, [accessibilityservices@trentu.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@trentu.ca)) as soon as possible. Complete text can be found under Access to Instruction in the Academic Calendar.

### **Seminar Schedule**

#### **FALL**

#### **September 10**

#### **Welcome and Introduction: The formation of Cultural Studies – Joshua Synenko**

Reading: Stuart Hall "The Formation of Cultural Studies." *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History*. Durham: Duke UP, 2016. 5-24. (Bata Library)

#### **September 17**

#### **Theories histories – Joshua Synenko**

Meaghan Morris, "Introduction: History in Cultural Studies," in *Too Soon, Too Late: History in Popular Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998. (Electronic copy available through Bata Library)

Tilottama Rajan (2001) "In the Wake of Cultural Studies: Globalization, Theory, and the University." *Diacritics* 31.3: pp. 67-88.

Bill Readings, excerpt from *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Gayatri Spivak, excerpt from *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Rinaldo Walcott (2023) “Undoing the University; or Whatever Happened to Antiracist Feminism.” *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*. 47.1, pp. 9-15.

## **September 24**

### **Sovereignty – Joshua Synenko**

Giorgio Agamben, excerpt from *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Alain Badiou, excerpt from *Can Politics Be Thought?*

Ben Bratton, “The Black Stack.” <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/53/59883/the-black-stack/>

Carl Schmitt, “Definition of Sovereignty,” from *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*.

Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power Over Life.”

Achille Mbembe, excerpt from *Necropolitics*.

## **October 1**

### **Ideology – James Penney**

Slavoj Žižek, “The Spectre of Ideology,” in Žižek, *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994). pp.1-33.

Karl Marx, *A Critique of the German Ideology* (Progress Publishers, 1968), Part 1 “Feuerback: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks.”

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: ElecBook, 1999) (“Analysis of Situations. Relations of Force,” pp. 175-185.)

Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror-Phase as Formative of the Function of the I,” in Žižek, *Mapping*, pp. 93-99.

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in Žižek, *Mapping*, pp. 100-140.

Terry Eagleton, “Ideology and Its Vicissitudes,” in Žižek, *Mapping*, pp. 179-226.

For reference: Slavoj Žižek, ed., *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994).

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***Salon Seminar: Thursday, October 3***

Alex Levant (Laurier), “I’m Blue: AI Literacy in the Age of Agentic Machines.” Location TBA @7:30PM.

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**October 8**

**Narrative and Culture 1 – Victoria DeZwaan**

Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth”

Northrop Frye, “Archetypes of Literature”

John Crowe Ransom, “Criticism as Pure Speculation”

Gerard Genette, “Frontiers of Narrative”

**October 15**

**Narrative and Culture 2 – Victoria DeZwaan**

Stanley Fish, “Is There a Text in this Class?”

Homi Bhabha, “Introduction: Locations of Culture” (from *The Location of Culture*)

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*

Fredric Jameson, excerpts from 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

**Reading Break**

**October 29**

**Barthes the anti-colonialist – Ian MacLachlan**

Barthes *Mythologies* – focus on the section “Myth Today”

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***Fekete Distinguished Lecture Series: Thursday, November 7***

Davide Panagia (UCLA) “Cultural Theory, Mimesis, and the Algorithm Dispositif.” Bagnani Hall @ 7:30PM.

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***Special date: Friday November 8 @ 10:00AM (Senior Common Room)***

**The Algorithm Dispositif: What is it? – Davide Panagia**

Gillespie, Tarleton. “Algorithm.” In *Digital Keywords: A Vocabulary of Information Society and Culture*, edited by Benjamin Peters. Princeton University Press, 2016: 18-30.

Joque, Justin. *Revolutionary Mathematics: Artificial Intelligence, Statistics and the Logic of Capitalism*. Verso Books, 2022; Introduction; Chapter 6 & 7.

Panagia, Davide. "Michel Foucault and the Political Ontology of the Dispositif" in *Sentimental Empiricism*.

Panagia, Davide. "Introduction" in *Intermedialities*.

## **November 12**

### **New materialisms – Anne Pasek**

Coole, Diana H, and Samantha Frost. "Introducing the New Materialisms." In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, edited by Diana H Coole and Samantha Frost, 1–37. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs* 28.3 (2003): 801-831.

Liboiron, Max. "Introduction." In *Pollution is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.

Winner, Langdon. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus* 109 (1980): 121–36.

## **November 19**

### **Science and technology as culture – Anne Pasek**

Shapin, Steven. "Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology." *Social Studies of Science*. 14.481 (1984): 481-520.

Haraway, Donna J. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 183–201. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern." *Critical Inquiry*. 30, no. 2 (2004): 225.

Táíwò, Olúfẹ̀mí O. "Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference." *The Philosopher* 1923 108.4 (Autum 2020), <https://www.thephilosopher1923.org/post/being-in-the-room-privilege-elite-capture-and-epistemic-deference>.

