

**Perspectives on Comparative Cultural Studies
Fall 2013 Syllabus**

CCS 2350/LAST 3396/REL 3396

Professor: Andrew J Gordon, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, Anthropology Program

Teaching assistant: Arrow Maldonado

(The professor and the teaching assistant may be reached through email through blackboard)

Office hours: Appointments with Dr. Gordon or Arrow Maldonado for a mutually convenient time that may be made outside of office hours.

The information contained in this class syllabus is subject to change so as to enhance learning objectives. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course. Any changes or messages will be found in the "Announcements" or "Mail" tabs on the left of the Blackboard page. New messages will be indicated by the appearance of a green symbol.

Learning Objectives

The course, the gateway course to the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, gives insight into culture in everyday life, in art forms and in persuasive communication. The aim of this course is to merge theory, concepts and examples from cultural studies and anthropology. Thereby it prepares students for more advanced or specialized work in this Department and in coursework in other departments that share the same concerns for exploration of culture. This course will introduce students to: Latin American Culture, European Culture, Middle and Near East and African/African-American Culture. Sections will include examples of cultural expressions including art, music, theatre, architecture, religion, poetry, philosophy, and fiction as well as other features of culture.

Required books: *Topdog Underdog* (play) Suzan Lori-Parks

Organization of Class, Format, Procedures, and Goals:

- All materials for the course will be available through Blackboard Learn online. There are four sections within the course each covering a different culture/region and examples of art, music or literature. This allows students to become familiar with different cultural experiences and perspectives.
- In each section of the course you will find weekly folders that follow along with the syllabus. These folders contain the resources to support understanding of all the materials for each week and to prepare for course assignments.
- **Weekly folders will be taken down for one week after the deadline of submission of discussion thread. If the discussion thread is due on Oct. 10 then the materials will be up until Oct. 17. They will be up again when you receive the question for the project/assignment to conclude each of the four sections.**
- **Resources Found in Weekly Folders Include:**
 - Video lectures
 - Readings
 - Videos
 - Lecture Guides
 - Glossary
 - Notes

Student Responsibilities, Assignments, and Grading:

Student should e-mail the teaching assistant with any questions about the content of the course or assignments. If you are having trouble in the course, it is best to contact the teaching assistant before your grades are affected. Dr. Gordon and Arrow will be using a number of techniques that will help ensure your success.

It is the student's responsibility to login to Blackboard 3 times a week to check for course updates, class announcements or e-mails.

Discussion Threads: Each Monday a question taken from the weekly assignments will be posted. **You have until 11:59 Sunday to respond to the question and post it on the "Discussion" tab** found in the toolbar to the left of your Blackboard page. This allows you to be thinking about the question while you go through the assignments for the week and demonstrate your knowledge of the weekly topics. Questions will be pulled from readings, lectures, media clips, the lecture guide and the glossary. Students will be graded on the accuracy/quality of the content submitted. Discussion thread grades will be posted at the end of each of the course section.

Week one's discussion topic is optional. If you do participate, you will get a 100. Your submission of topic for week one allows you to miss a future discussion question (if you are sick or forget) without it affecting your grade. The first discussion question is an opportunity to share what your expectations for the course are and to tell us why you are interested in comparative cultural studies—what has drawn you to it?

The average of all 10 weeks discussion board post = 20% of your final grade

Projects: Students will be given four projects (500 words each) following each part of the course.

Ex: A project about Latin American Culture, a project about European Culture etc...

The nature of each project will be specific to the content in that section, these assignments are meant to be engaging and allow you to exercise comparing cultures and expose you to different forms of art, theories and concepts. Instructions for each project will be posted in the "Assignments" folder in the tool bar to the left of your Blackboard page.

If you do poorly on your first assignment it will be dropped, and your grade will be the average of the next 3 assignments. IF YOU DO NOT ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT, IT WILL NOT BE DROPPED—IT WILL BE A ZERO AND WILL COUNT TOWARD YOUR FINAL GRADE.

The average of all 4 assignments will count for 50% of your final grade

Final Exam: Final exams are comprehensive take home exams, will be posted on December 9th and due December 12th at 11:59 pm. Final exams will allow students to display knowledge acquired in the course and to apply examples, concepts and theories to observations of culture in their lives.

Final Exams will count for 30% of their final grade

Students are expected to use word count to ensure they have produced work that is equal to or above 500 words. All words are to fully written (no short hand or "text speak"). You may produce more than 500 words if you have a lot to say

Submissions will be graded for content, use of course materials (readings, lectures, glossary items) and organization.

