COMM 5304:001 Spring 2019 (Jan 14-May 10)  
Professor: Dr. Anantha S. Babbili  
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CULTURAL STUDIES

Course Description:

This course examines culture and theoretical approaches to cultural studies; it focuses on interdisciplinary research of mediated communication in societies and cultures, on media and audiences, covering a range of methods and theoretical frameworks; concentration varies.

About the Course:

This seminar in cultural studies examines culture as the key construct in human communication, key theories and methods used to study popular culture in-depth. It contextualizes the fundamental methods and related theories for understanding the construction of meaning in media such as film, television, popular music, and advertising within the various academic disciplines and traditions of cultural studies. Throughout the course, we will endeavor to connect this critical and intellectual history with contemporary media culture.

Student Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand culture and a variety of frameworks for interpreting popular culture
2. Apply interpretive frameworks and analyze popular culture
3. Create original media criticism and research by applying cultural theories

Required Textbook:


Additional Readings: Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

Method of Instruction: Discussion of material in the text and other assigned readings; oral presentations by students and professor; in-class assignments, and written work.

Method of Evaluation: Students will be graded on written papers; individual critiques of written work; in-class activities and in-class presentations. Students will know how each assignment fits into the final grade for the course. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss grades on assignments and not wait until the end of the semester.
Course assignments and Grade Calculation:

6 weekly Abstracts of one-page each from selected or assigned readings: 30% (5% each)

Two Short Papers 20% (10% each)

Final research paper 35%

In-class presentation of research paper 10%

Attendance & Class participation 15%  TOTAL: 100%

Grade Scale: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 and under=F

Note: Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA and thus, grades below a B can be troublesome.

Abstracts: One-page single-spaced typed summary of selected or assigned readings and shared in class.

Short Papers: Students will choose topics important to understanding communication scholarship and will submit two papers synthesizing at least 2 scholarly articles for each short paper. Papers do not have to be on the same topic. Papers will be graded on content and use of APA style of citation and writing. Papers graded at C or below must be revised by the student and submitted for a second time within 2 weeks of receiving the original grade. In these cases, final grades will be the average of the first and second grades. Papers should not exceed five pages. All papers will be submitted by hardcopy.

Research Paper and In-class Presentation: Students will present their work in a research paper. Papers will be 10-12 pages long (do not exceed 12 pages not counting bibliography). Grade for the research paper includes an outline of the paper student must submit prior to writing the paper. Students will make a 10 to 15-minute presentation in class about their paper. Papers must use APA style and good writing techniques. Papers will be submitted both electronically and by hardcopy. Topic for this final paper must be approved by the instructor in advance.

Attendance and Class discussion: All assignments are due on the dates assigned. If you have a doctor's excuse for missing class, we can work around that; prolonged illnesses may mean you will have to take an Incomplete or drop the class, but I will try to work with you as much as possible. Since in-class discussion is graded, if you are absent you cannot participate in class discussions! Students need to come prepared to class to discuss all readings and be actively engaged in class.

Course Policies:

Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their
disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Advising

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If you have a question as to who your academic advisor is, contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Graduate Coordinator (361-825-5753; stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in F.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Course Schedule & Assignments on Next Page
Course Schedule and Assignments
(dates and topics may change if special circumstances arise)

Jan. 14   Introduction(s)/History of Cultural Studies as a field of study and framework
            Read Chapter 1

Jan 21   Defining Cultural Studies, Chapter 2  Abstract 1 due

Jan. 28   British and American Cultural Studies, Chapter 3 Abstract 2 due

Feb. 4   Post-modernism and CS, Chapter 4 Abstract 3 due

Feb. 11   History and politics of CS, Chapter 5 Abstract 4 due

Feb. 18   Differing perspectives on CS, Chapter 6 SHORT PAPER # 1 DUE

Feb. 25   Transformations within Cultural Studies, Chapter 7 Abstract 5 due

March 4   Feminism and CS, Chapter 8 Abstract 6 due

March 11-15   SPRING BREAK

March 18   Post-colonialism and CS, Chapter 9 Abstract 7 due

March 25   Global Cultural Studies, Chapter 10 Abstract 8 due

April 1   Race, Identity and CS, Chapter 11 SHORT PAPER # 2 DUE

April 8   Margin and the Center

April 15   Racial politics and CS Oral presentations of Final Paper

April 22   Dialogue with Stuart hall Oral presentations of Final Paper

April 29   Course overview & Written papers due
ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Anantha S. Babbili (Ph.D., The University of Iowa) is Professor of Communication & Media Studies at Texas A&M - Corpus Christi. He was Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the university from 2007 to 2010. He is former Dean of the College of Mass Communication (2002-2007) at Middle Tennessee State University. Babbili taught and directed the Journalism and Media Studies department at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, for more than two decades. He was the visiting Rogers Chair in Journalism and New Information Technologies at the University of Western Ontario, Canada and lectured in Mexico, India, Slovakia, UK and Asia. Babbili is the co-author of the book, An Ethics Trajectory, published by the University of Illinois Press and has published his research in several books including Communication Ethics and University Values, Critical Issues in Media, Bosnia by Television (British Film Institute), Mass Media in the Middle East, and The Press and the State.

A former journalist, Babbili has published scholarly articles that have appeared in journals such as Media, Culture and Society, Journal of Communication Inquiry, Newspaper Research Journal and the International Third World Studies Journal. Babbili was the Editor (2000-2008) of the national Journalism & Communication Monographs and served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Mass Media Ethics and Journalism Studies. He is on the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences advisory board at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He received the Barry Bingham Award from the National Conference of Editorial Writers and was the consultant to the United Nations and the UNESCO on human rights and communication. The Carnegie Foundation and the Council on the Advancement and Support of Teaching named Babbili the Texas Professor of the Year. He is the recipient of the National Teaching Award from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, St. Petersburg, Florida. His columns and opinions as a news source on breaking events and U.S. foreign policy appeared on CNN, ABC News, CBS, and NBC and in Chicago Tribune, New York Times, Fort Worth Star-Telegram and other media outlets. Before earning his doctorate, Babbili earned two undergraduate degrees in biological sciences and journalism from his native India and M.A. in journalism from the University of Oklahoma.

Since 2006, Babbili has been a member of the governing board of a communication institute operated by a reputed media-related reputed foundation in India. As the Provost of Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Babbili served as the chief institutional liaison to the successful SACS accreditation Process and was responsible for overall quality of academic affairs of the University. He is the graduate of the Management and Leadership program of Harvard University.

What do we do in the Department of Communication & Media? Here’s our mission:

Develop students who are effective and ethical communicators with the creative, critical, and collaborative skills necessary to succeed in a diverse global environment.

What are the Department’s Objectives? After graduation, our graduates are able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively;
- Practice the ability to work with others to create a product; and
- Recognize ethical issues in communication