

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY FALL SEMESTER 2008

EDUC 488-4  
SPECIAL TOPICS: MEDIA, EDUCATION, CULTURE & SOCIETY  
(E100)

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Fridays, 8:30a-12:20p AQ 4140

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*By influencing public norms, perceptions, expectations, hopes, fears, desires, and angsts about diversity, the mass media play a powerful role in the social construction of knowledge about race, ethnicity, religion, gender, culture, sexual orientation, and other aspects of diversity.*  
Carlos E. Cortés, *The Children are Watching*, p. 21

**Prerequisites:**

This course is open to undergraduates in all Faculties who have completed sixty (60) credit hours of coursework (it is recommended that students have completed at least one diversity-related class in any department).

**Course Description:**

Applying the educational concept of *societal curriculum* to media representations, this course takes an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the role of media and popular culture in educating about society. Specifically, the course will explore racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, class, and other socially-constructed differences, and examine how these representations reproduce, or challenge, existing norms and power structures in mainstream society. This course serves as an introduction to key concepts and authors in fields including critical education studies, critical pedagogy, media studies, sociology, and cultural studies. It will provide undergraduate students in education the conceptual language with which to examine, understand, and respond to the educative power of pop culture and bring it into their classrooms in meaningful and substantive ways. For students in fields other than education, it will introduce them to educational concepts and offer them an introduction to the breadth of scholarship in education (what we study beyond teacher education, and professional development).

**Topics will include these and others:**

- TV & social class – the bumbling idiots
- Music Videos & masculinity/femininity -- “girl power”
- Sport & Indigenous mascots
- Kid culture – Disney... is it “just entertainment”?
- Hollywood – Bollywood
- Discourse and How we talk about the “Supercrip”
- Consumerism, capitalism, advertising – Living in McWorld
- Violence & terror

**Course Objectives include:**

The course activities are organized with attention to the following learning objectives. Students will:

- examine the influence of media and popular culture representations on one's own knowledge about socially-constructed groups;
- describe and analyze media and popular culture representations of social differences, particularly as related to race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class;
- think critically about the historical, social, and politicized contexts within which education takes place;
- gain proficiency with key concepts and issues in the fields of critical education studies, critical pedagogy, media studies, sociology, and cultural studies;

**Required Learning Activities & Evaluation:**

ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATE	VALUE
Attendance, Participation, Homework*	Ongoing (*you will be asked regularly to 'collect data' via field assignments – viewing music videos, trip to a toy store, etc.)	25 %
In class free-writes/ responses to readings	Ongoing (3 total)	25 %
Critical media analysis (6-8 PP)	Week 8	25%
Final project (paper or multimedia option)	Week 13	25%

**Required texts:**

1. Cortés, C. E. (2000). *The Children are watching: How the media teach about diversity*. New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN-10: 0807739375; ISBN13: 9780807739372 Cost: \$21.39 on Amazon.ca but also available used through various online bookstores. A limited number will be ordered for the SFU bookstore.
2. Macedo, D. & Steinberg, S. R. (2007). *Critical media literacy: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang. ISBN-10: 0820486668X; ISBN-13: 978-0820486680 Cost: \$54.13 on Amazon.ca but also available used through various online bookstores. A limited number will be ordered for the SFU bookstore.