

SOCIM0014 Understanding Culture

Teaching Block: 1

Weeks: 1-12

Unit Owner:	Dr Marcus Morgan	Level:	M/7
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Email:	marcus.morgan@bristol.ac.uk	Prerequisites:	None
Office:	B.02, 3 Priory Road	Curriculum area:	Sociology
Unit owner office hours:	Please see SPAIS MSc Blackboard for details (Please note, there are no regular office hours during Reading Weeks)		

Seminar time and location:
Please refer to your personal timetable.

Teaching arrangements:

Timetables and seminar group allocation will be made available through SPAIS Admin on Blackboard. Seminar groups are fixed. Please do not change groups without first consulting the office.

Requirements for passing the unit:

- Satisfactory attendance and participation at seminars
- Completion of all formative work to an acceptable standard
- Combined mark of all summative work must be a pass (50 or above)

Assessment:	Word count:	Weighting:	Deadline:	Day:	Week:
Formative assessment: Short essay	1500	0%	9.30 am 6 Nov 2017	Monday	7
Summative assessment: Essay	4000	100%	9.30am 11 Jan 2018	Thursday	AW 1

- Summative essay questions will be made available on the SPAIS MSc Admin Blackboard site.
- Instructions for the submission of coursework will be emailed prior to the submission deadline.
- Assessment in the school is subject to strict penalties regarding late submission, plagiarism and maximum word count. See Appendix.
- Marking criteria can be found in the Appendix.

Other:

Make sure you check your Bristol email account regularly throughout the course as important information will be communicated to you. Any emails sent to your Bristol address are assumed to

have been read. If you wish for emails to be forwarded to an alternative address then please go to <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/10957?hl=en>

Unit description:

This unit aims to introduce students to the various historical and contemporary ways in which 'culture' has been defined, and in which sociologists have gone about analysing it. As well as reviewing some of the most influential social theories of culture, we will question whether, in attempting to 'understand culture', we are trying to comprehend a discrete sphere of society or something which, to a greater or lesser extent, underlies and penetrates all aspects of social life. We will explore both elitist and democratised understandings, examine it both from the side of production as well as from the side of consumption, and demonstrate the ways in which it might be thought of as both expressing and reproducing symbolic and material structures. We will ask how autonomous culture is from other social spheres and forces, whether it is a hierarchical or horizontal system, and whether it is best conceived as a context within which actors act, or a resource that agents actively produce and deploy. On completion of this unit, students should have a good understanding of some of the main debates over how culture ought to be understood, and be well-equipped to critique and selectively synthesise the various approaches covered in order to perform their own cultural analyses.

Teaching arrangements:

In order to successfully complete this unit, essential and additional readings are set each week to complement the sessions and private study is expected (for example, preparing notes from reading to present on the main ideas of the week and participate in class discussions). A formative (optional) assessment will be set in **week 3**; this will enable you to get feedback on your written work.

Seminar preparation

Lists of readings are given under each week including key readings. It is expected that, as a minimum, you will have read the set (2 to 4 key readings) in advance of the seminar each week and **prepared brief notes**. You will be expected to answer questions about the set reading each week, engage in small group discussions or undertake workshop style tasks in seminars. Therefore, you should come prepared to present an argument concerning each seminar reading. You may need to briefly summarise the main features of the content in order to engage with other students. The further reading section offers suggestions for supplementary reading and **should be used when writing the essay**. I would recommend that in addition to the required key readings, you try and read something else from the further reading list each week to give you a head start on your essay preparation and a better understanding of each of the topics as we proceed through the unit. If you have trouble finding the texts, use your initiative – do a keyword search in the library to find alternatives, or look for electronic journal articles.

Requirements for credit points:

To gain credit for this unit the following is required:

- Attendance and participation at weekly classes. Please inform me if you are unable to attend. If you are ill or are experiencing some other kind of difficulty which is preventing you from attending, **please inform the PG Office**.
- Satisfactory summative assessment. This contributes directly to your degree result.

Assessments:

There will be a) an optional 1500 word formative assessment in the form of an essay, plus b) a summative assessment in the form of a 4000 word essay. These assess all learning outcomes.

a) Formative Assessment

This 1,500 word essay exercise will prepare students for the assessed essay. Full details will be given out in Week 3 and students will be asked to submit in Week 7. Please note: this element is **optional** under programme guidelines. However, this is strongly recommended as an opportunity to get feedback on this style of written work before submitting the summative assessment.

b) Summative Assessment

This will be an essay totalling 4,000 words. Students will select from a range of questions, which will be distributed 4-5 weeks before the submission date. Students are expected to provide an answer to the question with an argument, drawing on sources and readings they will have done on the topic(s) (drawing on the list of readings, AND their own research).

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the unit, students should be able to:

- Critically engage with key historical and conceptual approaches in the sociology of culture
- Demonstrate understanding of the differing nature and social position of culture in modernity and postmodernity
- Critically evaluate the relationship between cultural production and cultural consumption within specific cultural spheres
- Understand cultural transformations, and the relationship between culture and the social.

Development and feedback

Critical reading of empirical and methodological literature and the ability to evaluate contrasting approaches to data analysis will be invaluable for students – preparing for their dissertations – and enhance the quality of their future work. Weekly discussions and group work will foster individual ability, communication skills and team working. Individual written feedback will be provided on your essay in line with the school's guidelines on return of work.

Further resources:

Short-loan items

A selection of useful items for supplementary seminar reading and essay writing is available on 3-hour short-loan.

Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment

SPAIS encourages the use of this package for all of its units. Course material is posted on this website. Announcements and email messages will also come through this route. There will also be supplementary readings available through e-reserves.

Academic Journals

This syllabus includes references to articles in academic journals. You should also browse journals relevant to this unit. It is also helpful to read reviews of books listed on the reading list in academic journals. Journals to browse include, but are not restricted to:

Cultural Sociology
Media, Culture & Society
International Journal of Cultural Studies
European Journal of Cultural Studies
American Journal of Cultural Sociology
Cultural Studies
Journal for Cultural Research
Poetics
Theory, Culture and Society

SEMINAR TOPICS

Week 1: Introduction: Definitions

Week 2: Culture as ordinary: early British cultural studies

Week 3: Culture as structure & sign: structuralism & semiotics

Week 4: Culture as mass deception: the Frankfurt School

Week 5: Culture as hegemony: the Gramscian approach

Week 6: -----Reading Week-----

Week 7: Culture as distinction: the Bourdieusian approach

Week 8: Culture as simulacra: postmodern perspectives

Week 9: Culture as symbolic classification: The Durkheimian approach

Week 10: Culture as text: the Geertzian approach

Week 11: Culture as relatively autonomous: the 'Strong Program'

Week 12:-----Reading Week-----

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction – Definitions

Culture is a complex and at times apparently contradictory term - it can often seem to refer to everything and nothing all at once. After we've dealt with housekeeping, in this introductory session, we will review the different ways in which 'culture' has been understood both historically and at present. Rather than choose an authoritative definition, we will try to grasp the multiplicity of meanings the term has held, and indeed does hold, and attempt to understand how specific contexts may have shaped these differing significations. The purpose of this session is to sensitise us to the varying uses of the term that we will encounter throughout the remainder of the unit, so we can clearly identify such differing uses as and when they arise.