All submissions should be sent via Blackboard e-mail to the teaching assistant as an attached document. Students should copy and paste their work within the e-mail in the event there is a problem with opening the attachment due to incompatibility of word processing programs).

Grades can be viewed through the "My Grades" tab in the tool bar to the left of the Blackboard page.

Discussions Threads: average of **10 grades = 25% of final grade**

Assignment: average of **4 grades = 50% of final grade**

Take Home **Final Exam = 25% of final grade**

Introduction

Aug 26- Sept 1 (Week 1): Introduction to the CCS 2350

- **Introduction Video** <http://youtu.be/9OSN6Nov1do>
- **Discussion Thread** (due Sunday, Sept 1st, 11:59pm)

Part 1: Latin America Culture

Sept 2 – Sept 8 (Week 2): Mexico, Colonization, and Transculturation

Media Materials

- Youtube Video Lectures: Professor Suzan Kellogg, Dept. of History, UH on Indigeneity and Professor Lois Zamora, Dept. of Comparative Cultural Studies
- La Malinche, media darling, media daring, media dizzy
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJB_FO-zzsU

Readings:

- *The Baroque Culture of the New World*-Fuentes, Carlos pgs. 195-196; 201-213
- *The Baroque Age*-Leonard, Irving A pgs. 21-31; 37-52
- *The Sons of Malinche*- Paz, Octavio Chapter 4

Glossary: Transculturation, Hybridity, Phenomenology vs. Positivism

Discussion thread: due Sunday Sept 8th 11:59pm.

***** (Sept 3rd Last day to add a Class) *****

Sept 9 –Sept 15 (Week 3): Hispanics in North America

Media Materials

- Professor George Diaz, Dept. of History, UH on smugglers and traffickers
- Professor Andrew Gordon, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies on Drinking in Three Hispanic Cultures
- Narco Corridos musicians glorify drug traffickers
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIQ7s_LLpS8

Readings:

- *Twilight of the Tequileros: Prohibition Era Smuggling in South Texas Borderland*- Carey, Elaine & Marak, Andrae
- *The Cultural Context of Drinking and Indigenous Therapy for Alcohol Problems in Three Migrant Hispanic Cultures*-Gordon, Andrew

Glossary:

- Discourse

Discussion thread: due Sunday Sept 15th 11:59pm.

***** (Sept 11th Last day to drop or withdraw without a grade)*****

Sept 16- Sept 22 (Week 4): Positivistic methods**Media Materials:**

- Professor Rebecca Storey on Copan and her work in Biological Anthropology in Copan, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies - UH on Physical Remains
- HONDURAS COPAN / DIRECTED BY CESAR RICAR
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJB_FO-zzsU

Readings:

- *Conceptualizing Human Variation*-Keita, Kittles
- *A Broader Perspective on the Bioarchaeology of Late Classic Copan*-Storey, R
- *Tracing the Threads*-Hodder, Ian pp.179-205

Glossary:

- Cultural Adaptation,
- Emic/Etic distinctions

Discussion thread: due Sunday Sept 22nd 11:59pm.

(First submission due Sunday Sept 29th at 11:59pm)

Part 2: European Culture**Sept 30-Oct 6 (Week 6): Classicism, the Enlightenment and Romanticism****Media Materials**

- Professor Richard Armstrong, Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages, UH on Reception Theory, Romanticism and Classical Traditions
- Professor Thomas Behr, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, UH on the Enlightenment (Began 27:00 minutes into the Behr lecture)
- The Age of Enlightenment <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8iohPnq9go>
- John Keats, English poet - Ode on a Grecian Urn 1819
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_1aF8IQ7WQ

Readings:

- *A Revolutionary Discipline*- Stanley Diamond Essay pgs. 432-435
- *The Enlightenment Spirit: An Overview*-Kant, Immanuel
- Poems by Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, John Keats and Rainer Maria Rilke

Glossary

- Classicism
- Metanarrative
- Enlightenment
- Reception Theory
- Materialism vs. Idealism

Discussion thread: due Sunday Oct 6th 11:59pm.

