Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Marlovits

Office Location: CL 463

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Email: John.marlovits@sjsu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:00-1:00 or by appt.

Class Days/Time: Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:15 pm

Classroom: Online

Prerequisites: None

Course Description

In this course we will analyze the means by which different institutions and individuals control the actions, behaviors, and thoughts of people in contemporary modern societies—including our own. We will also analyze the dynamics of control—how control mechanisms change over time, as well as the means by which people are able to resist or escape such controls. The course should help you think critically about controllers, their targets, the mechanisms they employ, and the goals they seek to accomplish. It should also help you understand controlling processes affecting your everyday life.

For more than a century, social scientists and others have taken an interest in mechanisms of cultural and social control including "brainwashing" or coercive persuasion, indoctrination, groupthink, and propaganda, among others. Some argue that increasing political and economic centralization on a global scale—together with the wide reach of today's global communication technologies—have led to more efficient
and total social and cultural controls. Controllers may use these techniques in an undemocratic (and sometimes dangerous) fashion to convince others to modify their behaviors, to reform their thoughts and values, or to compel them to act in predictable ways.

In this course, we will be particularly focused on analyzing control from an anthropological perspective. We will examine the use of culture as a tool—in other words, the instrumental uses of culture. To help us think critically about processes of social and cultural control, we will begin by reading the classic novels 1984 and Brave New World as ethnographic accounts. Then we will focus upon mechanisms of social and cultural controls in various realms including schools, families, government, science, media, and business. Although much of the course material is set in the US, we will also examine other regions. Finally, we will discuss how processes of control influence everyday life and how we might effectively deal with them.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
Over the course of the semester, I intend to help you meet the following learning objectives:

1. Identify various mechanisms of social and cultural control operating in contemporary societies (including the US) and dynamic processes that transform them over time.

2. Analyze the ways in which institutions such as governments, corporations, religious groups, and other organizations have compelled members to behave and act in specific ways.

3. Understand the processes by which mass media, government officials, social scientists, and the advertising industry have interacted to design new means of influencing public opinion, shape habits and tastes, and create mass consumers.

4. Gain insight into the ways by which nationalism, ethnicity, and other forms of identity and membership have been incorporated into controlling processes.

5. Trace the development of communication, pharmacological, and surveillance technologies for behavior modification, and other inventions which might potentially be used for control.

6. Identify how and why individuals and groups resist or revolt against forms of social and cultural domination, and how mutual aid, education, political mobilization, direct action, and other means might be used as a means of countering social and cultural controls.
Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley (any edition)
1984 by George Orwell (any edition)
Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas by Natasha Dow Schull
United States of Distraction: Media Manipulation in Post-Truth America, by Nolan Higdon and Mickey Huff

Students should purchase low-cost student subscriptions to The New York Times, The Washington Post, or both

In addition, we will use a supplemental materials distributed through Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course grades will be derived from six assignments:

1. List of control mechanisms in 1984. This assignment should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (5% of final course grade)

2. List of control mechanisms in Brave New World. This assignment should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (5% of final course grade)

3. Bi-weekly Group Seminar Papers. Research clusters are required to compose five Seminar Papers throughout the semester. (50% of final course grade)

4. Participation. This grade will be assessed based on class participation as well as peer- and self-evaluations. (10% of final course grade)

5. Term Paper. In this assignment, you will research and write an 8-page (double-spaced, not including cover page or references) term paper that analyzes a mechanism of social control, cultural control, or ideological control that has affected your own life. The instructor will give you more information about this assignment in Week 4 of the course. Term papers are due on the date of the last regular class meeting. (25% of final course grade)

6. Contribution to discussion threads. Students must participate actively on class discussion threads (5% of final course grade)

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

You will take one final exam, consisting of identifications/definitions, essays, and maps. (Final exam counts for 25% of final grade. CLO 1,2,3) . Final exam will be administered in the usual class meeting room (see Course
University Policy S06-4 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf) states that “There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless the course is on the official List of Courses in which a final is optional.”

Grading Policy

Your work will be assessed based on your effort and reasoning, as illustrated by your writing. Your assignments document your mastery of the skills critical to anthropological inquiry. More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following two university policies:


Determination of Grades

• Grades will include minus and plus grades as illustrated below and are determined by percentage of total points possible.
• Short summaries and evaluations of instructor-approved public lectures may provide extra credit options up to 5 points.
• All assignments must be completed in order to pass. I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless documents can be presented as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail—I must receive hard copies of all assignments. The term paper will also be uploaded via Canvas and vetted through turnitin.com.
• NOTE that University policy F69-24 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf states that “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

Grading distribution is as follows:

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>100 - 97</td>
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<td>96 - 93</td>
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<td>92 - 90</td>
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<td>89 - 87</td>
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<td>72 - 70</td>
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Note that “All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades.” See University Policy F13-1 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf for more details. If you have questions regarding your grades (including explanations for the determination of course grades, you should visit with the course instructor during office hours.