Essential Reading

- Arnold, M., ([1869] 2013) 'Culture and Anarchy' in Storey, J. ed. (2013), *Cultural theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Fourth Edition, pp. 6-11.
- Leavis, F. R., ([1933] 2013), 'Mass Civilization and Minority Culture', in Storey, J. ed. (2013), *Cultural theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Fourth Edition pp. 12-19.
- Williams, R., (1976), "Culture." In Williams, R., *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana, p. 87-93.

Further Reading

- Arnold, M., (2006), *Culture and Anarchy*, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics/ Oxford University Press.
- Eliot, T. S. (1963), *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, London: Faber.
- Filmer, P. (1998) High/ Mass,' in Jenks, C. *Core Sociological Dichotomies* London: Sage.
- Geertz, C., (1973), 'The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man, in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.
- Mulhern, F., (2000), *Culture/Metaculture*, London: Routledge.
- Scruton, R., (1999), *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Modern Culture*, London: Duckworth Publishers.

Week 2: Culture as ordinary: early British cultural studies

This session will elaborate upon an approach to studying culture inspired by one of the definitions of culture we encountered in Raymond Williams's unpacking of the term in Week 1. This approach was important in taking working-class culture seriously, stressing not only that 'culture is ordinary', but also that it is an actively produced and lived process, rather than a passively consumed set of objects or media. We will analyse what separated this new work from the Leavisite tradition as well as what continuities it held with the earlier 'culture and civilization' approach. We will also try to unpick the differences in understanding between our three main authors—Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson—and discuss the institutionalisation of this approach in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham in 1964. Finally, we will touch upon the evolving differences in the subsequent generations of cultural scholars this Centre produced.

Essential Reading

- Hoggart, R. (1957), 'The Juke Box Boys', *The Uses of Literacy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, pp. 246-50.
- Williams, R. (1989) 'Culture is ordinary', in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. London: Verso. pp. 3-14.
- Thompson, E. P., ([1963] 1991) 'Preface' and 'Rituals of Mutuality', *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Penguin Books, pp. 8-13; 456-69.

Recommended Reading

- Hoggart, R. (1957), 'Who are the "Working-Classes"?' *The Uses of Literacy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books', pp. 13-26.
- Williams, R., ([1961] 2013) 'The Analysis of Culture', *The Long Revolution*, pp. 61-95.

Further Reading

- Dworkin, D. (1997). *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- CCCS (1982), *The Empire Strikes Back - Race and Racism in '70s Britain*, London: Hutchinson/Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
- Gilroy, P. ([1987] 2002). *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Hall, Stuart; T. Jefferson (1976), *Resistance Through Rituals, Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. London: Harper Collins Academic.
- Hall, S., et al. (1980), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972-9*, London: Routledge.
- Hall, Stuart (1980). "Encoding / Decoding." In: Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, and P. Willis (eds). *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. London: Hutchinson, pp. 128-138.
- Hall, Stuart; Critcher, C.; Jefferson, T.; Clarke, J.; Roberts, B. (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan. London: Macmillan Press.

- Inglis, F. (1995). *Raymond Williams*, London ; New York: Routledge.
- Kenny, M. (1995). *First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin* (First Edition edition). London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.
- Rojek, C. and Turner, B. (2000). 'Decorative Sociology: Towards a Critique of the Cultural Turn', *Sociological Review*, 48:4, pp. 629–648.
- Thompson, E. P., (1957) "Socialist Humanism," *The New Reasoner*, vol. 1, no. , pp. 105–143.
- Thompson, E. P., (1959) "The New Left," *The New Reasoner*, whole no. 9, pp. 1–17.
- Thompson, E. P., (1978), *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London: Merlin Press, 1978. [Thompson's classic polemic against another approach to studying culture that we will explore later in this unit – structuralism].
- Williams, R. (1963) *Culture and Society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch.1.
- Williams, R. (1981) *Culture*. London: Fontana Press.
- Willis, P. 1990. *Common Culture*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Other Media

- Taylor, L., (2009), 'The Work of Richard Hoggart', *Thinking Allowed*, 26/08/2009. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00m6gg9> - RADIO BROADCAST.
- Thomas, Colin (2005) 'Border Crossing: The Journey of Raymond Williams' BBC4, 2005. DOCUMENTARY FILM.
- Akomfrah, J. (2014). *The Stuart Hall Project*. British Film Institute. DOCUMENTARY FILM.

Week 3: Culture as structure & sign: structuralism & semiotics

This session will introduce the key terms and concepts of structuralism and semiotics as they have been developed to understand culture, focussing on the influence of the work of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, and the semiologists Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco. We will unpick the terminology of structuralism and semiotics: defining concepts such as 'signifier', 'signified', 'diachronic', 'synchronic', '*langue*', '*parole*', and 'denotation' and 'connotation'. We will probe how linguistic concepts came to be applied to social analysis, and work through the example of Ian Fleming's *James Bond* novels. Finally we will touch upon how Barthes' later focus on 'polysemy' pre-empted many of the developments that occurred in poststructuralist and so-called 'postmodernist' approaches to culture that we will cover in Week 8.

Essential Reading

- de Saussure, F. "Signs and Language," in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 55-63.
- Barthes, R., ([1957] 2000) selection from 'Myth Today', in *Mythologies*, London: Vintage, pp. 109-131.
- Eco, U. (1984) 'Narrative Structures in Fleming', in Irons, G. 1992. *Gender, Language, & Myth: Essays on Popular Narrative*, University of Toronto Press.

Recommended Reading

- Barthes, R., ([1957] 2000) "The World of Wrestling," in *Mythologies*, London: Vintage pp. 15-25

Further Reading

- Culler, J., (1976), *Saussure*, London: Fontana.
- Culler, J. (2002), *Barthes. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University
- de Saussure, F. (1983) *Course in General Linguistics*, London: Duckworth Press.
- DeGeorge, R. T. and F. (1972). *The Structuralists. From Marx to Lévi-Strauss*,

Dublin, Doubleday.

- Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*, London and New York: Longman.
- Hawkes, T. (1978) *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Methuen.
- Inglis, D and Hughson, J (2003). Chapter 5: The Empire of Signs: The Semiotics of Culture, in *Confronting Culture: Sociological Vistas*, pp 112 – 136.
- Jameson, F. (1972) *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Lane, M. (ed.) (1980) *Structuralism: A Reader*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Leach, E. (1970). *Levi-Strauss*. London: Fontana Press.
- Levi-Strauss, C. 1966. "The Science of the Concrete." In *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1-33.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1967). *Structural Anthropology*. Anchor Books / Doubleday & Company.
- MacCannell, D and MacCannell, J. (1982) *The Time of the Sign: A Semiotic Interpretation of Modern Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Moriarty, M. (1991) *Roland Barthes*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 19-30.
- Piaget, J. (1971). *Structuralism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Robey, D. (1973) *Structuralism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Other Media

- The Late Show (1990), *Roland Barthes*, DOCUMENTARY FILM.