Oct 7 – Oct 13 (Week 7): Modernism and the International Style, the Bauhaus**Media Materials:**

- Anne Breux, Designer, Houston on Modernism and the International Style (2 videos) It's suggested to slow the speed of the video to 4/5.
- Also the site on Phillip Johnson (282 images).
<http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/index/johnson/johnsonindex.html>
- Architecture in the Early 20th Century, Modernism, Bauhaus, DeStijl and International Style
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUb1ficeiD8>

Readings:

- *Bauhaus* – Naylor, Gillian (entire book-mostly picture)
- *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to the Cold War*- James-Chakraborty, Kathleen pp.153-170
- *The First Years: Weimar*- Frank Whitford pp.38-53

Glossary:

- Semiotics for Beginners,
- The International Modern
- Vernacular Architecture
- Phillip Johnson

Discussion thread: due Sunday Oct 13th 11:59pm.
(Second Submission Sunday Oct 20th at 11:59pm)

Part 3: Middle and Near East: Roots and Diaspora**Oct 21 – Oct 27 (Week 9): ISLAM****Media Materials**

- Christiane Amanpour on Islamic Fundamentalism
- Helen-Rose Ebaugh, Department of Sociology, UH on a Moderate Islamic Movement
- CBS 60 Minutes US Charter Schools Tied to Imam Fethullah Gulen
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dh4EwqRYTpE>
- What is Salafism?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=402wup8xz00>

Readings

- *A Brief Biography of Fethullah Gulen: The Gulen Movement* -Ebaugh, Helen pgs.23-46

Glossary

- Organizational Culture

- Postcolonial Studies
- Pentecostals and Their Means of Creating Faith

Discussion thread: due Sunday Oct 27th 11:59pm.

Oct 28 – Nov. 3 (Week 10): Hindu Culture from the Caribbean

Media Materials

- Professor Michele Verma, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, UH on India and its Caribbean Diaspora
- Professor Keith McNeal Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, UH on Mortuary Practices of Hindus in Diaspora

Readings

- *Transnational Movements, Diaspora and Multiple Modernities*-Tambiah, Stanley
- *Global Hinduism in Gotham*-Hawley, John
- *Redefining A Nation: The Struggles of East Indians for Inclusion in Trinidad*- Munasinghe, Viranjini

Glossary

- Diaspora
- Culturally Constructed Memory

Discussion thread: due Sunday Nov 3rd 11:59pm.

***** (Nov 1st Last day to drop with a “W”)*****

Nov 4 – Nov 11 (Week 11): Modernity and Orientalism (Islamic and Hindu Worlds)

Media Materials

- Meera Janganathan on Indian Modernity, Department of Modern and Classical Languages UH
- Professor Hosam Aboul-Ela, Department of English, UH on Orientalism
- Edward Said on Orientalism

Readings:

- *A Tale Told by a Dog*-Abdullah, Yahya
- *Orientalism*-Said, Edward Chapter1
- *Pyasa & Letters to my Grandma*-Roy, Anusree

Glossary:

- Orientalism
- Postmodernity

Discussion thread: due Sunday Nov 11th 11:59pm.

(Third submission due on Sunday Nov 17th at 11:59pm)

PART IV African-African American Culture

Nov 18-Nov 24 (Week 13): Expressions of Performance in African American Culture

Media Materials:

- Robert Shimko, Department of Theatre, UH on Performance in the African-American Context
- Shayne Lee, Department of Sociology, UH on Rap (Mediasite)

- Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap and Hip Hop <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI62Cg3afhE>
- Mood music video "Drugs War & Crime" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9JkEKmRN20>

Readings:

- *Pimps Up, Ho's Down* (Chapter 2) - Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean
- *Topdog Underdog*-Lori-Parts, Suzan

Glossary: Globalization

Discussion thread: due Sunday Nov 24th 11:59pm.

***** (Thanksgiving Break Nov 27-30)*****

Nov. 25 - Dec. 1 (Week 14): Race and Racism: The US and Africa

Media Material

- Professor Janis Hutchinson, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, UH on racism
- Professor Andrew Gordon, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, UH Fulani and the Body
- The Father of American Anthropology www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uYQuQtjE88

Readings

- *"Race" and the Construction of Human Identity*-Smedley, Audrey
- *Chapter 8: Race, Racial Identities and Racism Today*-Hutchinson, J
- *Seeing Disease like the Fulani*-Gordon, Andrew

Glossary:

- Essentialism
- Race/Class/Gender

Discussion thread: due Sunday Dec 1st 11:59pm.

Fourth Submission due on Dec. 8 at 11:59 pm
(Distributed Dec. 1 by 9:00am)

TAKE HOME EXAM DUE ON DECEMBER 12 at 11:59
(Distributed December 9th by 9:00am)