

**San José State University**  
**Anthropology**  
**ANTH 136, Thought Control in Contemporary Society,**  
**Section 01, Spring , 2009**

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| <b>Instructor:</b>      | Professor R. Gonzalez  |
| <b>Office Location:</b> | Clark Hall 402G  |
| <b>Telephone:</b>       | (408) 924-5715   |
| <b>Office Hours:</b>    | Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30-3:30pm,<br>and Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00pm |
| <b>Class Days/Time:</b> | Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00-1:15 pm                                 |
| <b>Classroom:</b>       | Hugh Gillis Hall 122   |

**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.

This course 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 including Germany, China, Israel and Palestine, Venezuela, southeast Africa, Papua New Guinea, North Korea, Argentina, and Iraq. Finally, we will discuss how processes of control influence everyday life and how we might effectively deal with them.

There are no prerequisites for this course, and it is open to students from all majors. The more disciplinary perspectives that are represented in this course, the more likely it is that we will have fruitful discussions since the course material includes work by anthropologists, psychologists, journalists, novelists, historians, sociologists, and others.

### **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

- Understand culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life, and the relationship of human biology and evolution.
- Become aware of human diversity and the ways humans have categorized diversity.
- Become knowledgeable about the significant findings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology, and important issues in each sub-discipline.
- Become knowledgeable about the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history.
- Comprehend migration, colonialism, and economic integration as significant phenomena shaping global society.
- Locate and use different forms of anthropological data and literature.
- Become aware of the importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
- Become knowledgeable about the research methods of anthropology's sub-disciplines and to apply appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.
- To present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.
- Become knowledgeable about political and ethical implications of social research.

### **Course Content Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify various mechanisms of social and cultural control operating in contemporary societies (including the US) and dynamic processes that transform them over time.
- 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.
- 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.
- Gain insight into the ways by which nationalism, ethnicity, and other forms of identity and membership have been incorporated into controlling processes.
- Trace the development of communication, pharmacological, and surveillance technologies for behavior modification, and other inventions which might potentially be used for control.

- 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

### Textbook

Brave new world by Aldous Huxley (any edition)

1984 by George Orwell (any edition)

American counterinsurgency: Human science and the human terrain by Roberto González

The street is my home: Youth and violence in Caracas by Patricia Márquez

Obstacles to peace: A re-framing of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by Jeff Halper

### Other Readings

In addition, we will use a supplemental course reader available for purchase at Maple Press (at 481 E. San Carlos Street). All materials will be on reserve at King Library. Much of the course material will be covered during the lectures, so it is critical that you attend class and take detailed lecture notes

## Classroom Protocol

Laptop computers are not permitted in class unless you have a note from the Disability Resource Center justifying a need. You should write lecture notes by hand, or else make audio recordings of lectures and transcribe them after class meetings. Cell phones must be turned off during class to avoid disruption. Any student who allows a cell phone to ring during class will first be given a warning. A second infraction of this rule will be promptly reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

## Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html). [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## Assignments and Grading Policy

### Grading distribution

|           |          |          |          |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 100-97 A+ | 89-87 B+ | 79-77 C+ | 69-67 D+ |
| 96-93 A   | 86-83 B  | 76-73 C  | 66-63 D  |
| 92-90 A-  | 82-80 B- | 72-70 C- | <63 F    |

## Course assignments

Course grades will be derived from six assignments for a possible total of 100 points:

- *List of control mechanisms in 1984*. This assignment (due February 5) should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (10 points)
- *List of control mechanisms in Brave new world*. This assignment (due February 19) should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (10 points)
- *Midterm exam*. This exam will consist of short definitions, multiple choice, and an essay. You will need a blue book. Midterm exam will take place on March 19. (20 points)
- *Final exam*. This comprehensive exam will consist of short definitions, multiple choice, and two essays. You will need a blue book. Final exam will take place on May 20. (25 points)
- *Unannounced quizzes*. Over the course of the semester, four unannounced quizzes will be given based on the week's reading. The best three out of four grades will be taken. (5 points each, 15 points total)
- *Group project*. During the semester you will develop a group project in which you will analyze a control mechanism operating either locally, regionally, nationally, or globally. The instructor will assign you to a group. Instructions will be distributed by the instructor during Week 6. Each group will present the results of their project on May 12. (20 points)

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Assignment 1—Control mechanisms in <i>1984</i>            | 10% of course grade |
| Assignment 2—Control mechanisms in <i>Brave new world</i> | 10% of course grade |
| Midterm exam  | 20% of course grade |
| Final exam  | 25% of course grade |
| Unannounced quizzes                                       | 15% of course grade |
| Group project   | 20% of course grade |

All assignments must be completed in order to pass. Assignments will not be accepted via e-mail—the instructor must receive hard copies. No late assignments will be accepted nor makeup exams given unless the student presents documentary evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without

giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**ANTH 136/ Thought Control in Contemporary Society,  
Spring 09, Tuesday and Thursday 12:00-1:15pm**

