

Fall 2009
CULT 806
Research Seminar in Cultural Studies

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Office hours by appointment

SCHEDULE

Aug 31	Introductory Class
Sept 7	GMU closed
Sept 14	Discussion in class
Sept 21	Discussion in class
Sept 28	Discussion in class
9/29 – 10/23	Tutorials
Oct 26	Check-in meeting
10/27 – 11/27	Independent research
Nov 30	In-class Presentations
Dec 7	In-class Presentations

Aug 31st: In the Introductory Class we will review the syllabus and discuss our general goals for the seminar.

Sept 14th, 21st, 28th: For three weeks we will investigate what are the standing assumptions, methods and various methodologies in the field of Cultural Studies. We

will, of course, be free to critique and attempt to hone already existing practice in the field.

Sept 29th thru Oct 23th: There will be no seminar for these three weeks, but each student will make appointments with me for at least two one-on-one tutorials. In these tutorials we shall establish individual research projects and begin to elaborate them.

Oct 26th: For this class session we will briefly discuss as a group each students' project and assess each person's progress.

Oct 27th – Nov 27th: There will be no seminar for these weeks. Instead you will each continue your research project as you can. You should keep in regular e-mail contact with me during these three weeks, to apprise me of your progress and to have any questions answered. You can also make an appointment for one tutorial session during this time.

Nov 30th, Dec 7th: During these final two weeks, each student will disseminate their work to the class and give a 10 to 15 minute presentation.

GOALS

The course is largely concerned with what I call the epistemology of research in Cultural Studies. That is, you will be expected to learn how to think through the assumptions, methods, and methodologies appropriate to Cultural Studies. There will be a strong emphasis on the question of what distinguishes both the guiding epistemology and the actual research undertaken in Cultural Studies. You will then be expected to begin a research project that reflects the specificity of the field of Cultural Studies. The course and its tutorials are designed to teach you how to do this systematically and methodically, and the final document that you hand in and present will be expected to reflect such a methodical approach. The final product will not be a completed research project or standard term-paper; rather, it will be an account of how you would go about a major research project. In that sense it will be essentially a proposal, more akin to a grant application, book manifesto, dissertation proposal, or even a field statement.

ASSESSMENT

Your grade will be assigned on the basis of a final account of your chosen research project and on your presentation of it in the final two weeks of class. Since the projects will be tailored to the needs and interests of each individual student, formats will be allowed to vary.