

Winter 2015

CAPITALIST CULTURES?

INT 204-102 CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Classroom: Arts & Letters – Room 211

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Office hrs: Wednesday noon-2pm and by appt

Class time: 2:40-4:10pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is culture? Is it a set of social practices peculiar to a particular society? If so, who establishes those practices and defines them? Is culture stable? If so, how is it stabilized? If it changes, how does it change? Are there rules? If so, how are these rules defined and how and why are they remembered? Is culture something that benefits the whole or only certain groups? If it is only certain groups, why don't disadvantaged groups rebel? Why would persons participate in reproducing social hierarchies if it is not in their interest to do so? If certain groups participate in reproducing their own subordination, what does this imply about our "consciousness"? Does it mean that groups are unconscious of what they are doing? Or are they consciously working to thwart their own human potential? If it is unconscious, how have those involved in their own subordination come to find out the rules to be followed and to act, accordingly? And if groups are unconscious, is there any way to make them conscious?

This course explores these and related questions through interrogating the historical, material, and social contours of capitalism in relation to a number of taken-for-granted cultural norms. The latter include, but are not limited to, the **family, time, space, aesthetics, sexuality, and identity—including the nonhuman and cyborgic**. In the process, we de-naturalize the natural and show how social, ontological, and epistemological sensibilities are instrumental to economic schemes and vice versa. We focus on capitalism, in particular, to tease out the relationships between *commodification* and culture.

We explore these questions through several key texts, spending much of our time on Engel's classic, *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*

(<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>),

and Herbert Marcuse's definitive, *One Dimensional Man*

(<http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/64onedim/odmcontents.html>).

Both works are available online and do not need to be purchased.

The midterm and final projects are linked. You work in groups of 2-4 persons, investigating a contemporary commodity of your choice and the mechanisms by which it has become a part of capitalist "culture."

COURSE GOALS:

- 1) To develop a set of analytical tools by which to understand the relationship between "culture" and "economy," particularly in the context of capitalism
- 2) To differentiate between domination and hegemony
- 3) To understand the intersectionality of economic and political instrumentalities and hierarchies
- 4) To be able to explain what is meant by ideology, consciousness, and unconsciousness in the context of capitalism
- 5) To appreciate how a cultural institution, set of practices, or performances might be instrumental in accomplishing certain capitalist goals and vice versa

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance is mandatory. An unexcused absence from class prohibits me from providing you with attentions of the kind available to those who attend class. I encourage you, in these cases, to contact class colleagues for notes or information. By contrast, if you are unable to attend a class due to an emergency, please consult with me about what was missed, bringing proof of what it was that prevented your attendance. After two unexcused absences, your grade is lowered significantly.

Emergencies do not include: a doctor's appointment, birthdays, dates with loved ones, anniversaries, weddings, extended travel to meet family or friends, a job interview, or a much-needed (or not) vacation. If you are unsure about what constitutes an emergency, feel free to contact me. **Note that an absence on a day when a particular exercise, quiz, or exam is due will count as two absences.**

Think about your attendance in terms of a potluck to which everyone is expected to bring something. Those who arrive empty-handed impoverish the larger group. So please read and be prepared. One-quarter of your grade is based on the *quality* of your participation, which includes in-class and out-of-class writing exercises.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

If there has been an emergency or unanticipated delays, please enter quietly, sit in the back, and make sure to get notes and information from colleague afterwards. If we are in the middle of a quiz or exercise, please sit out the exercise and do not attempt to ask about details or join in after the fact.

Unacceptable reasons for being late include: you met a friend whom you hadn't seen in forever; you stayed late after the previous class to talk with a professor; the previous professor kept you over time (*if s/he did this, please show him this syllabus and ask him/her to contact me at: 773 325 7882*); or you were starving and had to eat (feel free to bring your beverage or snack to class, provided you open up crunchy packages and bottled beverages before class starts).

Positive forms of etiquette include: **taking notes** (you care enough to write things down, realizing with humility that your memory will fail you); **speaking up in class** (a means of caring about and cultivating classroom-community); listening with care to others (indicating interest and respect); and **being respectful to the instructor and colleagues** by not talking while they are talking, speaking with gum in your mouth, using your computer to shop on the internet, or starting to pack up to leave well before the class period is over.

READINGS

Class readings are either on the Internet or on D2L. If and when the instructor announces changes to the syllabus, including new readings, students are responsible for the changes. Students who miss class have the responsibility to find out what information was missed. Ignorance of duly announced syllabus changes is not an excuse from responsibility for those changes.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is not tolerated at DePaul. Those found plagiarizing in any way fail this course. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the DePaul handbook. If you are still

uncertain, feel free to consult with me.

Remember that cutting/pasting what someone else has said and putting it into your text without attribution is one form of plagiarism. Be careful of this when you are completing your midterm.

