Psychology, Culture, & Society
Psyc 6400-01
Monday & Wednesday 2-3:40
Melson 104

General Information
Professor:  John L. Roberts, Ph.D.      Phone:  678-839-0609
Office:  Melson 118                Email:  jroberts@westga.edu
Office Hours:  9am-Noon Monday/Wednesday &
                             9am-1pm Tuesday and by appointment

Course Description
An intensive exploration of the effects of culture on psychological life that works with recent
ideas on the interrelationship of history, culture, and the psychological. The course draws upon
theory and research approaches derived from feminism, qualitative research paradigms,
cultural studies, discursive analysis, psychoanalysis and critical theory.

Course Objectives
Students will develop and express understanding of the reciprocal relationship between
psychology and culture.

Required Texts
Texts will consist of required books, and other materials (i.e., book chapters, essays, etc.) on
electronic reserve, and/or handed out in class. The required books are as follows:

   Civilization and Its Discontents – Sigmund Freud
   The Things of the World:  A Social Phenomenology – James Aho*
   Damaged Life:  The Crisis of the Modern Psyche – Tod Sloan*
   How to Read Lacan – Slavoj Zizek
   On the Genealogy of Morals (Vintage, Kauffman, Trans.), Friedrich Nietzsche
   Psychiatric Power – Michel Foucault
   Social Constructionism (2nd Ed.) – Vivien Burr
   Critical Race Theory:  An Introduction – Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic
   Time and the Other – Emmanuel Levinas

Course Format
The course is a seminar, and will be primarily based around class discussion with student
presentations/discussion facilitation. As such, students will be expected to be consistently and
thoroughly prepared by reading all of the assignment material, coming to class with questions
and issues in mind, and participating actively in discussion. If a student is not adequately
prepared (has not done the reading), he/she cannot meaningfully contribute to our discussion.
“Seminar” derives from the Latin seminarium, meaning “seed plot.” Ideally, we will all learn from
each other, and that our time together will be fertile ground for the exchange of perspectives
and the growth of understanding.
Course Requirements & Expectations

Attendance: It is vital that you attend all class meetings unless there is a very good reason for you not being present. In a seminar, we are all teachers and when someone is absent the teaching suffers. In my experience, more than three (3) absences will likely result in diminished understanding and engagement.

Participation/Facilitation: Because the seminar format requires consistent participation from its members, a significant portion of the grade will be based on weekly reading assignments – in the form of discussion. Each student will facilitate class discussion or present on relevant material at least once during the term. When in class, please do turn off phones and/or other distracting electronics. If there is an urgent need to use one's phone, please use a mute setting.

Research Paper: It is expected that each student will complete a written fifteen to twenty (15-20) page (double-spaced, 1 inch margin, APA style, etc.) research paper. The paper will examine some dimension of psychology, culture, and society pursuant to the student’s interest. Papers are due on May 7.

Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for upholding the University’s honor code.

Other Student Rights & Responsibilities: Students should carefully review information here:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Evaluation

Grading is collaborative; we will have a conversation concerning what grade is appropriate. Here is a suggested breakdown of grading:

- Participation: 50 %
- Final Paper: 50 %

Course Schedule & Topoi

Readings for focused group discussion are in **bold**.

1/8   No Class – UWG closed for Winter Weather

1/10  Introduction

1/15  No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1/17  Psychology & the Social: Hacking, from Historical Ontology, 1-26, 99-114; Foucault, from Abnormal, 55-79.


2/12  The Subversion of the Subject:  Fink, from *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, 35-79; Lacan, 75-81; Fink, “Reading ‘The Subversion of the Subject,’” 106-128.


2/19  Zizek Film


3/5  Film: *Chomsky-Foucault Debate*


3/19  No Class – Spring Break

3/21  No Class – Spring Break


4/2  Psychopathology and the Modern Subject:  Levin, 21-76; Bracken, 38-59; Cushman, 599-610; Hacking, 67-88.

4/4  Gender, Feminism, & Identity:  Butler, Gender Trouble, Chapter 1; Foucault, from The History of Sexuality, An Introduction: Volume 1, 3-12.

4/9  Gender, Feminism, & Identity:  Butler, Gender Trouble, Chapter 3, sections I, II, & IV; Young, 27-45.

4/11  Feminism & Nomadic Subjects:  Braidotti, from Nomadic Subjects, Chapters 4-6; Haraway, 149-201; Chanter, Chapter 4.


Syllabus is subject to change (like people)