Week 4: Culture as mass deception: The Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School were a group of German Marxist intellectuals linked with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, although they produced much of their most important work whilst in exile in the USA. Focussing on the two theorists who perhaps embodied the principles of 'critical theory' in its most undiluted form—Adorno and Horkheimer—we will examine their arguments concerning the effects of what they described as the 'culture industry' on working class consciousness. We will look at their arguments concerning the ways in which fatalism, conformity, dependence, and irrationality were both fed by, and capable of finding confirmation in, contemporary mass culture. We will outline the ways in which Frankfurt School thinkers connected these dispositions both to the rise of authoritarian regimes and support for racist forms of political ideology. In particular, we will focus on Adorno's examination of the *Los Angeles Times* astrology column, and his claims concerning what it might reveal about the social psychological makeup of the purportedly 'free' society under late capitalist conditions. We will examine in particular his implicit critique of Weber's argument that magic and superstition were receding and the world becoming progressively 'disenchanted' with the spread of modernity, focussing in particular upon the role of mass culture in pushing this process forward.

Essential Reading

- Adorno, T. & Horkheimer, M ([1944] 1997) 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso, pp. 120-142.
- Adorno, T., (1994), 'The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column' in *The Stars Down to Earth & Other Essays on The Irrational in Culture*, London: Routledge, pp 34-41; 113-123.

Recommended Reading

- Adorno, T. & Horkheimer, M ([1944] 1997) 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso, the whole of this chapter.
- Adorno, T (2005), 'Theses against Occultism' in *Minima Moralia*, London: Verso, pp. 238-44

Further Reading

- Adorno, T (2000/1968), "Lecture One' and 'Lecture Two', in Introduction to Sociology, Stanford University Press.
- Adorno, T. et al., (1950), The Authoritarian Personality, New York: Harper.
- Adorno, T. W. (1991) The Culture Industry: selected essays on mass culture. London: Routledge.
- Adorno, T., (1973/1966), 'The Possibility of Philosophy', 'Dialectics is not a Standpoint', 'Presentation' in Negative Dialectics, pp. 3-6; pp. 18-19.
- Adorno, T., (1990 /1941); "On Popular Music", in Frith S., and Goodwin, A., *On Record: Rock, Pop, and The Written Word*, New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 301-314.
- Benjamin, W., (1973) 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', in *Illuminations*, London, Fontana, pp. 211-244.
- Benzer, M., (2011), *The Sociology of Theodor Adorno*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bottomore, T. (1980), *The Frankfurt School*, London: Ellis Horwood.
- Buck-Morss, S. (1977), *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*, New York: The Free Press.
- Held, D. (1980), *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., (2002) *The Cultural Industries*. London: Sage.
- Jay, M. (1984). *Adorno*. Fontana Press.
- Jay, M., (1973) *the Dialectical Imagination: a History of the Frankfurt School of Social Research 1920-1950*, Berkley: University of California Press.
- Kellner, D., (1984) *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, London, Macmillan, esp. Introduction – pp. 1-12 and Chapter 8 – pp 229-267.
- Marcuse, H., (1941/1982); 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', in Arato, A., and Gebhardt, E., eds. *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, London: Continuum, pp., 138-163
- Marcuse, H., (1964) *One-Dimensional Man*, esp. Introduction to the First Edition – 'The paralysis of criticism: society without opposition' and Chapter 1 – 'The New Forms of Control'.
- Nealon, J., and Caren, I., (2002) *Rethinking the Frankfurt School; Alternative Legacies of Cultural Critique*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Slater, D. and Tonkiss, F. (2001) 'Adorno: the culture industry' *Market Society*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 162- 70
- Slater, P. (1977). *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Week 5: Culture as hegemony: The Gramscian approach

Orthodox Marxism, especially as it was perpetuated in Russia, led to a certain caricature of Marx's account of culture that tended to neglect both his earlier 'humanistic' writings, as well as his references to the complex dialectic of culture and economy peppered amongst his more 'mature' work too. Nevertheless, since he was attempting to define his new materialist philosophy against German idealism, it is easy to see how this caricature arose. This week we will question how justified such an account was, and look at an important later Italian thinker working within the Marxist tradition who took culture as the main focus of his work. We will ask what Gramsci took from Marx, and what he rejected. We will try to determine the meaning of his most famous term—'hegemony'—and examine how he saw it functioning. We will explore Gramsci's account of how social order is sustained through consent and analyse the role of 'organic intellectuals' in this process. Finally, we will explore the influence of Gramsci's cultural Marxism on studies on youth subcultures and creative consumption practices.

Essential Reading

- Marx, K., (1978), excerpt from *The German Ideology*, in Tucker, R. C. ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York: Norton, pp. 147-55.
- Gramsci, A., (1971), 'Hegemony, Intellectuals, and the State', in Storey, J. ed. (2013), *Cultural theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Fourth Edition, pp. 75-80.
- Hebdige, D., (1979), 'Introduction: Subculture & Style'; 'From Culture to Hegemony', *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen, pp. 1-4 & 5-19.

Recommended Reading

- Hebdige, D., "Object as Image: The Italian Scooter Cycle," in Schor J. B. & Holt., D B., eds., (2000), *The Consumer Society Reader*, New York: The New Press, pp. 117-54.

Further Reading

- Anderson, P. (1980) 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review*, 100, pp. 5-78.
- Anderson, P. (2017). *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Verso.
- Bellamy, R. (1990) Gramsci, Croce and the Italian political tradition, *History of Political Thought*, 11 (2), pp. 313-317
- Bennett, A., ([1986] 2013) 'Popular Culture and the Turn to Gramsci' in Storey, J., *Cultural theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Fourth Edition, London: Routledge.
- Crehan, K., (2002), *Gramsci, Culture, and Anthropology*, London: Pluto Press.
- Femia, J.F. (1981) *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, consciousness, and the revolutionary process*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fiori, G. (1990). *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (New edition). London: Verso.
- Gilroy, P. ([1987] 2002). *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Gramsci, A. (1985) *Selections from Cultural Writings*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Gramsci, A., (1990), "Culture and Ideological Hegemony," in Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 47-54.
- Hall, S. (1973). 'Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse', Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
- Hall S and T Jefferson (eds) (1976) *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subculture in Post-War Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1986). Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), pp. 5–27.
- Hall, S., (1987), 'Gramsci and us', *Marxism Today*, June 1987.
- Ives, P. (2004) *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, London: Pluto.
- Laclau, E., and Mouffe, C., (2001), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London: Verso Books.
- Landy, M. (1986) 'Culture and politics in the work of Antonio Gramsci', *boundary 2*, 14 (3), pp. 43-70.
- Martin, J. (1998) *Gramsci's Political Analysis: a Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Martin, J. (ed.) (2001) *Antonio Gramsci: Critical Assessments*, 4 volumes, London: Routledge.
- Mouffe, C., ed. (1979) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, London: Routledge.
- Ransome, P. (1992) *Antonio Gramsci: a New Introduction*, Brighton: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Sassoon, A.S., ed. (1982) *Approaches to Gramsci*, London: Writers & Readers.