GRADING, PARTICIPATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS

There are two assignments in this class—a midterm (30%) and a final (45%). This means that participation is very important and highly regarded. **Participation involves:** thoughtful written and oral responses in light of class discussions; taking the time to see the instructor if you have questions; contacting the instructor if questions emerge about the subject matter or course; and engaging with others in a thoughtful and respectful manner at all times. **The grades on both assignments are determined by:** the quality of the writing, the care with which you present detail, the care with which you format your work (including sources), and the rigor of the research. Directions for both assignments will be made available on D2L well ahead of the deadline. Since the INT program stresses the importance of writing well, 50% of each grade awarded is based on the writing. I do not correct for style; only for good writing techniques, which we discuss in class.

25% PARTICIPATION – judged primarily by the quality and thoughtfulness of written or oral responses in the context of classroom work, and the skills with which you engage your colleagues in productive dialogue with you and with others. This includes the Engels exam, in-class writing assignments, attendance, and so on.

30% GROUP MIDTERM – each person will collect and analyze 15 primary and *secondary* sources from a variety of popular and *scholarly* databases and fill out the midterm template provided for you on D2L. At the very end, group members will combine the individual 15 sources into a single document using a different colored font for each person (see D2L guidelines for details). You will then meet as a group to discuss three patterns or trends you found in EACH of your work (so, if there are three persons, you will have nine trends). These will be placed in a special table at the very end of the midterm document. Upload the group midterm onto D2L as a single file. *You must use Garamond 12 pt font throughout. You must use the active voice. At the very end (in the chart), you must use the **author-date** citation system, NOT the entire reference. (e.g., Nast 2011, 2; Gott 2010, 3).*

45% GROUP FINAL PAPER – 10 pages EACH person, not counting bibliography **THE FINAL MUST BE FORMATTED AS FOLLOWS:** *Garamond type; 12 point font; 1” margins; double spaced--no extra spaces inserted in between subheadings and the rest of the text; page numbers at top/center; a formal introduction; sub-headed sections in the body of the paper; a formal conclusion; bibliography in Chicago B style (guidelines on D2L).* Do not number your bibliography; it must be in alphabetical order. The group final must be uploaded on D2L under the “Final paper” button. Detailed directions are available on D2L.

CLASS SCHEDULE: 6 JANUARY – 12 MARCH

Weeks 1-3 Readings: Engels’, Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>

The easiest thing to do is to save each chapter as a pdf. On a Mac, you would download the chapter, then click on Print, then click on “Save as PDF.” Page numbers are automatically added, making it much easier to follow along in class. Not sure how this works on a PC.

January 6, 9

T: Are culture and economy linked? How did Marx theorize capitalism? What do the theoretical terms “private property” and “commodity form” mean? Read: Engel’s “Preface to the First Edition 1884” (2 pp), “Stages of Prehistoric Culture” (6 pp). (Be prepared to discuss on these on the first day of class!) ***Write up notes on the readings today and for Thursday. I will collect these at the end of Thursday’s class.***

- Also, discuss the group-based midterm and final
- Review the Midterm Quiz.
- Link your computer to the DePaul library.

- **Print and bring to Thursday's class style**

the D2L guidelines for Chicago B

Upload Midterm QUIZ by 17 January (Sunday) 11:59pm.

Th: "The Family" (42pp). For Engels, what is it that has propelled changes in family structures over time?

J13, 15

T: Finish "The Family." Break into research groups in-class and discuss your group's particular topic and related division of research labor. **Be ready to hand in to me five sources, properly formatted using the D2L guide after sharing them with your group members. These should be typed out and ready for class.**

Th: Next two chapters of *Origins*, "The Iroquois gens" and "The Greek gens." Take notes on how a gens is constituted and how it has varied across time and place? In what **location/s in particular** do we see the creation of private property, patriarchal naming practices, and the state?

Upload Midterm QUIZ onto D2L-Dropbox by this Sunday, 18 January at 11:59pm.

Upload Engels exam onto D2L-Dropbox by next Wednesday (J21) at 11:59pm.

The exam consists of two parts: a diagram of a gens and a 2-3 page response to the questions posed, below. The diagram can either be made using software or by drawing it by hand, scanning it, and uploading it onto Dropbox. You can upload two documents (diagram + text) or combine them and upload them as one document.

