

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2021-2022 MLCS 210-A1: Approaches to Cultural Studies
(Fall Term)

Instructor: Ann De León
Office: Old Arts Bldg. 308-C
E-mail: adeleon1@ualberta.ca
Course Website: e-class

Time: Tu, Th 12:30-1:50PM
Place: T 1-119
Office Hours: F 1-2PM
or by appointment

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: None

Technology requirements (minimum): You must have access to a device such as a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or cellphone to access e-class. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Experiential Learning Component

√ Optional. This course has a voluntary 20-hour CSL (Community Service Learning) component. *Note: Only five placements will be available this semester giving priority to MLCS Majors who require CSL to graduate this year.*

For more information on CSL visit: <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-service-learning/index.html>

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

√ No, not needed

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

Exam registry – Students' Union

<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>

See explanations below

√ Document distributed in class

Other (please specify)

NA

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will be exposed to some major theories and theorists within the discipline of Cultural Studies. Through select critical readings and guest speaker presentations, we will explore how culture and cultural processes are shaped, distributed, and responded to in diverse ways. Students will leave this course equipped with the skills needed to think critically and creatively about how culture and cultural practices are shaped by notions of identity, language, nation, power, class, race, gender, popular culture etc.

**Students who also volunteer to do the 20-hour CSL (Community Service-Learning) component, will also get to reflect upon how some of the cultural theories addressed in the course apply or not to the “real-life” experiences of a local non-for-profit organization in Edmonton.*

Topics covered might include: Globalization & Nationalism, Architecture & Space, Popular Culture & the Market, Race & Multiculturalism, Sexuality & Gender, Media & Public Spheres, Science, Cyberculture & Nature.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify some of the main theorists and theories in the field & their strengths and limitations.
- Think critically about how culture and cultural practices are shaped by notions of identity, language, nation, power, class, race, gender, popular culture etc.
- Learn how scholars from different disciplinary, geographical, and linguistic perspectives have engaged with some of these theories in their own work.
- Produce brief critical reflection e-posts on select readings.
- Create a digital portrait or creative piece accompanied by a micro-narrative on a cultural artefact of their choice.
- Write a final critical essay on one cultural practice, icon, celebrity, product, institution, or organization of their choice relating it to one or more of the cultural theories looked at; **or** produce a creative piece (video, art, song, performance etc.) with accompanying text inspired by some of the cultural theories addressed in the course.
- *(CSL Students): Will also get to produce a reflection piece regarding their experiences working with a local non-for-profit organization.*

**This course counts towards the MLCS Major/Minor: <https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students/index.html>*

**This course counts towards the Certificate in International Learning: <https://www.ualberta.ca/international/global-education/certificate-international-learning/index.html>*

**The optional CSL (Community Service Learning) component can also count towards the Certificate in Community Service Learning: <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-service-learning/csl-student-info/certificate-program/index.html>*

Course Format: The Objectives of the course will be met through a combination of formal lectures, guest presentations, assigned readings and audiovisual materials.

Texts:

Simon During (Editor), *The Cultural Studies Reader 2nd edition*, New York: Routledge, 1993.
(Note: We will be using this 2nd edition as it is free and fully accessible online).

All other readings and audiovisual materials required will be provided through e-class links.

Additional Course Fees

√ No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 1, 2021

Add/Delete Date: September 15, 2021

50% Withdrawal Date: October 4, 2021

Withdrawal Date: November 30, 2021

Last Day of Class: December 7, 2021

Final Exam Date (if applicable): N/A

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): N/A

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

<i>Participation:</i>	15% (ongoing)
<i>4 Critical e-posts @ 5% each:</i>	20% (Sept 14, 28, Oct 19, Nov 16)
<i>Pop-culture postcard:</i>	10% (Nov 22)
<i>Midterm Exam:</i>	25% (Nov 4)
<i>*Final Project:</i>	30% (Dec 14)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:*Notes:*

**All class assignments will be submitted through e-class by the due dates (unless noted otherwise). In case of any unforeseen technological issues with e-class, you may email the instructor your assignment by the due date explaining why it was not possible for you to submit the work via e-class.*

*** In light of the ongoing pandemic and to ensure your safety and that of everyone on campus, it is imperative that you carry out the daily University of Alberta “Check In” and “Check Out” forms <https://here.ualberta.ca/> (for purposes of contact tracing) as well as the Government of Alberta Health Daily Covid-19 Screening Checklist: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-alberta-health-daily-checklist>. If you are feeling unwell or experience any of the symptoms outlined in the checklist, it is imperative that you stay at home, test for Covid-19, isolate if positive, and*

follow guidelines as directed by the University of Alberta and Alberta Health. In the case that you have tested positive for Covid-19 it is important that you isolate, inform your course instructors, and follow Alberta Health Guidelines.

Participation (15%): Will be factored through attendance and thoughtful participation. Attendance will be documented the first 5 minutes of class via a sign-up sheet. Thoughtful participation means actively and respectfully engaging in class discussion on the topic at hand evidencing having carefully completed the assigned readings and discussion questions for that day.