- Sassoon, A. S. (1988). *Gramsci's Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Simon, R. (1982). *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Culture as capital: the Bourdieusian approach

Following an overview of Bourdieu's theory of practice for those new to his work, we will focus in particular on the role played by his concept of 'cultural capital' and his argument concerning the role that cultural taste and cultural competency plays in social distinction. Bourdieu's original formulations have inspired a great deal of empirical research employing, developing, and critiquing his concepts and findings. We will examine how culture is implicated in producing and reproducing unequal social structures, and question to what extent Bourdieu's account in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* can be universalised beyond France in the 1970s. In particular, we will question whether the thesis he put forward in that book has lost any of its power in explaining the relationship between contemporary social structure and cultural practice and consumption. We will do this by reviewing a recent debate over the 'omnivore thesis', which has critiqued Bourdieu's original formulation of the ways in which cultural and social hierarchies are implicated in one another.

Essential Reading

- Bourdieu, P. (1991) "First Lecture. Social Space and Symbolic Space: Introduction to a Japanese Reading of *Distinction*." *Poetics Today* 12(4): 627-638.
- Bennett, T. and Silva, E. (2011). 'Introduction: Cultural Capital—Histories, Limits, Prospects', *Poetics*, 39, pp. 427-43. [e-Reading available]
- Atkinson, W. (2011). 'The Context and Genesis of Musical Tastes: Omnivorousness Debunked, Bourdieu Buttressed', *Poetics*, 39:3, pp. 169-86. [e-Reading available]

Recommended Reading

- Peterson, R. A. (1992). 'Understanding Audience Segmentation: From Elite and Mass to Omnivore and Univore', *Poetics*, 21, pp. 243- 58.

Further Reading

- Alexander, J. (1995) 'The Reality of Reduction: The Failed Synthesis of Pierre Bourdieu', in *Fin De Siècle Social Theory*, London: Verso.
- Bennett, T. (2011). 'Culture, Choice, Necessity: A Political Critique of Bourdieu's Aesthetic', *Poetics*, 39, pp. 530-46.
- Bennett, T. et al. (2009). *Culture, Class, Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. 'Structures, Habitus, Practices' in *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 52-65.
- Bourdieu, P. (1980). 'The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods', *Media, Culture & Society*, 2:3, pp. 261-93.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge, esp. Introduction, chapters 2, 5, 6, 8, Conclusion, and Appendix.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). 'Forms of Capital' in J. E. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, pp. 241-58, available at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). 'Chapter 14: The Metamorphosis of Taste', in *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage Publications.

- Bourdieu, P., (1993), 'The Field of Cultural Production, or the economic world reversed', in *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge, Polity, pp. 29-73.
- Calhoun, C., Li Puma, E. & Postone, M. (eds.) (1993). *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Cambridge: Polity Press (Chapters 1 and 10).
- DiMaggio, P., (1987). 'Classification in the arts'. *American Sociological Review* 52, 440-445.
- DiMaggio, P. & Mohr, J (1985). Cultural capital, educational attainment, and marital selection. *American Journal of Sociology* 90, 1231-1261.
- Glevarec, H. and Pinet, M. (2012). 'Tablatures of Musical Tastes in Contemporary France: Distinction without Intolerance', *Cultural Trends*, 21:1, pp. 67– 88.
- Jenkins, R. (1992). 'Culture, Status and Distinction' in *Pierre Bourdieu*, London: Routledge. Jenks, C. (1993). *Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Ollivier, M. (2002). 'Conspicuous Openness to Diversity: Implications for Cultural Minorities', available at: <http://educ.jmu.edu/~brysonbp/symbound/papers2001/papers2005/Ollivier2.pdf>
- Ollivier, M. (2008). 'Modes of Openness to Cultural Diversity. Humanist, Populist, Practical, and Indifferent', *Poetics*, 36:2–3, pp. 120–47.
- Peterson R. and Kern, R. (1996). 'Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore', *American Sociological Review*, 61:5, pp. 900– 07.
- Peterson R. and Simkus, A. (1992). 'How Musical Tastes Mark Occupational Status Groups' in M. Lamont and M. Fournier (eds.), *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Savage, M. (2006). 'The Musical Field', *Cultural Trends*, 15:2-3, pp. 159-74.
- Savage, M. and Gayo-Cal, M. (2009). 'Against the Omnivore: Assemblages of Contemporary Musical Taste in the United Kingdom', *CRESC Working Paper Series Working Paper No.*
- Swartz, D. (1997) *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. University of Chicago Press, esp. chapters 5, 6, and 8.

Week 8: Culture as simulacra: postmodern perspectives

This week we will explore the claims of so-called 'postmodern' perspectives on culture. After scrutinising the various, and often conflicting, ways in which the term 'postmodern' has been used, we will focus on the work of a French philosopher who is frequently labelled as a prime exemplar of this mode of thinking, Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard made some very bold claims concerning contemporary mediatised society, and we will examine one of his boldest: the claim that 'the Real' has been murdered. What might such a claim amount to? What might its consequences be? Baudrillard is a difficult thinker to analytically dissect because he presents his project not as an example of theory, but of anti-theory; what he terms a 'theory-fiction'. Nonetheless, by discussing Baudrillard's style and returning to his more conventional early work we will try to unlock his thought, not as something consistent and stable, nor as something providing an *explanation* for contemporary events, but rather as providing what he describes as an 'analogon' to the world in which he found himself. We will look at how Baudrillard presented a world of 'objective irony'; a world which did not need to be negated, for it spontaneously negated itself. To try to get a better grip on this most slippery of theorists, we will follow his thinking through the (apparently) concrete example of the destruction of the World Trade Centre in NYC on September 11th, 2001.

Essential Reading

- Baudrillard, J., (2001), 'The Murder of the Real', in *The Vital Illusion*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 61-83.
- Baudrillard, J., (2002), 'The Spirit of Terrorism', in *The Spirit of Terrorism*, London: Verso, pp 3-34.

Recommended Reading

- Baudrillard, J., ([1976] 1998), *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London: Sage Publications, especially the Introduction by Mike Gane, and Chapter 5.
- Baudrillard, J., (2003), *The Violence of the Global*, <http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=385>.