Engels Exam, Parts 1 & 2: Begin by drawing a diagram of the 'gens.' Then, respond to the following questions. Divide up the response using the numbers, below. Also, cut and paste the question you are answering before your response to it. Questions: 1) Define the "gens" and the "family" in analytical terms that make it clear how the two are structurally antithetical to one another. Hint: social structures of matrilineality versus those of patriarchy; 2) in what ways and why did the 'gens' (matrilineality) become important to domains of **spirituality, political leadership, and land rights**; 3) Out of what precise gendered socio-economic and political tensions did **merchant trade, war-mongering, and slavery emerge**? 4) How and why were **private property and the state** invented to "resolve" the tensions? 5) How and why did monogamy emerge and how is it related to #s 3 and 4? 6) Summarize how private property, patriarchy, and the state undermined the gens and how their invention allowed for the rise of **the monogamous patriarchal family**. 7) In what ways, precisely, does the text **challenge culturally accepted** (i.e., hegemonic) ideas about love, marriage, family, monogamy, and happiness? Remember to upload both documents.

J20, 22

T: Read "The rise of the Athenian state" and "Gens and the state in Rome."

Engels exam is due tomorrow (Wednesday) by midnight...

Th: **22-minute in-class viewing of the following film. There will be an in-class quiz that will ask you to link it analytically with Engels, so if you want to get a head start on this, you're free to do so:** <http://www.highexistence.com/videos/view/the-womens-kingdom-pbs-frontline-broadcast/> In-class discussion of Midterm Quiz and midterm exam progress.

MIDTERM is due by midnight 31 January

Weeks 4-7 Capitalism and Subject Formation – Dominance, Hegemony, Identity

J27, 29

T: EP Thompson's 1967, "Time, work discipline, and industrial capitalism." In-class quiz. In-class film excerpt from Charlie Chaplin's 1936, *Modern Times*. Midterm discussion.

Th: Lacan's (1938) Pages 1-15 of his Chapter One in *Family complexes in the formation of the individual* (this is an advanced work on identity and "subject formation," so give yourself 5-6 hours to prepare. Mandatory midterm group meetings. 15 minutes.

MIDTERM is due by midnight 31 January

February 3, 5

T: Nast (2014) 'Race,' the geography of the machine, and psychoanalysis. In-class film excerpt from Fritz Lang's, *Metropolis* (1927).

Th: Lacan (1938), Chapter 1, pages 15-23, through the "Weaning complex," only. Mandatory in-class meeting with group members, 15 minutes.

F10, 12

T: Lacan (1938), chapter 1, 23-44 (from the "Complex of intrusion" through the Oedipus Complex). Use the same D2L file used for the previous Lacan reading, above. This is the most difficult reading to date, so be sure to spend ten or so hours on it.

Th: Levy (2007) Chapter 11. Sex and reproduction AI Style

F17, 19

T: D'Emilio's, 1993 "Capitalism and gay identity".

Th: Excerpt from Lee Edelman's *No future: queer theory and the death drive* (2004)

Weeks 8-9 Is Marxism obsolete? – The nation-state and unifying cultures of consumption

During these weeks, you will read Marcuse's 1964, *One Dimensional Man*, which is available here:

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/marcuse/works/one-dimensional-man/introduction.htm>

F24, 26

T: Introduction to first edition (Paralysis of Criticism: Society Without Opposition) and Chapter 1 (New Forms of Social Control). In-class viewing of video featuring Dwight D. Eisenhower giving his famous 1961 "military-industrial" speech: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y06NSBBRtY>

Th: Read ½ of chapter 2 (The Closing of the Political Universe). In-class viewing of *Koyaanisqatsi* excerpts.

*These films have never been about the effect of technology, of industry **on** people. It's been that everyone: politics, education, things of the financial structure, the nation state structure, language, the culture, religion, all of that exists **within** the host of technology. So it's not the effect of, it's that everything exists **within** [technology]. It's not that we use technology, **we live technology**. Technology has become as ubiquitous as the air we breathe..."*

March 3, 5 resume on line, 204 versus 206, active passive, final paper, eportfolio!

T: Second ½ of chapter 2 and all of Chapter 3 (Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness: Repressive Desublimation).

Th: In-class writing assignment on all of Marcuse.

Week 10

10, 12

T: Excerpt from Jane Bennett's *Vibrant matter*. Chapter 1

Th: Excerpt from Jane Bennett's *Vibrant matter*. Chapter 2

**UPLOAD FINAL PAPER BY 15 MARCH MIDNIGHT
THE END**

Skills valued by INT alumni & employers learned in INT 206 that should be listed on resumes:

Writing & written communication	Analytic and critical thinking	Ability to handle multiple tasks & deadlines
Ability to plan & organize tasks or projects	Time management skills	Attention to detail
Ability to work independently	Ability to work in a team environment	Intercultural skills
Interpersonal skills	Editing skills	Verbal communication
Word and Excel (opt)		



This is the Midterm Quiz!: (cut/paste this document, work on it individually. You will then have to combine responses for your group, differentiating your work with different font colors. Upload this final combined “group” document onto D2L by the deadline)

- ✚ Cut/paste the following into a *separate Word document*. (Only **Word** documents are accepted. **Word can be found on all campus computers if it is not on your computer**. No PDF files are accepted. Nor can you use Pages, Text, etc. There are many available computers on campus.)
- ✚ Answer each question. **You must use the D2L guide (only!!!!) for the Chicago B referencing format.**
- ✚ Think about what disciplines your work addresses and then search relevant DePaul databases: Sociology? Economics? Marketing? Geography? Law? Nongovernmental? Governmental?

