

Department: Modern and Classical Languages

Course No: FREN 3224 [224]

Credits: 3

Title: Issues in Cultural Studies, the Media and the Social

Contact: Roger Travis

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Diversity: CA4 International

CatalogCopy: FREN 224 - Issues in Cultural Studies, the Media, and the Social Sciences Either semester. Three credits. Recommended preparation: French 211 or instructor consent. May be repeated twice for credit. The economics of the media industry, mass audiences and new technologies, the marketing of culture, French nationalism and the global market, electronic democracy, the politics of food and addictions, ethics and new forms of human reproduction.

Course Information: a. This course introduces to radical impacts of new sciences and technologies on social and cultural issues, on identity politics and new forms of repression/resistance through the policing of individual and collective bodies. Emphasis on the role of traditional and electronic media, pharmaceutical and medical industries, reproductive technology, statistics and polls, etc... on the "gouvernement" of bodies, through images and representations but also through real and concrete technologies.

b. Requirements: Midterm and Final exams, three quizzes, one final research paper, one oral presentation and weekly written assignments (300-500 words answer to a question related to assigned readings)

c. This course is repeated with different contents: last two courses were on "addictions" and on "Body art". Course on addictions focused on the role of media, pharmaceutical and medical industries as well as on the role of the social sciences (namely statistical and behavioural psychology and Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis), and questioned their ideological impacts on body images and representations. Major topics: brain chemistry of pain and pleasure, physiological and psychological dependency, social and familial conditioning, cultural and historical factors, the economics and geopolitics of drugs. Introduction to various forms of addictions (food, shopping, sports, internet, games, drugs etc...) Course on "body art" dealt with the role of new media and technologies - video, digital imaging, PT Scanners, nuclear technology, as well as medical surgery in the invention of new artistic forms of the body in performance in France in Europe and the USA, since the seventies.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: Meets criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

This course requires of students to become familiar with complex social and cultural issues at the interface of new technologies, various industries and social sciences, and to understand how they become transformed into literary and artistic forms (in cinema, music, dance, fiction and non fiction, in science-fiction). Using

written press, visual documents, TV popular programs, for class discussions require from students to become articulate and acquire critical judgement.

Because addictions for instance are often related to economical and social difficulties, it helps students acquire an awareness of social inequalities at the basis of behavioural inadaptations, and develop a moral sensitivity to the diversity of human experience. This topic has a diversity as a focus. It teaches the students to examine the premises of their own ways of approaching differences in behaviour and living styles, by comparing for instance new addictions related to a consumer society and traditional, cultural, use of drug in other societies. And it teaches them to recognize the complexity and diversity of cultural productions which arise from different experiences in the same era and society.

CA1 Criteria: meets 1, 2 and 4 criteria- through historical, critical and aesthetical modes of inquiry this course engages the students to question official and mediatic versions of social and individual issues such as addictions, portrayed mostly as criminal and moral issues, and to become aware of their multifaceted aspects. They are required to use theoretical and methodological tools in their weekly assignments and in class discussions and to develop an historical sense of imaginary and symbolic representations.

CA4 Criteria: meets criteria 1, 2, 3, 5 --last two courses dealt with addictions and body art (next two planned courses will deal with I. reproductive technology and its reshaping of family imaginary and symbolic structure, as well as its effects on family romance in art and performance; II. Internet and new artistic forms, its impacts on thought processes, on research and book writing) These topics usually focus on structural changes and radical transformations in contemporary France in a global economical context. Thus they involve comparative analyses of various human experiences and emphasize the cultural construction on individual and collective behaviours, grounded in new technologies. They help develop a sense of the complex interaction of economic, political and sociological factors in any human experience. And because some of the changes in the global market, affect mostly those parts of the population that are more economically fragile, this course generally deals with those "excluded" or marginalized by the market, those who live in precarious conditions and who inspire new artistic forms such as 'installations', 'actions', 'performances' (see for instance the last International art exhibition called Documenta XI in Cassel): for the first time since its creation, the curator was non-European, a Nigerian academic, living in the USA, Okwui Enwezor and the exhibition was preceded by platforms and conferences in five locations - in Europe, Africa, the Americas (St Lucia), Asia. And the topics discussed were among others, the postcolonial aftermath of globalization, the democracy unrealized, experiments with truth, Creolity and Creolization. Artists' works selected came from five continents and dealt mostly with the transnational, deterritorialized, diasporic and global world. This dialectical intersection of contemporary art and culture, and the crucial role of sciences and technologies, are central to the argument of any topic covered in French 224. Diversity and multiculturalism are their designed focus.