Further Reading

- Baudrillard, J., (1988) 'Simulacra and Simulations', 'Disneyland', in *Selected Writings*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Baudrillard, J., (2004/1991), *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Power Institute of Fine Arts.
- Baudrillard, J., (2007/1977), *Forget Foucault*, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Calhoun (1995) "Postmodernism as Pseudo-History. The Trivialization of Epochal Change", in: Calhoun: *Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 97-132.
- Connor, S. (1997). *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, 2nd Edition, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dodd N., (1999) "Reality in Retreat: Lyotard and Baudrillard", in Dodd, N., *Social Theory and Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 131-160.
- Dutton, D. (1990), 'Jean Baudrillard', *Philosophy and Literature*, 14, pp. 234-38.
- Gane, M., (1993), *Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews*, London: Routledge.
- Gane, M., (2000), *Jean Baudrillard: In Radical Uncertainty*, London: Pluto Press.
- Habermas, J., (1981), 'Modernity vs. Postmodernity,' *The New German Critique*, 22, pp. 3-14.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jameson, F. (1984). 'Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146, pp. 53- 92.
- Jarry, A., (1992/1894), *Adventures in Pataphysics: Collected Works Volume I*, London: Atlas Press, esp. 'Introduction' for an overview.
- Lyotard, F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition*, Manchester University Press.
- Mauss, M., (2002/1902), 'The Exchange of Gifts and the Obligation to Reciprocate' in *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London: Routledge Classics, pp. 8-18.
- Mc Robbie, A. (1994). *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Smart, B. (1993). *Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, Chapters 2 & 5.
- Žižek, S., (2002), *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, London; Verso.

Other Media

- Baudrillard lecturing on 'The Murder of the Real' at University of California, Irvine in 1999: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOijl2gFizM> .

Week 9: Culture as symbolic classification: the Durkheimian approach

This week we will examine culture as a system of symbolic classification as it was initially developed in Durkheim's work from the late 1890s up until his death in 1917. We will ask what we can learn from the late-Durkheim's contention that understanding the secular modern world should take place through an analysis of the 'sacred' drawn from the sociology of religion. We will focus in particular upon the importance he gave to the classificatory separation of the 'sacred' from the 'profane' and the key role he ascribed to ritual activity in reconfirming sacred symbols and reinforcing social solidarity. We will then focus upon two developments of symbolic classification that arose in the field of symbolic anthropology, but which have clear significance for sociological endeavour. These are Victor Turner's description of ritual, and Mary Douglas's account of dirt as 'matter out of place'. Following all three of these thinkers' prescriptions, we will ask how these studies of symbolic classification might have relevance to cultural analysis in the contemporary secular world.

Essential Reading

- Douglas M., (1966), 'Symbolic Pollution', extracts from *Purity & Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution & Taboo*, in Alexander J., and Seidman, S. (1990) *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 155-9.
- Giddens, A., (1986), 'Religion and the Theory of Knowledge', in *Durkheim*, London: Fontana Press, pp. 80-100.
- Turner, V., (1969), 'Liminality and Community', extracts from *the Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure* in Alexander J., and Seidman, S. (1990), *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 147-54.

Recommended Reading

- Durkheim, E. & Mauss, M., ([1903] 2009), *Primitive Classification*. London: Routledge Revivals, p. 2-6; 48-52 [the critical Introduction by Rodney Needham is also worth looking at, though perhaps slightly unfair].
- Durkheim, E. (2001), *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, esp. 3-21; 101-8; 169-74; 310-43.

Further Reading

- Alexander, J., ed. (1988), *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. the Introduction, pp. 1-21.
- Bellah, R. N., (1967), 'Civil Religion in America', *Daedalus*, Vo. 96, No. 1, pp. 1-21.
- Douglas, M., (1975) "Deciphering a meal" and "Jokes," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*, London: Routledge, pp. 249-75; 146-64.
- Douglas, M., (1987) *How Institutions Think*, London: Routledge.
- Lukes, S. (1975). *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lynch, G., (2012), *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach*. OUP: Oxford.
- Schmaus. W., (2004). "Chapter 1: Durkheim and the Social Character of the Categories." in *Rethinking Durkheim and His Tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-26
- Turner, V. (1969). *Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Turner, V. (1975). *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in human societies*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar, (1996) "Lumping and Splitting: Notes on Social Classification." *Sociological Forum*, 11: pp. 421-33.

Other Media

- Interview with Mary Douglas by Alan MacFarlane in 2006
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xl3oMdIRFDs> [VIDEO].

Week 10: Culture as text: the Geertzian approach

This week we will evaluate the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's focus upon the central significance of meaning to cultural analysis and his associated interpretative method of situational 'thick description'. We will do so by examining both his classic programmatic statement on interpreting culture, as well as his most celebrated example of this approach: his exceptionally influential account of the Balinese cockfight. We will try to locate his ideas within and against various preceding intellectual traditions, such as hermeneutics and Parsonian structural functionalism, and ask whether—and if so in what ways—Geertz's approach to reading cultures differs from other endeavours within the humanities, such as that found within literary criticism, or even literature itself. We will attempt to resist the undeniably seductive and entertaining style of Geertz's writing, and question whether his

move away from general explanatory theory and towards 'thick descriptions' of the local is an adequately ambitious project for a sociology of culture.

Essential Reading

- Geertz, C., (1973) 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,' in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-30.
- Geertz, C., (1973), 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 412-53.

Recommended Reading

- Geertz, C., (1983) 'Centres, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power', in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 121-146.

Further Reading

- Alexander, J. C., (1987), 'Cultural Sociology (1): The Hermeneutic Challenge', 'Cultural Sociology (2): Clifford Geertz's Rebellion against Determinism', in *Twenty Lectures: Sociological Theory Since WWII*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 281-329.
- Alexander, J. C., Smith, P., Norton, M., eds. (2011) *Interpreting Clifford Geertz: Cultural Investigations in the Social Sciences*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Asad, T., (1983). "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz." *Man* 18: 237-259
- Biersack, A., (1989). "Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond." Pp. 72-96 in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Geertz, C., (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*; New York: Basic Books .
- Geertz, C., (1980), *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Geertz, C., (1983), *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C., (1986), 'The Uses of Diversity'. in the *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Vol. 7., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 251–275.
- Geertz, C., (1988), *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Inglis, F., (2000) *Clifford Geertz: Culture, Custom and Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- James, C., (1983), 'On Ethnographic Authority', *Representations*, 1 (2), pp. 118-46.
- Parker, R. (1985). "From Symbolism to Interpretation: Reflections on the Work of Clifford Geertz." *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 10(3), pp. 62- 67
- Ricoeur, P. (1971). 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text'. *Social Research*, 38(3), 529–562.
- Rorty, R., (1983), 'Postmodern Bourgeois Liberalism', *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 80, No. 10, pp. 583–589.
- Rorty, R., (1986), 'On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz', *Michigan Quarterly Review*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 525–534.
- Shankman, Paul. 1984. "The Thick and the Thin: On the Interpretive Theoretical Program of Clifford Geertz." *Current Anthropology* 25 (June), pp. 261-279.
- Shweder, R. A., & Good, B. eds. (2005). *Clifford Geertz by his colleagues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, P., (2011), 'The Balinese Cockfight Decoded: Reflections on Geertz and Structuralism', in Alexander, J. C., Smith, P., Norton, M., eds. *Interpreting Clifford Geertz: Cultural Investigations in the Social Sciences*, New York: Palgrave

Macmillan.