Four Critical e-posts (20%) @ 5% each due (Sept 14, 28, Oct 19, Nov 16): Students will be asked to submit 4 critical e-posts (200-300 words max. in length each) throughout the semester. For each post, students will be asked to identify TWO KEY IDEAS in the reading and explain them in their own words. They will be asked to engage critically with the text by asking questions such as: “Why is this key idea/text/quotation etc. important? And “How are these concepts or examples relevant (or not) to cultural practices/icons/traditions etc. today?”

- Full marks (5%) will be received for completing the critical e-post adequately;
- Half-marks (2.5%) will be received if the work appears last minute or shows evidence of not having completed the reading or failure to comprehend the main ideas of the text.
- A Zero (0%) will be received if you choose not to submit anything.

Pop-culture Pandemic Postcard (10%) due Nov 22: This assignment aims to empower students to take ownership of a popular cultural ‘object/artifact’ in their possession by creating a digital portrait of it and writing a postcard-like micro-narrative (of approx. 350-540 words) to accompany the image, taking into account one or two of the cultural theories addressed in the course. Students will briefly share their work with their peers in class on Nov 23 & 25. Detailed instructions are posted in e-class.

Midterm Exam (25%) on Nov 4th: Will be offered in class and will cover all course readings covered up until that date. The format will be a mixture of short and long answer questions, matching terms/concepts/authors, and True or False Statements. A midterm review will be provided in class on Nov 2nd.

***Final Project (30%)** due by Dec 14th: As their final project, students will have the opportunity to either : 1) Write a critical essay (8 pages long) on one cultural practice/product/celebrity/artwork/icon etc. of their choice **or** they can 2) produce a creative work along with an accompanying narrative. The creative work (art, collage, song, video, poem etc.) will be accompanied by a (500-800 word) narrative. Detailed instructions are posted in e-class.

****Note: Students who opted to do the CSL component will have this final project count for (20%) of their final grade and the remaining (10%) will be obtained through a CSL reflection piece they must write upon completion of their 20-hr placement. A set of*

questions will be provided to them to help them reflect on their experience (500 words in length).

Explanatory Notes on Experiential Learning (CSL):

Experiential learning is students' purposeful engagement in direct experience, focused reflection, and authentic assessment in order to promote learners' initiative, increase knowledge, develop skills and strategies, clarify values, and apply knowledge in the real-world setting (adapted from [the Association of Experiential Education](#)). Experiential learning may include Community-service learning (CSL), project-based learning, field work, or other type of activity that allows students to apply their knowledge in practice in a multitude of settings inside and outside of the classroom.

*In this course, students who opt to do CSL (Community-service learning) will be required to volunteer 20 hours of their time through either remote or in-person activities with their non-for-profit organization. Students must keep track of their hours to ensure completion. Hours logged can include: learning about their organization through online or in-person research, meetings with their organization liaisons, any travel time required for project work, any time required in preparation for CSL activities or deliverables, and active work for their organization. At the end of their placement, students will be required to fill out a completion form with their non-for-profit partner liaison and they will produce a 500-word reflection piece (worth 10% of their final project mark) based on questions provided by their course instructor due by Dec 14th.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the "attendance and participation" component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#).

In this course, attendance and participation in group discussions are an important part of the course and counts 15% of the final grade. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions by having thoughtfully completed their readings for that day. In the case of an unforeseen emergency, students may request an excused absence within two working days through email.

Policy for Late Assignments:

All assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Students who consult *in advance* with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course without penalty. Should a student be given an extension for a late assignment but fail to

abide by the new deadline, no further extension will be granted and the student will receive a zero for that assignment. In case of an emergency which has impeded the student from submitting an assignment by the deadline, an email should be sent to the instructor within 48 hours of the due date explaining the situation. Unless supported by substantial reasons, a grade of zero will be assigned to any work not submitted on time.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed **only** with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

[The Academic Success Centre](#) provides professional academic support to help students maximize their academic success and achieve their academic goals. We offer appointments, advising, group workshops, online courses, and specialized programming year-round to students in all university programs, and at all levels of achievement and study.

They also administer the University of Alberta's [Duty to Accommodate procedure](#) for students and works with students, instructors, campus units, Faculties and departments, community and government agencies, and on and off-campus service providers to coordinate students' disability-related accommodation needs for participation in university programs.

For general information and to register for services visit the [Academic Accommodations](#) webpage.

[The Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

[The First Peoples' House](#) provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

[Health and Wellness Support for Students](#) outlines available mental and physical health resources that are offered on-campus and in the community.

[The Office of the Student Ombuds](#) is a confidential service that strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. We offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.

Learning and working environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) section of the University Calendar.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations.	A+	4.0	95-100
	A	4.0	90-94
	A-	3.7	86-89
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	82-85
	B	3.0	75-81
	B-	2.7	70-74
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	66-69
	C	2.0	61-65
	C-	1.7	58-60
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	55-57
	D	1.0	50-54
Failure.	F	0.0	0-49

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