(optional: Law, John. "On Sociology and STS." *The Sociological Review* 56, no. 4 (November 1, 2008): 623–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.00808.x>.

## **November 26**

### **Counter-syllabus – Joshua Synenko**

Each student will deliver a short presentation on their choice, followed by discussion.

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**Salon Seminar: Thursday November 28**

Danielle Taschereau Mamers (UofT), “Settler Colonial Ways of Seeing.” Location TBA  
@7:30PM.

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**December 3**  
**Writing workshop**

Students will workshop their papers.

**WINTER**

**January 7**  
**Archives and cultural memory – Joshua Synenko**

Assmann, J., and Czaplicka, J. (1995) “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique*, 65, pp. 125-133.

Ernst, W. (2004) “The Archive as Metaphor” *Open*, 7, pp. 47-53.

Gitleman, L. (2014) “Near Print and Beyond Paper: Knowing by \*pdf,” *Paper Knowledge*, Durham: Duke University Press, 111-136.

Huyssen, A., excerpt from *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*.

Moss, M. (2018) “Memory Institutions, the Archive and Digital Disruption,” Hoskins, A. (Ed.) *Digital Memory Studies: Media Past in Transition*, New York and London: Routledge, 253-280.

**January 14**  
**Cinema and post-cinema – Joshua Synenko**

Chateau, D., and Moure, J. (eds.) *Post-cinema: Cinema in the Post-art Era*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. Selections TBD.

Grusin, R., “DVDs, Video Games, and the Cinema of Interactions,” *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Film*, eds. Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, ReFrame Books, 2016,  
<https://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/post-cinema/1-3-grusin/>

Farocki, H., *Parallel I*, 2014 (streaming video available via Bata Library).

Shaviro, S. *Post-Cinematic Affect*, London: Zero Books, 2011, pp.11-35.

**January 21**

**Research-creation and praxis – Jessica Marion Barr**

Selections (TBA) from:

Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, Third Edition. The Guilford Press, 2020. (Preface online here: [www.guilford.com/excerpts/leavy\\_preface.pdf?t=1](http://www.guilford.com/excerpts/leavy_preface.pdf?t=1) and Introduction via Google Books: [https://books.google.ca/books?id=sb\\_nDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PA1&pg=PA7#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=sb_nDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PA1&pg=PA7#v=onepage&q&f=false))

Natalie Loveless. *How to Make Art at the End of the World*. Duke University Press, 2019. (Available as e-book through Bata Library: [https://ocul-tu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL\\_TU/jk8eeu/alma991008839541405159](https://ocul-tu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_TU/jk8eeu/alma991008839541405159))

Springgay, Stephanie, *Feltness: Research-creation, Socially Engaged Art, and Affective Pedagogies*. Duke University Press, 2022. (Available as e-book through Bata Library: [https://ocul-tu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL\\_TU/jk8eeu/alma991009138860305159](https://ocul-tu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_TU/jk8eeu/alma991009138860305159))

Watch:

"Our Bodies, These Lands: Practicing Reciprocity" by Jessica Marion Barr, Jenn Cole, and LA Alfonso; in "Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays I" Csenge Kolozsvari, Anja Plonka, Marko Stefanovic, Rasmus Nordholt-Frieling, Jessica Marion Barr, Jenn Cole, LA Alfonso and Alessandro Guglielmo; *Journal of Embodied Research* 2023-02-24 Volume 5 • Issue 2 • 2022 • Ecologies of Embodiment • Article 2 <https://jer.openlibhums.org/issue/870/info/>

(\*video essays here: <https://jer.openlibhums.org/article/id/9822/> \*start at minute 18:46 for "Our Bodies, These Lands")

KIASualberta. "Natalie Loveless: Research-Creation and Social Justice." YouTube, March 1, 2016, Accessed 24 April 2023, <https://youtu.be/nwfoAXjWCdo>

Recommended (but not required):

Thomas Kampe et al, "Embodying eco-consciousness: Somatics, aesthetic practices and social action," *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, Volume 13, Dec 2021, p. 3 – 8  
DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp\\_00063\\_2https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/jdsp\\_00063\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp_00063_2https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/jdsp_00063_2)

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**Salon Seminar: Thursday January 23**

Martin Arnold (Trent), "Stain Ballads: Martin Arnold talks about his (and others') music."  
Location TBA @ 7:30PM.



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## **January 28**

### **Affect, feeling and emotion – Mike Epp**

Raymond Williams “Structures of Feeling.” *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford UP 1977. 128–135.

Arlie Russell Hochschild “Exploring the Managed Heart.” *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling*. U of California P 2003. 3–23

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri on affective labour in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. London: Penguin 2004. 108–110.

