

COM105A: Introduction to Media Studies
Final Take-Home Exam

THIS REQUIREMENT ONLY APPLIES TO THE SENIORS GRADUATING IN MARCH 2009

The coverage of this requirement is mainly based on the readings taken up after the midterm requirement. There will be two questions to answer.

The first one is about **The Politics of Representation**. You may cite ideas from the readings in the earlier modules, but the focus should be on the issues raised in **The Politics of Representation**. The second question is about your initial exposure to the postmodern as represented by the last two (or three) articles discussed in class:

- (“Hybrid Cultures, Oblique Powers” by Néstor García Canclini)
- “The Precession of Simulacra” by Jean Baudrillard
- “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” by Fredric Jameson

Your answers will take the form of a short essay that should address these general questions in specific ways, facilitated by the mandatory use of direct quotes and paraphrases from several readings. I expect a correct and consistent use of either the APA or the MLA citation styles¹. The questions are as follows:

- 1) Pick a specific type of representation and discuss why this issue in media and cultural studies is a political issue as well.**

(The specific type of representation may be based on gender, race, subculture, etc. You may pick examples ranging from children to single mothers to senior citizens, etc. After discussing your example to provide some background, ask where the politics is to be found in your chosen issue. What do power relations have to do with your chosen example? How does politics provide the possibility for resistance even when it seems unlikely? Etc.)

- 2) Despite the differences in their approaches and foci, what are the similarities and patterns you can trace across the ideas of the postmodern that are being espoused by Garcia Canclini, Baudrillard, and Jameson?**

(This is a comparison/contrast paper, but the focus really should be on the comparison. It's a no-brainer to discuss why these thinkers are all different from each other in their treatment of the postmodern. To make things more interesting, try to see instead what commonalities they share with regard to trying to define and/or describe the postmodern condition. Do not neglect all the differences between these thinkers but focus on how all three are discussing the same phenomenon in contemporary existence, albeit from different points of view.)

These questions are broad enough to accommodate different perspectives and approaches, but an alternate option is for you to generate your own question to answer or for you to generate a thesis statement that can address the themes listed above. Like the given questions, doing this requirement in this manner also involves an understanding of the diverse ideas relevant to each module. Similarly, the answer you will furnish should also refer to several readings.

¹ Students under the School of the Social Sciences are required to use the APA system for their formal research requirements, so you may as well get used to that system for this assignment.

There is neither a minimum nor a maximum page requirement; consequently, I demand strict adherence to paper format and mechanics:

- 1-inch margins on all sides
- double-spaced lines
- Times New Roman in either size 10 or 12—no more, no less, no in-between
- proper use of paragraphs and all aspects of formal/academic written English
- no real names: only ID numbers or an optional pseudonym
- black ink on white 8.5 × 11 bond paper
- no cover pages and/or folders
- no illustrations and fancy layouts, unless absolutely necessary (e.g., tables and charts, etc.)
- no email submissions will be accepted, but you must keep your “soft copy” in case it is needed
- **the deadline for this paper is 12 noon of 27 February 2009 (Friday)**
- any other stipulation will be mentioned in class