

AMERST 5850: Class And Culture

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Course Description

This course is designed to help you achieve the following learning goals:

- Understand the complexity of class as a social and analytical category
- Develop your ability to critically analyze representations of the working-class
- Understand how popular culture shapes working-class consciousness and activism
- Understand how class culture is complicated by the intersection of multiple cultural identities – race, gender, sexuality, place, ethnicity

To help you achieve these goals, we will use a combination of class discussions, individual research, presentations of your research, and one-on-one conversations.

Required Texts

Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*

A significant number of additional readings will be posted in WebCT in PDF format, or you may borrow a CD from me to print out copies of the PDFs.

WebCT

About half of this course will be conducted online, using the discussion board feature of WebCT. Whenever the course schedule lists an online discussion, we will meet virtually instead of face-to-face. You may participate in the online discussion at whatever time of day or night you prefer, though I will always set a deadline by which you need to make an initial and concluding post to the discussion. You'll find guidelines for effective online discussion in WebCT.

In WebCT, I will also post PDFs of all of the course readings other than the two books. You may download and print this directly from WebCT, though please be advised that this takes up a lot of bandwidth; I recommend that you do this on a computer with a very fast internet connection. I also have a CD with these PDF files, which you may borrow to print from.

Assignments and Grading

Everyone will write one short paper and complete a multiple-piece "inquiry" project. Graduate students will also write a culminating paper, drawn from the research involved in the inquiry project. Grades will be calculated as follows:

Project	Due dates	Percentage for Undergraduates	Percentage for Graduate Students
Class autobiography	September 16	20%	20%
Inquiry project	Multiple dates	70%	50%
Critical paper	December 7	n/a	20%
Participation in discussions	All semester	10%	10%

Specific grading criteria for each assignment will be distributed as part of the assignment sheets.

Course Schedule

Theme	Date	Preparation	Activities	Assignments Due
Theories of class	8/26	Complete class questionnaire	Class meeting: your "starting point" class theories WebCT orientation	
	8/31	View <i>People Like Us</i> , video available in library of the CWCS	Class meeting: discuss film	
	9/2	Read Zweig excerpt	Online discussion of reading	
	9/7	Read Sennet & Cobb	Online discussion of reading	
	9/9	Read Metzgar excerpt	Online discussion of reading	
	9/14	E-mail Sherry w/ questions about the theoretical readings	Class meeting: map common ground and differences among the theories	
	9/16		Online discussion of theories	Class autobiography
Representations of the working class	9/21		Class meeting: discuss sample representations	
	9/23		Class meeting: discuss	

			sample representations	
	9/28	Read Rubin & Butsch essays	Online discussion of readings	
	9/30	Read Lipsitz essay	Online discussion of Lipsitz	
	10/5	E-mail Sherry w/ questions about the readings	Class meeting: mapping theories of pop culture	
	10/7		Work on your presentations	
	10/12		Class meeting: presentations of individual text sets	Text analyses
How representations shape class consciousness	10/14		Class meeting: theorizing about how representations affect consciousness	
	10/16	Read Enstad, Introduction	Online discussion of Enstad	
	10/21	Read Enstad Chs. 1 & 2	Lab session: work with sample representations from circa 1910	
	10/23	Read Enstad Ch. 3	Class meeting: discuss Enstad & related representations	
	10/28	Read essay from <i>Bringing Class Back In</i> Read Fiske essay	Online discussion of reading	
	10/30		Individual meetings with Sherry, work on projects	
	11/2		Class meeting: presentations	
	11/4		Class meeting: presentations	Analysis of the relationship between your texts and audience response
Class, race, gender, sexuality	11/9		Online discussion: intersections in Enstad	
	11/11	No class – University closed for Veteran’s Day		

	11/16	Read Lott, Introduction and chapter three	Online discussion: unpacking Lott	
	11/18		Class meeting: More work w/ Lott	
	11/23		Individual meetings with Sherry, work on projects	
	11/25	No class - Happy Thanksgiving!		
	11/30		Class meeting: presentations	
	12/2		Class meeting: presentations	Analysis of how intersections play out in your text set
	12/7			Graduate papers due