Sara Ahmed “Afterword: Emotions and Their Objects.” *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014. 204-33.

Recommended:

Brian Massumi. “The Autonomy of Affect.” *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. 23-45.

Ann Cvetkovich. “The Everyday Life of Queer Trauma.” *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003. 15-48.

## **February 4**

### **Animal studies – Stephanie Rutherford**

Donna Haraway, “Playing String Figures with Companion Species.” *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 9-29.

Cary Wolfe, “Flesh and Finitude: Thinking Animals in (Post)Humanist Philosophy.” *SubStance* 3.117 (2008): 8–36.

Julie Livingston & Jasbir Puar, “Interspecies,” *Social Text*, 29.1 (2011): 2-14.

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “Outer Worlds: The Persistence of Race in Movement ‘Beyond the Human.’” *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly (GLQ)*, 21. 2–3 (2015): 215–18.

Vanessa Watts, “Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go on a European World Tour!),” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2.1 (2013): 20–34.

## **February 11**

### **Energy humanities – Brent Ryan Bellamy**

LeMenager, Stephanie. “Introduction: Ultradeep, Petroleum Culture in the American Century.” *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*. Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 3-19.

Lucas, Rob. "Fossil Labour." *Sidecar*, 9 December 2021. <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/fossil-labour>, accessed 03 September 2024.

Wenzel, Jennifer. "Improvement and Overburden." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 26, no.2, January 2016, available at: <http://www.pomoculture.org/2020/07/10/afterword-improvement-and-overburden/>.

Yaeger, Patricia. "Editor's Column: Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale-Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power and Other Energy Sources." *PMLA*, vol. 126, no. 2, 2011, pp. 305–310. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2011.126.2.305>.

## **Reading Break**

### **February 25**

#### **Jewish and Palestinian literature in diasporic comparison – Feyzi Baban and Aaron Kreuter**

Readings TBD.

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### ***Salon Seminar: Thursday, February 27***

Kate Last and Mark Allwood (Trent), "Sustainable Representation: An analysis of temporality in Andy Goldsworthy and Ana Mendieta's Land Art." Location TBA @7:30PM.

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### **March 4**

#### **Chicana/o/x and cultural borderland theory – Karleen Pendleton Jiminez**

Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands la frontera: The new mestizo* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Pendleton Jiménez, K. (Sep 2020). Borders, Sexuality, and Gender in Popular Culture. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1315

Rodríguez, R. T. (2022). *A kiss across the ocean : Transatlantic intimacies of British Post-Punk & U.S. Latinidad* (pp. 1-20). Duke University Press.

Verdecchia, G. (1993). *Fronteras Americanas: American borders*. Toronto: Coach House Press.

Verdecchia, G. (Dec. 27, 2020). Guillermo Verdecchia shares some stories and images from Fronteras Americanas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dd-OeQ9jmWg>

### **March 11**

#### **Indigenous week – David Newhouse**

Readings TBD.

## **March 18**

### **Media theory – Scott Henderson**

Kittler, Friedrich (2017). “Towards an Ontology of Media”. *Theory, Culture and Society* vol. 26, issue. 2-3, pp. 23-31 (<https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/doi/10.1177/0263276409103106>)

Young, Liam Cole (2015). “Cultural Techniques and Logistical Media: Tuning German and Anglo-American Studies” *M/C Journal* , 18:2, Spring 2015. (<https://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/961>)

Siegert, Bernhard (2013). “Cultural Techniques: Or The End of the Intellectual Postwar Era in German Media Theory”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 30:6, 2013. pp. 48-65 ([https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/48\\_ctoteopeigmt.xml](https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/48_ctoteopeigmt.xml))

Geoghegan, Bernard Dionysius (2013) “After Kittler: On The Cultural Techniques of Recent German Media Theory”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 30:6, 2013. pp. 66-82 ([https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/66\\_akotctorgmt.xml](https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/66_akotctorgmt.xml))

Macho, Thomas (2013) “Second Order Animals: Cultural Techniques of Identity and Identification” *Theory, Culture and Society*, 30:6, 2013. pp. 30-47 ( [https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/30\\_sactoiat.xml](https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v30i0006/30_sactoiat.xml))

Young, Liam Cole (2020). “Salt: Fragments From the History of a Medium”, *Theory Culture and Society*, 37:6, 2020. pp. 135-158 ([https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v37i0006/135\\_sffthoam.xml](https://journals-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/pdf/02632764/v37i0006/135_sffthoam.xml))

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### **Salon Seminar: Thursday, March 20**

Liam Mitchell (Trent), “The Parasocialists.” Location TBA @7:30PM.

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## **March 25**

### **Subject TBD – Liam Mitchell**

Readings TBD.

## **April 1**

### **Exam review – Joshua Synenko**

We will discuss the format and schedule of CUST 6125 Comprehensive Examination.