- Swidler, A., (1996) 'Geertz's Ambiguous Legacy' *Contemporary Sociology* 25 (3), pp. 299-302.

Other Media

- Interview with Clifford Geertz in 2004 by Alan MacFarlane, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dQDx3axrDs> [VIDEO]

Week 11: Culture as relatively autonomous: the 'Strong Program'

This final week we will focus upon a fairly new approach to the sociological study of culture that has developed in recent years in the US. This approach can be conceived as at least in part an attempt at synthesis, an attempt at what its proponents describe as 'structural hermeneutics'. Since the goal of the program is in part synthetic, it will allow us to review many of the approaches to understanding culture we have covered in the preceding weeks. We shall ask what, if anything, makes this new 'cultural sociology' approach different from the 'sociologies of culture' we have examined so far. We will question what is meant by the 'relative autonomy of culture', and ask whether it is possible, or indeed desirable, to 'bracket out all non-symbolic relations' in the way in which the programme proposes. We will examine the central role played by social performance in the 'strong program', and try to assess its merits and possible shortcomings through analysing its application in certain empirical settings.

Essential Reading

- Alexander, J. C., & Smith, P., (2003) "The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Toward a Structural Hermeneutics", available www.centerforculturalsociology.com.
- Alexander, J. C., (2004) "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between Ritual and Strategy." *Sociological Theory*, 22: pp. 527-573. [e-Reading available]

Recommended Reading

- Alexander, J. C. (2003), "Watergate as Democratic Ritual", *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 155–178.

Further Reading

- Alexander, J. C. (2005). 'On the Origins of Cultural Sociology'. In *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*, 3–10. Oxford: Oxford University Press, U.S.A.
- Alexander, J. C. (2005). *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, U.S.A.
- Alexander, J. C. (1993). "The Promise of a Cultural Sociology." Pp. 293–323 in R. Munch and N. Smelser, eds., *Theory of Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Alexander, J. C. (1995). *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and the Problem of Reason*. London ; New York: Verso Books.
- Alexander, J. C. (1996). "Cultural Sociology or Sociology of Culture?" *Culture* 10(3–4): 1–5.
- Alexander, J. C., and Smith, P. (2010). 'The Strong Program: Origins, Achievements, and Prospects' in Hall, J. R., Grindstaff, L., and Lo, Ming-Cheng (eds.) *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, Routledge Handbooks, London: Routledge, Ch1.
- Battani, M., Hall, R., and Powers, D., (1997), "Culture's Structures: Meaning Making in the Public Sphere." *Theory and Society* 26: 781–812.
- Boudon, R., (2007) "Nouveau Durkheim? Vrai Durkheim?" *Durkheimian Studies* 12(1): pp. 137–48.
- Cordero, R., Carballo, F. Ossandón J., (2008), "Performing Cultural Sociology: A Conversation with Jeffrey Alexander" *European Journal of Social Theory* 11 (4): 501–520.

- Cutler, J. (2006) "War Cultures and Culture Wars." *Contexts* 5(3): 52–54.
- Emirbayer, Mustafa. 2004. 'The Alexander School of Cultural Sociology'. *Thesis Eleven* 79 (1): 5–15.
- Gartman, D. (2007), "The Strength of Weak Programs." *Theory and Society* 36(5): 381–413.
- Hess, A., (2009), 'The Glass Half-Full? An Attempt To Contextualize Jeffrey C. Alexander's The Civil Sphere'. *Thesis Eleven* 96 (1): 135–43.
- Kurasawa, F. (2004), "Alexander and the Cultural Refounding of American Sociology." *Thesis Eleven* 79 (1): 53–64.
- McLennan, G., (2005). 'The "New American Cultural Sociology": An Appraisal'. *Theory, Culture & Society* 22 (6): 1–18.
- McLennan, G. (1998)., 'Fin de Sociologie? The Dilemmas of Multidimensional Social Theory'. *New Left Review* 230: 58–90.
- McLennan, G. (2006)., 'Sociological Culturalism'. In *Sociological Cultural Studies: Reflexivity and Positivity in the Human Sciences*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 120–38.
- Morgan, M, & Baert, P, (2015), *Conflict in the Academy - A Study in the Sociology of Intellectuals*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, esp. pp. 1-6; 44-59; 74-81.
- Olick, J. (2010). 'What Is "the Relative Autonomy of Culture"?' In Hall, J. R., Grindstaff, L., and Lo, Ming-Cheng (eds.) *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, Routledge Handbooks. London: Routledge, Chapter 9.
- Rambo, E. and Chan, E. (1990) "Text, Structure, and Action in Cultural Sociology: A Commentary on 'Positive Objectivity'." In Wuthnow and Archer, *Theory and Society* 19: 635–48.
- Reed, I. A. (2012) "Cultural Sociology as a Post-positivist Research Program," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, edited by Jeffrey Alexander, Philip Smith, and Ron Jacobs. New York: Oxford University Press
- Schechner, R., (2003). *Performance Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, P., ed. (1998) *The New American Cultural Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Steensland, B., (2009), "Restricted and Elaborated Modes in the Cultural Analysis of Politics" *Sociological Forum*. 24: 926–34.
- Wherry, Frederick F. 2012a. *The Culture of Markets*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. 2013. *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Appendix A

Instructions on how to submit essays electronically

1. Log in to Blackboard (<https://www.ole.bris.ac.uk/>) and select the Blackboard course for the unit you are submitting work for. If you cannot see it, please e-mail f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk with your username and ask to be added.
2. Click on the "Submit Work Here" option on the left hand menu and then find the correct assessment from the list.
3. Select 'view/complete' for the appropriate piece of work. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have selected both the correct unit and the correct piece of work.
4. The screen will display 'single file upload' and your name. Enter your candidate number as a submission title, and then select the file that you wish to upload by clicking the 'browse' button. Click on the 'upload' button at the bottom.
5. You will then be shown the essay to be submitted. Check that you have selected the correct essay and click the 'Submit' button. This step must be completed or the submission is not complete.
6. You will be informed of a successful submission. A digital receipt is displayed on screen and a copy sent to your email address for your records.

