

GMC 8803

Instructor: Dr. Koel Banerjee

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Course Description

This seminar provides graduate students with a comprehensive grounding in the theoretical frameworks and research methodologies foundational to Cultural Studies and Media Studies. Drawing on the humanistic social sciences, the course equips students with analytical tools for the study of cultural production, media texts, and aesthetic form across a range of historical and contemporary contexts.

Assigned readings introduce students to seminal concepts in twentieth and twenty-first century critical theory, including semiotics, structuralism, psychoanalysis, critical theory, reception studies, and theories of representation.

This theory and foundations seminar is centered around in-depth discussion to enable students to develop skills for humanities research in intercultural and global media contexts.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will learn how to:

- Understand and identify the historical development and key figures in the fields of Cultural and Media Studies.
- Define and debate fundamental concepts and theories in Cultural and Media Studies such as structuralism, postcolonialism, and reception theory.
- Define methods and approaches in Cultural and Media Studies including textual analysis, historical analysis, discourse analysis, interviews, surveys, and ethnography.
- Connect these methodologies to the study of contemporary cultural objects, media texts, and social movements.

Course Requirements & Grading

Attendance + Participation: 20 points

Discussion Leader: 20 points

Reflective Posts: 30 points

Final Paper: 30 points

Grading Scale:

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

- A 90-100%

- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 0-59%

Course Materials

All required texts will be posted on Canvas.

Course Expectations and Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. For more information on the Honor Code, visit the OSI website.

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 404.894.2563 or visit their website as soon as possible to discuss your needs and obtain an accommodations letter. Once you have the letter, schedule an appointment with me at your earliest convenience to discuss how we can best support your learning needs.

Electronic Device Policy

Laptops are permitted for the purposes of note taking and accessing course readings only. You will be marked absent if you are found using your laptop for any other purpose.

Phones are strictly prohibited.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

I recognize that generative AI is here to stay, and you can use it in this class in specific ways (see below). You are permitted to use AI for the following purposes:

- I. Cleaning up your prose (e.g., Grammarly). But this also means that you are not actively learning how to write better and letting a machine do it for you. In addition, prose edited by Grammarly typically sounds generic.
- II. Starting your learning journey – i.e., a resource to help you brainstorm and start gathering ideas (as many of us use Wikipedia).
- III. If you use ChatGPT or other LLMs or AI sources, you must cite them in the assignment as you would a textual or web-based source.

You may not use AI in the following ways:

- I. Writing most – or the entirety of – the assignment.
- II. Copying text straight from AI to the assignment. This is considered plagiarism.⁴
- III. Using AI-generated ideas unquestioningly. Remember, AI can – and often does – provide you

with dubious and unverified information from the Internet. So, you must fact-check it. You are solely responsible for the accuracy and quality of your assignments.

IV. Using AI but not citing it in the assignment.

Inappropriate use of generative AI will result in a 0.