**Classroom Protocol**

Students are expected to attend and contribute to class discussions via Zoom. Students are encouraged to participate by leaving their webcam on. Finally, students are expected to **prepare for both class and research cluster meetings by reading and viewing course materials before meeting**. Debate and disagreement are essential elements of critical cultural analysis, and there is plenty of room for a diversity of opinions, however discussion that is disrespectful of others will not be tolerated.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/”

**Course Schedule**

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<thead>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/2 2/4</td>
<td><strong>From Citizens to Consumers: Advertising, Consumption, Work Ethic</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stuart Ewen, excerpt in <em>Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture</em>&lt;br&gt;Christopher Turner, “The Hidden Persuader: Ernst Dichter, the Freud of Madison Avenue”&lt;br&gt;Mari Ruti, “The Creed of Pragmatism”</td>
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|   |   | David Graeber, “On the Phenomenology of Bullshit Jobs”  
View *The Corporation*  
Continue *1984* (Part II) |
| 3 | 2/9  
2/11 | Propaganda  
George Orwell, finish *1984*  
Rebecca Solnit, “Politics and the American Language”  
George Packer, “Political Obituary for Donald Trump”  
Notes on the “Big Lie”  
Hugh Raffles, “Against Purity”  
William Astore, “Bread and Circuses in Rome and America”  
Watch: *Good Night and Good Luck*  
Watch: clips on *Triumph of the Will*  
Recommended: Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*  
**Seminar Paper Due – Group A** |
| 4 | 2/16  
2/18 | Fear, Disinformation, Violence  
Michael Taussig, “Terror as Usual: Walter Benjamin’s Theory of History as a State of Siege”  
Open Culture, “Hannah Arendt Explains how Propaganda Uses Lies to Erode Truth and Morality”  
Anna Funder, excerpts from *Stasiland*  
**Seminar Paper Due – Group Z**  
**Control Mechanisms for 1984 Due** |
| 5 | 2/23  
2/25 | Media Structures  
Higdon and Huff, “Prologue” and “Introduction” in *United States of Distraction: Media Manipulation in Post-Truth America*  
Notes on Jurgen Habermas and the Bourgeois Public Sphere  
Lois Beckett, “Facts won’t fix this” *Guardian*  
Carole Cadwalladr, “Fresh Cambridge Analytica Leak ‘shows global manipulation is out of control.’” *Guardian* Jan 4, 2020  
Paul Farhi, “Talk-radio owner orders conservative hosts to temper election fraud rhetoric,” *Washington Post* Jan 11, 2021  
Viewing *The Great Hack*  
Begin *Brave New World*  
**Seminar Paper Due – Group A** |
| 6 | 3/2  
3/4 | Media Structures II  
Higdon and Huff, ch 1, 3, & 5 in *States of Distraction*  
Jayson Harsin, “Regimes of Post-Truth, Postpolitics, and Attention Economies”  
Continue *Brave New World*  
**Seminar Paper Due – Group Z** |
| 7 | 3/9  
3/11 | Distraction, Memory, Attention  
Marita Sturken, Introduction to *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* |
<p>| 10 | 4/6&lt;br&gt;4/8 | <strong>Designing Counterpublics</strong>&lt;br&gt;Natasha Schull, <em>Addiction by Design</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Seminar Paper Due – Group Z</strong> |</p>
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| 13   | 4/27    | **Dismantling the Commons**                | Watch *Requiem for the American Dream: Noam Chomsky and the Principles of Concentration of Wealth and Power*  
Andrew Ross, Introduction and “Education for Free People” in *Creditocracy and the Case for Debt Refusal*  
Seminar Paper Due – Group A |
|      | 4/29    |                                            |                                                                      |
| 14   | 5/4     | **American Extremism**                     | Seymour Martin Lipset, “The Radical Right: A Problem for American Democracy”  
Christopher Vials, “Adorno’s The Authoritarian Personality”  
David Niewert, excerpts in *Alt-America*  
David Blight, “How Trumpism May Endure” *NYT*  
Karen Cox, “What Trump Shares with the ‘Lost Cause’ of the Confederacy” *NYT*  
Seyward Darby, “The Far Right Told us what it had Planned. We Didn’t Listen” *NYT*  
1.7.2021  
Seminar Paper Due – Group Z |
|      | 5/6     |                                            |                                                                      |
| 15   | 5/11    | **Deprogramming**                          | Howard Zinn, "A Quiet Case of Social Change”*  
Higdon and Huff, “Make America Think Again”  
Rebecca Solnit, “Naïve Cynicism”  
Viewing: *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers*  
Recommended: Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*  
Term Paper Due Friday |
|      | 5/13    |                                            |                                                                      |
|      | FINAL   |                                            | Wednesday May 19  
Peer-Review and Self Evaluation Due |