Important notes

- You are only allowed to submit one file to Blackboard (single file upload), so ensure that all parts of your work – references, bibliography etc. – are included in one single document and that you upload the correct version. You will not be able to change the file once you have uploaded.
- Blackboard will accept a variety of file formats, but the School can only accept work submitted in .rtf (Rich Text Format) or .doc/.docx (Word Document) format. If you use another word processing package, please ensure you save in a compatible format.
- By submitting your essay, you are confirming that you have read the regulations on plagiarism and confirm that the submission is not plagiarised. You also confirm that the word count stated on the essay is an accurate statement of essay length.
- If Blackboard is not working email your assessment to f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk with the unit code and title in the subject line.

How to confirm that your essay has been submitted

You will have received a digital receipt by email and if you click on the assessment again (steps 1-4), you will see the title and submission date of the essay you have submitted. If you click on submit, you will not be able to submit again. This table also displays the date of submission. If you click on the title of the essay, it will open in a new window and you can also see what time the essay was submitted.

Appendix B
Summary of Relevant School Regulations
(Further details are in the Postgraduate taught handbook, which takes precedence)

Attendance of Seminars

SPAIS takes attendance of and participation in seminars very seriously. Seminars form an essential part of your learning and you need to make sure you arrive on time, have done the required reading and participate fully. Attendance at all seminars is monitored, with absence only condoned in cases of illness or for other exceptional reasons. If you are unable to attend a seminar you must inform your seminar tutor. You should also provide evidence to explain your absence, such as a self-certification and/or medical note, counselling letter or other official document. If you are ill or are experiencing some other kind of difficulty which is preventing you from attending seminars for a prolonged period, please contact the Postgraduate Office or the Graduate Administration Manager who can advise on how to proceed.

Requirements for credit points

To be awarded credit points for a taught unit, students must:

- Have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Pass the summative assessment

Where there are multiple summative assessments in a unit, students must achieve the pass mark for the weighted average of the assessments (i.e. in the mark for the unit overall). They do not need to pass each individual piece of assessment. If any of these conditions are not met, then your ability to progress through your degree may be affected.

Presentation of written work

Coursework must be word-processed. As a guide, use a clear, easy-to-read font such as Arial or Times New Roman, in at least 11pt. You may double-space or single-space your essays as you prefer. Your tutor will let you know if they have a preference. All pages should be numbered. Ensure that the essay question appears on the first page.

Students are required to complete and include a cover page for essay/summative submissions – the template cover page will be available via the online submission point for students to complete.

Candidate numbers are required on summative work in order to ensure that marking is anonymous. Note that your candidate number is not the same as your student number. This number can be viewed in StudentInfo (<https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo>). You should regard this number as personal to you and not share it with anyone else. The number is used to ensure that the marking of a student's work is done anonymously. Please ensure that you memorise your candidate number as you will need to write it on every assessment.

Assessment Length

Each piece of coursework must not exceed the stipulated maximum length for the assignment (the 'word count') listed in the unit guide. Summative work that exceeds the maximum length will be subject to penalties. **The word count is absolute (there is no 10% leeway, as commonly rumoured)**. Five marks will be deducted for every 100 words or part thereof over the word limit. Thus, an essay that is 1 word over the word

limit will be penalised 5 marks; an essay that is 101 words over the word limit will be penalised 10 marks, and so on.

The word count includes all text, tables, numbers, footnotes/endnotes, Harvard referencing in the body of the text and direct quotes. It excludes the cover page, bibliography, headers and appendices. However, appendices should only be used for reproducing documents, not additional text written by you.

Students are advised that any attempt to circumvent word count limits by changing essay format, e.g. by removing spaces in references, will be investigated. In these cases, penalties will be applied if the actual word count is exceeded and further disciplinary action may be taken.

Students should be aware that word count penalties will incur a mark reduction that may in turn impact their progress and/or overall qualification.

Referencing and Plagiarism

Students are required to reference the source materials used to inform their submitted work. Students are expected to use the Harvard referencing system as set out in the relevant section of the SPAIS *Study Guide*. Unless otherwise stated, essays must contain a bibliography. Students should consult the SPAIS *Study Guide* for full details (students can access this via the SPAIS MSc-Dip Admin Blackboard site).

Inadequate referencing in submitted work can run the risk of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged inclusion in a student's work of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. "Work" includes internet sources as well as printed material.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and penalties will be applied in such cases, as is set out in the SPAIS *Postgraduate taught handbook*. See also the relevant section of the School *Study Skills Guide* for more information.

Please note that plagiarism may lead to penalties that may prevent students found guilty of such an offence from progressing in their programme of study.

Extensions

Extensions to coursework deadlines will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request an extension, complete a Coursework Extension Request Form (available at Blackboard/SPAIS MSc/Dip Administration/forms) and submit the form with your evidence (e.g. medical certificate, death certificate, or hospital letter) to Faye Cooper in the Postgraduate Office, 11 Priory Road or f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk.

Extension requests will not be considered if there is no supporting evidence.

All extension requests should be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the assessment deadline. If the circumstance occurs after this point, then please either telephone or see the Graduate Administration Manager in person. In their absence you can contact Faye Cooper in the PG Office, again in person or by telephone.

Extensions can only be granted by the Graduate Administration Office. They cannot be granted by unit convenors or seminar tutors.

You will receive an email to confirm whether your extension request has been granted or not.

Submitting Essays/Work for assessment

Formative work: Where applicable, details on how to submit formative work for assessment will be contained in this unit guide.

Summative work: All summative submissions ***must be submitted electronically via Blackboard***.

Electronic copies enable an efficient system of receipting, providing the student and the School with a record of exactly when an essay was submitted. It also enables the School to systematically check the length of submitted essays and to safeguard against plagiarism.

Late Submissions

Penalties are imposed for work submitted late without an approved extension. Any kind of computer/electronic failure is **not** accepted as a valid reason for an extension, so make sure you back up your work on another computer, memory stick or in the cloud (e.g. One Drive, Dropbox or another equivalent system). Also ensure that the clock on your computer is correct. The following schema of marks deduction for late/non-submission is applied to both formative work and summative work:

- Up to 24 hours late, or part thereof *Penalty of 10 marks*
- For each additional 24 hours late, or part thereof *A further 5 marks deduction for each 24 hours, or part thereof*
- Assessment submitted over one week late *Treated as a non-submission: fail and mark of zero recorded. This will be noted on your transcript.*
- The 24 hour period runs from the deadline for submission, and includes Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays and university closure days.
- If an essay submitted less than one week late fails solely due to the imposition of a late penalty, then the mark will be capped at 50 and recorded as a second attempt.

Students should be aware that late penalties will incur a mark reduction that may in turn impact their progress and/or overall qualification.

Marks and Feedback

In addition to an overall mark, students will receive written feedback on their assessed work.

In accordance with the Faculty's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught programmes, marks and feedback are typically returned within fifteen working days of the relevant submission deadline, unless exceptional circumstances arise in which case

students will be informed of the deadline for return. The process of marking and providing detailed feedback is a labour-intensive one, with most 4000 word essays taking at least 45 minutes to assess and comment upon. Summative work also needs to be checked for plagiarism and length and moderated by a second member of staff to ensure marking is fair and consistent.

