




Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 665

Cultural Studies: Reflections, Democratic Possibilities, and Futures

(Revision 3)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing  for the current revision 
Delivery mode:	Grouped study 
Credits:	3
Area of study:	Arts
Prerequisites:	None
Precluded:	None
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Notes:

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Moodle site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

Overview

MAIS 665 Cultural Studies: Reflections, Democratic Possibilities, and Futures begins by outlining the developing questions, intellectual positions, and analyses that have emerged in cultural studies' critical attention to "everyday" means of domination. We will explore sites of culture—including sports, arts, and media—attending to debates about how societies are organized, who participates in these organizing logics, and who is excluded or marginalized. We will engage the study of culture in relation to sexuality, gender, race, ability, and other locations/systems through theoretical positions including post/decolonial criticism, environmentalism, and social justice. Students will engage with a variety of everyday examples and case studies of their own interest to enhance understanding of the dynamism of cultures and identities resulting from the reorganization of societies and nations and the complexities associated with global integration, social movement, technological engagement, and rapid climate and ecological shifts.

In summary, key goals of the course include

- recognition of the enduring investment of cultural studies in subordinated groups and knowledges;
- development of an understanding of the relationship between culture, power, and knowledge production; and
- cultivation of an appreciation for cultural studies' commitment to exploring new territory and promoting new dialogues in an effort to contribute to social change in the contemporary moment.

The field of cultural studies does not entail a simple "multicultural" appreciation of different cultures, nor does it involve an appreciation of "culture" as elite artistic practice; rather, this field locates the practices of "everyday life" as sites of power that require critical attention. This interdisciplinary course is attentive to the internationalization of cultural studies and the limits and possibilities of applying established practices and ways of thinking in different contexts. Consequently, the course materials draw from a variety of locations and scholarly traditions in the social sciences and humanities, seeking to examine some enduring and novel challenges in the social world, in pursuit of transformative futures. This course adheres to the principle that "intellectual work matters, that it is a vital component of the struggle to change the world and to make the world more humane, and that cultural studies, as a particular project, a particular sort of intellectual practice, has something valuable to contribute" (Grossberg, 2006, p. 2).

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to

- identify current developments, issues, debates, and changing conditions in the field of cultural studies;
- articulate cultural studies' commitment as a dynamic intellectual project that studies cultural politics in an effort to affect social change, especially for marginalized groups and knowledges;
- critically understand a variety of locations of culture and power in everyday life;
- evaluate the field of cultural studies as a contested site that must also respond to exclusions—such as Indigenous knowledges—at its origins;
- communicate the challenges facing efforts to decolonize and globalize the field of cultural studies; and
- analyze contemporary sites of culture and power by selecting from a dynamic theoretical and methodological “toolbox.”

Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 percent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies **grading system** [↗](#). Please note that it is the student's responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of F in one course, or a grade of C in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Weekly Online Discussion Forum	30%
Assignment 2: Discussion Moderation	10%

Activity	Weight
Assignment 3: Critical Reflection on Key Concepts and Approaches	20%
Assignment 4: Term Paper Outline/Proposal	10%
Assignment 5: Term Paper	30%
Total	100%

Materials





All of the materials for this course are online.

Athabasca University Online Materials

Course Home Page: You will find the Course Information document at the top of the course home page. You will also find your Study Guide presented unit by unit, as well as your assignments and links to submit your work to your professor.

Athabasca University Library: Students are encouraged to browse the library's website to review the collection of journal databases, electronic journals, and digital reference tools: <http://library.athabascau.ca> .

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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View **previous revision** 
