

**San José State University
Anthropology Department
ANTH 136: Thought Control in Contemporary Society
Spring 2012 Semester**

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| Instructor: | Professor González |
| Office Location: | CL 459 |
| Telephone: | (408) 924-5715 |
| Email: | roberto.gonzalez@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | F 10:30 am - 3:30 pm |
| Class Days/Time: | TuTh 4:30 - 5:45 pm |
| Classroom: | CL 204 |
| Prerequisites: | None |
| GE/SJSU Studies Category: | N/A |
| Course Fees: | N/A |

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 including Germany, China, Israel and Palestine, 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.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Over the course of the semester, I intend to help you meet the following learning objectives:

- 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.

The anthropology department's objectives include helping students to:

- learn about the culture concept and significant findings in anthropology
- examine interconnections between human culture and biology
- develop awareness of past and present cultures
- understand the multicultural aspects of contemporary society
- make good use of social science data and scholarly literature
- increase knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods
- recognize anthropology's relevance in addressing social issues

Required Texts/Readings

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

An Israeli in Palestine by Jeff Halper

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.

Classroom Protocol

The instructor for this class prohibits laptop computers unless a student has a note from the Disability Resource Center that justifies a need. You should write lecture notes by hand, or else make audio recordings of lectures and transcribe them after class meetings. You must turn off cell phones during class to avoid disrupting lectures. The instructor strictly prohibits text messaging or other electronic communication during class. Any student who allows a cell phone to ring during class or who texts messages will first be given a formal warning by the instructor. The instructor will promptly report a second infraction of this rule to the Office of Student Conduct, and will submit a formal recommendation that the student be expelled from the course. Students should be aware that according to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, "Standards for Student Conduct," grounds for student discipline includes: "Participating in an activity that substantially and materially disrupts the normal operations of the University," {Section 41301(b)(4)} which might be interpreted to include use of unauthorized electronic devices in classroom settings.

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-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/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

Course grades will be derived from six assignments:

1. *List of control mechanisms in 1984*. This assignment (due February 9) should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (10% of final course grade)
2. *List of control mechanisms in Brave New World*. This assignment (due February 23) should be typewritten. Instructions will be distributed in class by the instructor. (10% of final course grade)
3. *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 15. (20% of final course grade)
4. *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 23--SEE COURSE SCHEDULE BELOW. (25% of final course grade)
5. *Unannounced quizzes*. Over the course of the semester, three unannounced quizzes will be given based on the week's reading. (5% each, 15% of final course grade)
6. *Term Paper*. In this assignment, you will research and write an 8-page (double-spaced) 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 (May 15). (20% of final course grade)

To summarize:

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| 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 |
| Term paper | 20% of course grade |

Students must complete all assignments in order to pass. I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless a student presents appropriate documents as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc. I will accept no assignments via e-mail—I must receive hard copies of all assignments.

University Policies

[I have included the following section as part of the University's syllabus requirements. I did not write this section, but University policy requires instructors to include it.]

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 2012 Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

Recommended readings are not required readings.

*Readings followed by an asterisk * are included in the supplemental course reader.*

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|------|-------------|---|
| 1 | 1/26 | Introduction George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part I) Recommended: Nicolai Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> |
| 2 | 1/31 - 2/02 | Propaganda George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part II) Film: "Triumph of the Will" Recommended: Edward Bernays, <i>Propaganda</i> |
| 3 | 2/7- 2/9 | Technology George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part III) Rania Khalek, "Six Creepy New Weapons the Police and Military Use to Subdue" Recommended: Troy Duster, <i>Backdoor to Eugenics</i> ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE 2/9--CONTROL MECHANISMS IN 1984 |
| 4 | 2/14 - 2/16 | Pleasure Aldous Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> (Chapters 1-8) Spencer Morgan, "Scent Branding Sweeps the Fragrance Industry"* David Owen, "The Soundtrack of Your Life"* Recommended: Paul Goodman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> |
| 5 | 2/21 - 2/23 | Persuasion Aldous Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> (Chapters 9-18) Margaret Singer, "Coming Out of the Cults"* Margaret Singer, "Continuum of Influence and Persuasion"* Margaret Singer, "How the US Marine Corps Differs from Cults"* Recommended: Deborah Layton, <i>Seductive Poison</i> ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE 2/23--CONTROL MECHANISMS IN BNW |
| 6 | 2/28 - 3/1 | Consumption Stuart Ewen, <i>Captains of Consciousness</i> (excerpt)* Recommended: Herbert Marcuse, <i>One-Dimensional Man</i> |
| 7 | 3/6 - 3/8 | Sexuality Linda Coco, "Silicone Breast Implants in America"* Naomi Arenson, "Working Up an Appetite"* George Leonard, "The End of Sex"* Recommended: Eli Zaretsky, <i>Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life</i> |
| 8 | 3/13 - 3/15 | Rebellion Max Gluckman, "Rituals of Rebellion in Southeast Africa"* Malcolm Gladwell, "The Coolhunt"* Film: "The Merchants of Cool" Recommended: Juliet Schor, <i>Born to Buy</i> MID-TERM EXAM--MARCH 15 |

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|-------|-------------|--|
| 9 | 3/20 - 3/22 | Corporatization Derek Bok, "The Purely Pragmatic University"* Recommended: Paolo Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> |
| | | SPRING BREAK--NO CLASS MEETINGS |
| 10 | 4/3 - 4/5 | Spin Roberto González, <i>American Counterinsurgency</i> (pp. i-iv, 1-44) Stuart Ewen, <i>PR! A Social History of Spin</i> (excerpt)* Sam Giedulig et al., "Occupy Wall Street Response"* Recommended: J. Stauber and S. Rampton, <i>Toxic Sludge Is Good for You</i> |
| 11 | 4/10 - 4/12 | Groupthink Roberto González, <i>American Counterinsurgency</i> (pp. 45-98) Laura Nader, "1984 and Brave New World Revisited"* Recommended: Irving Janis, <i>Victims of Groupthink</i> |
| 12 | 4/17 - 4/19 | Language Roberto González, <i>American Counterinsurgency</i> (pp. 99-130) David Thomson, "Worlds Shaped by Words"* Edward Schieffelin, "Evangelical Rhetoric in Papua New Guinea"* <i>The Nation</i> , "The National Entertainment State"* Recommended: N. Chomsky and E. Herman, <i>Manufacturing Consent</i> Film: "Good Night and Good Luck" |
| 13 | 4/24 - 4/26 | Obedience Jeff Halper, <i>An Israeli in Palestine</i> (Introduction and Chapters 1-3) Film: "Obedience—The Milgram Experiment" Recommended: Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> |
| 14 | 5/1 - 5/3 | Institutions Jeff Halper, <i>An Israeli in Palestine</i> (Chapters 4-7) George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"* Film: "The Take" Recommended: Marilyn Strathern, <i>Audit Cultures</i> |
| 15 | 5/8 - 5/10 | Deprogramming Jeff Halper, <i>An Israeli in Palestine</i> (Chapters 8-10) David Graeber, "Occupy and Anarchism's Gift of Democracy"* Howard Zinn, "A Quiet Case of Social Change"* Recommended: Howard Zinn, <i>A People's History of the United States</i> |
| 16 | 5.15 | Discussion and Review TERM PAPERS DUE 5/15 |
| Final | | FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MAY 23 (2:45-5:00 PM) |