If work is submitted late, then it may not be possible to return feedback within fifteen working days.

Fails and Resits

If you fail the unit overall, you will normally be required to resubmit or resit unless you do not meet the progression requirements for your programme. Your School Office will contact you if this is the case.

Appendix C

Level 7 Marking and Assessment Criteria (Postgraduate)

All MSc/Diploma marking in the School is out of 100 on the following scale and with the following classifications:

70 and above Distinction

60-69 Merit

50-59 Pass

Below 50 Fail

Work within each of the classifications is expected to demonstrate the following attributes. Please note that markers do not weight each of these attributes equally when finalising the mark. Markers may also take into account the extent to which achievement of unit-specific intended learning outcomes (see unit guide) has been demonstrated when assessing work and arriving at the mark.

70-100: DISTINCTION

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a highly appropriate response to the question or assignment task that has been set. Coverage and selection of content is exemplary. There is clear analysis of the question or topic. Clear ability to analyse and synthesize ideas is demonstrated. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will be outstanding in (where appropriate) its incorporation and use of empirical evidence/theoretical frameworks/methodological approaches in addressing the question.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The assignment is internally consistent, extremely coherent, concise and well-structured. The introduction is well focused and provides a clear indication of the rationale, key literature base used and organisation of the work. The central argument/structure of the work has a clear and logical sequence of progression. The conclusion draws insights which are logically developed from the analysis. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will be outstanding in the extent to which the structure facilitates the answer to the question.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A detailed understanding of key concepts and/or data will be demonstrated. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+) sustained evidence of critical understanding of concepts and/or critical analysis of data will be demonstrated.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

The assignment demonstrates that an excellent knowledge of the topic has been gained from careful research and wide ranging reading that goes well beyond the prescribed reading list. The selection, interpretation, comparison, evaluation, and integration of evidence and source material to support the argument is extremely effective. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will indicate outstanding ability to deal with complexity, contradictions or gaps in the existing academic literature.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

Work at this level will indicate a detailed and critical understanding of central theoretical and/or methodological issues as appropriate. At the upper end of the distinction range

(marks of 80+) work will show extensive evidence of coherence, creativity, originality and imagination in addressing the question or topic.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The work is extremely well presented, with minimal grammatical or spelling errors. It is written in a fluent and engaging style that demonstrates sufficient background reading, with exemplary referencing and bibliographic formatting in accordance with the required conventions. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), the work will be virtually error-free in these respects.

60-69: MERIT

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a very appropriate response to the set question or assignment task. The question is addressed comprehensively, and a convincing and coherent argument is maintained in doing so. There is very good coverage of content and some evidence of an ability to think critically in relation to the question or topic will be shown. Where appropriate, the work will illustrate good comprehension of the theoretical implications of the set question or assignment.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The structure of the assignment is sound. The introduction is relevant and provides the reader with a clear guide to the central argument and the overall structure of the work. The conclusion will highlight and reflect upon the key points of argument developed within the main body of the essay and relative to the set question or assignment.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A sound understanding of relevant key concepts and/or data has been developed and demonstrated, with key related issues and debates identified and discussed.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

Overall there is a very good selection and use of sources which are well integrated, interpreted and evaluated. The work will demonstrate the ability to be selective in the range of material used. Some independent reading and research that goes beyond the prescribed reading list will be demonstrated, although the range of evidence used will be more restricted in comparison with an assignment awarded a higher grade.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

The work will clearly demonstrate a capacity to synthesise and critically evaluate source materials and/or debates in relation to the set question or assignment rather than simply describe or summarise them.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The work is clear and fluent and largely conforms to referencing and bibliographic conventions. It has been well edited and demonstrates sufficient background reading. Proof-reading has resulted in there being few grammatical or spelling errors.

50-59: PASS

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a reasonably appropriate response to the set question or assignment task. All aspects of the set question or topic have been addressed. The work will show some

comprehension of the underlying theoretical/methodological implications of the question where appropriate, but there may be limitations in the understanding of how these issues relate to the question.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The assignment has been effectively structured, although more careful editing may have improved the overall coherence of argument. The introduction is well focused and provides a sense of the central argument and overall organisation. The conclusion provides a summary of the discussion, although may be primarily descriptive in nature and may fail to reflect upon or support the argument fully.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A basic level of understanding of relevant key concepts and/or data has been demonstrated, though there may be some errors and/or gaps in the knowledge and understanding. Key related issues have been identified and discussed but without many significant insights being developed.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

The argument will be supported by reference to and incorporation of some relevant evidence, but with scope for greater range and depth of evidence. The work will indicate a generally clear understanding of appropriate evidence, but this may be presented in an uncritical/descriptive manner and/or insufficiently incorporated into the overall argument in response to the set question or assignment task.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

A good range of relevant content has been covered, and there is some attempt at analysis but a tendency to be descriptive rather than critical. Work in this classification may also exhibit a tendency to assert/state points of argument rather than argue on the basis of reasoning and evidence.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The style of writing is appropriate and presents few comprehension difficulties for the reader. The assignment is not as fluently written as it might have been, and there may be scope for improvement in spelling and grammar. There is evidence of sufficient background reading. Referencing and bibliographic formatting generally conform to the conventions, but there may be scope for further improvement in accuracy and consistency in accordance with the required conventions.

0-49 FAIL

Addresses the Question Set

Although some attempt will have been made, the work largely fails to address and/or significantly misunderstands the set question or assignment task. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there is little or no understanding of the set question or assignment task in evidence.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The work does not contain a sufficiently structured argument, and may be ineffectively organised. The introduction may lack a clear rationale or statement of argument, and/or may lack a clear outline of the overall structure of the assignment. The conclusion may lack any indication of insights in relation to the set question or assignment task. At the

lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) the structure of the work may be incoherent or illogical, and/or the work may lack a clearly developed argument.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

There is limited knowledge and understanding of key concepts and/or data, with significant errors and/or omissions in this respect. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there may be significant lack of awareness or understanding of key concepts and/or data.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

Few key points of appropriate evidence are identified and/or there may be very little attempt at analysis of evidence, with the work tending towards excessive description. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) evidence referred to and included in the work may not be relevant to the addressing the set question or assignment task.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

The approach is typified by a general lack of critical evaluation in relation to relevant literature and issues. Work that simply asserts rather than argues a case may also fall into this classification. The use of sources may be excessively derivative of existing work, with little or no indication of an ability to independently analyse relevant material. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there is little or no evidence of critical evaluation.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The standard of writing presents difficulties for the reader, with frequent grammatical and spelling errors to a degree that inhibits communication. The range and depth of background reading may be insufficient. The approach to referencing and bibliographic formatting does not follow the required conventions to a sufficiently consistent level. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) the use of language may present considerable comprehension difficulties for the reader. The assignment may not meet stipulations in terms of layout and/or length, and the approach to referencing may not meet expected conventions