Names of **all** those in your group with phone numbers and emails:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Group topic/theme (be simple and direct):

Particular research tasks (division of labor) and who is doing it (depending on how many you are):

- a.
- b.
- c.

1. What is your project's tentative title. (hint: use simplest word combination that accessibly and precisely communicates the jist of your research. Hint: think about keywords that researchers would need to use to find YOUR work.

2. How many hours have each of you spent researching potential topics as of today?

- a. name/hours
- b. name/hours
- c. name/hours

3. How many hours has your group spent researching your chosen/particular topic as of today?

- a. name/hours
- b. name/hours
- c. name/hours

4. List the scholarly databases used (do not list GoogleScholar at this point—this is **NOT** a database; nor can you use Academic Search Premier, WorldCat, news databases, or JSTOR, though

you'll be able to use these, later.) List these by _____ person in your group (assuming you all tried the same and different databases, depending on your respective tasks). Experiment with databases best suited to the division of labor.

- a. name/databases:
- b. name/databases:
- c. name/databases:

5. List the keyword series that you used to research your topic. Separate each keyword-**series** search you do with semi-colons. For instance, if your topic is bourbon, you might try the keywords **series**:

bourbon capitalism; bourbon industry; bourbon companies; bourbon history; bourbon profits; bourbon geography; bourbon bottling; [and so on]. In this case, because you are looking at a commodity, you would need to research the marketing and business databases, such as ABI/inform, Business Source Complete, Dismal Scientist, and so on. Be creative and explore database descriptions.

- a.
- b.
- c.

6. Which of the databases explored proved the most useful?

- a.
- b.
- c.

7. How many appropriate sources have you found to date?

- a.
- b.
- c.

8. How much time (total) did you spend reading/skimming your research materials?

- a.
- b.
- c.

9. List in *alphabetical order* the three most important sources you have found, placing each one in *proper Chicago B style*. Refer to the Chicago B style guide that I placed on D2L. You must provide the stable link from the database from where you derived the article. If you don't know how to do this, ask a librarian and s/he will assist you.

- a.
- b.
- c.

10. In what week did you start the research?

- a.
- b.
- c.

11. Do you feel comfortable moving ahead with the research project?

- a.
- b.
- c.

12. Did you contact me about a potential project and, if so, when?

- a.
- b.
- c.

Ideas: Energy drinks, krokodil, cigarettes, robots, Internet pornography, action heroes, arms dealing, partying, pet insurance, pet hotels, breast implants, Viagra, Animal Planet, Amazon, Youtube, Sex dolls.

CULTURE IS NOT YOUR FRIEND

CULTURE IS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF CULTURE. IT INSULTS YOU. IT DISEMPOWERS YOU. IT USES AND ABUSES YOU. NONE OF US ARE WELL TREATED BY CULTURE.

CREATE YOUR OWN ROADSHOW. THE NEXUS OF SPACE AND TIME WHERE YOU ARE NOW IS THE MOST IMMEDIATE SECTOR OF YOUR UNIVERSE. AND IF YOU'RE WORRYING ABOUT POP STARS OR CELEBRITIES THEN YOU ARE DISEMPOWERED. YOU'RE GIVING IT ALL AWAY TO ICONS, ICONS WHICH ARE MAINTAINED BY AN ELECTRONIC MEDIA SO THAT YOU WANT TO DRESS LIKE X OR HAVE LIPS LIKE Y. THIS IS SHIT-BRAINED, THIS KIND OF THINKING.

THE CULTURE IS A PERVERSION

IT FETISHIZES OBJECTS, CREATES CONSUMER MANIA, IT PREACHES ENDLESS FORMS OF FALSE HAPPINESS. IT INVITES PEOPLE TO DIMINISH THEMSELVES AND DEHUMANIZE THEMSELVES BY BEHAVING LIKE MACHINES - MEME PROCESSORS OF MEMES PASSED DOWN FROM MADISON AVENUE AND HOLLYWOOD.

WE ARE CAGED BY OUR CULTURAL PROGRAMMING. CULTURE IS A MASS HALLUCINATION, AND WHEN YOU STEP OUTSIDE THE MASS HALLUCINATION YOU SEE IT FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH.

DRAW. SING. INTERACT. INVOLVE. ENRICH. RECLAIM YOUR MIND.

CREATE YOUR OWN CULTURE

