

COM105A: Introduction to Media Studies

Final Take-Home Exam

The coverage of this requirement is mainly based on the readings taken up after the midterm requirement. There will be three questions to answer, one for each module:

Like before, 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 to goths to the urban poor to students from a specific province, 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?

The readings will be important models for you to emulate in your analysis.)

- 2) **How does the postmodern challenge the possibilities for political agency and/or resistance? In what ways is political agency and/or resistance actually possible from the perspective of certain thinkers?**

(This question tests your capacity to first provide a background of the postmodern in its form as a radical challenge to “how things used to be.” It is against this background that you will then focus on the new forms of political agency and/or resistance that arise as a reaction to the novelties of the postmodern condition.

Along the way, you should automatically end up discussing why political agency is needed in the first place, as well as providing a comparison and contrast of the different theorizations of the postmodern. Do not neglect the differences between these thinkers but focus on how the differing points of view all point to the same general condition referred to as postmodern.)

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.

- 3) **How do the readings under Globalization and Social Movements address the old simplistic ideas of globalization as a unified and/or monolithic phenomenon? Compare and contrast the ideas of various thinkers who share a common interest in developing a nuanced and multifarious approach to understanding globalization.**

(Answering this question may involve a review and critique of certain ideas already taken up in class. It may also involve a revisit of certain ideas discussed in class that have influenced the thinkers in this module.

What is important is a presentation of the ideas from the thinkers in this module as a response to older paradigms in theorizing globalization. While comparison and contrast is operative in answering this question, focus more on the contrast between them. After all, the commonality is precisely that tendency towards revising the old ways of thinking about globalization that we already assume.)

These questions are broad enough to accommodate varied 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 the 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.

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 26 March 2009 (Thursday)**
- any other stipulation will be mentioned in class