**Table 1 Course Schedule**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| Week 1      | 1/22        | Course overview and assignments<br>Read: George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part I)  |
| Week 2      | 1/27-1/29   | Creating a strong state through direct controls<br>Read: George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part II)<br>Recommended: Nicolai Machiavelli, <i>The prince</i>  |
| Week 3      | 2/3-2/5     | Propaganda as a social instrument<br>Read: George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part III)<br>Jonathan Watts, "Where are you, beloved general?"*<br>Film: "Triumph of the will"<br>Recommended: Nancy Snow, <i>Propaganda, Inc.</i> |

| Week      | Date      | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines  |
|-----------|-----------|---|
|           |           | ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE FEB. 5-<br>CONTROL MECHANISMS IN 1984  |
| Week<br>4 | 2/10-2/12 | Science, technology, and indirect controls<br>Read: Aldous Huxley, <i>Brave new world</i> (Chapters 1-8)<br>Kathryn Schulz, "Brave neuro world:<br>The ethics of the new brain science"*<br>Recommended: Troy Duster, <i>Backdoor to eugenics</i>   |
| Week<br>5 | 2/17-2/19 | Mobilizing the pleasure principle<br>Read: Aldous Huxley, <i>Brave new world</i> (Chapters 9-18)<br>George Leonard, "The end of sex"*<br>Recommended: Paul Goodman, <i>Amusing ourselves to death</i><br>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE FEB. 19—<br>CONTROL MECHANISMS IN <i>BRAVE NEW WORLD</i>  |
| Week<br>6 | 2/24-2/26 | <b>Coercive persuasion and messianic cults</b><br>Read: Margaret Singer, "Coming out of the cults"*<br>Margaret Singer, "Continuum of influence and persuasion"*<br>Margaret Singer, "How the U.S. Marine Corps differs from<br>cults"*<br>Patricia Márquez, <i>The street is my home</i><br>(Introduction and Chapter 1)<br>Film: "Jonestown: The life and death of the People's Temple"<br>Recommended: Deborah Layton, <i>Seductive poison</i> |
| Week<br>7 | 3/5-3/7   | <b>Birth of the mass consumer and creation of false needs</b><br>Read: Patricia Márquez, <i>The street is my home</i> (Chapters 2-3)<br>Stuart Ewen, <i>Captains of consciousness</i> (excerpt)*<br>Recommended: Herbert Marcuse, <i>One-dimensional man</i>  |
| Week<br>8 | 3/10-3/12 | <b>Transforming gender roles, beauty standards, and family life</b><br>Read: Patricia Márquez, <i>The street is my home</i> (Chapters 4-5)<br>Linda Coco, "Silicone breast implants in America"*<br>Naomi Arenson, "Working up an appetite"*<br>Recommended: Eli Zaretsky, <i>Capitalism, the family and personal life</i>  |
| Week<br>9 | 3/17-3/19 | <b>Commercializing childhood and adolescence</b><br>Read: Patricia Márquez, <i>The street is my home</i><br>(Chapter 6 and Conclusion)<br>Max Gluckman, "Rituals of rebellion in southeast Africa"*<br>Film: "The merchants of cool"<br>Recommended: Juliet Schor, <i>Born to buy</i>   |

| Week    | Date      | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines  |
|---------|-----------|---|
|         |           | MIDTERM EXAM—MARCH 19   |
| *       | 3/23-3/27 | <b>SPRING RECESS</b>  |
| Week 10 | 4/2       | <b>CESAR CHAVEZ DAY</b><br>Education and scientific research<br>Read: B. McKibben, C. Mooney, R. Gelbspan, "Climate of denial"*<br>Derek Bok, "The purely pragmatic university"*<br>Robert Kennedy, Jr., "The junk science of George W. Bush"*<br>Film: "Century of the self" or "War is sell"<br>Recommended: Paolo Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the oppressed</i>                                       |
| Week 11 | 4/7-4/9   | <b>Public relations, spin, "impression management" and the manufacture of consent</b><br>Read: Roberto González, <i>American counterinsurgency</i> (pp. i-iv, 1-44)<br>Stuart Ewen, <i>PR! A social history of spin</i> (excerpt)*  |
| Week 12 | 4/14-4/16 | <b>Victims of groupthink</b><br>Read: Roberto González, <i>American counterinsurgency</i> (pp. 45-98)<br>Laura Nader, "1984 and Brave new world revisited"*<br>Recommended: Irving Janis, <i>Victims of groupthink</i>  |
| Week 13 | 4/24-4/23 | <b>Uses of language and media</b><br>Read: Roberto González, <i>American counterinsurgency</i> (pp. 99-130)<br>David Thomson, "Worlds shaped by words"*<br>Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman, <i>Manufacturing consent</i> (preface)*<br>Edward Schieffelin, "Evangelical rhetoric in Papua New Guinea"*<br><i>The Nation</i> , "The national entertainment state"<br>Film: "Good night and good luck" |
| Week 14 | 4/28-4/30 | <b>Obedience, authority and the banality of evil</b><br>Read: Jeff Halper, <i>Obstacles to peace</i> (pp. 1-31, pp. xi-xii, and Maps 1-7)<br>Film: "Obedience—The Milgram experiment"<br>Recommended: Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i>   |
| Week    | 5/5-5/7   | <b>Bureaucratic mechanisms and hegemonic controls</b>   |

| Week       | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines   |
|------------|------|--|
| 15         |      | Read: Jeff Halper, <i>Obstacles to peace</i> (pp. 32-79, pp. xiv, and Maps 8-10)<br>Film: "The take"   |
| Week 16    | 5/12 | Towards a cultural deprogramming—Class presentations<br>Read: Jeff Halper, <i>Obstacles to peace</i> (pp. 80-105, pp. xv-xvi, and Maps 11-14)<br>Howard Zinn, "A quiet case of social change"* |
| Final Exam | 5/20 | FINAL EXAM—Wednesday, May 20 (9:45 am-12:00 pm) in regular class meeting room<br>*Articles marked with an asterisk are included in the course reader.  |