

**San José State University  
Anthropology Department  
ANTH 136: Thought Control in Contemporary Society  
Spring 2014 Semester**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Professor González
<b>Office Location:</b>	CL 459
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Monday 1:30-4:30 pm
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesday and Thursday 4:30 - 5:45 pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	CL 310
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	None
<b>GE/SJSU Studies Category:</b>	N/A
<b>Course Fees:</b>	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.

## **Required Texts**

*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

*The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* by Nicholas Carr

In addition, we will use a supplemental course reader available for purchase at Maple Press (at 481 E. San Carlos Street).

## **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.

## Assignments and Grading Policy

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. (10% 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. (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. See course schedule below for midterm exam date. (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. See course schedule below for final exam date. (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, 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. (20% of final 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. Grading distribution is as follows:

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

## ANTH 136: Thought Control in Contemporary Society Spring 2014 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	1/23	<b>Introduction</b> George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part I) Recommended: Nicolai Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
2	1/28 - 1/30	<b>Propaganda</b> George Orwell, <i>1984</i> (Part II) Film: "Triumph of the Will" Recommended: Edward Bernays, <i>Propaganda</i>
3	2/4 - 2/6	<b>Technology</b> 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> <b>ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE 2/6--CONTROL MECHANISMS IN 1984</b>
4	2/11 - 2/13	<b>Pleasure</b> 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	2/18 - 2/20	<b>Persuasion</b> 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> <b>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE 2/20--CONTROL MECHANISMS IN BNW</b>
6	2/25 - 2/27	<b>Consumption</b> Stuart Ewen, <i>Captains of Consciousness</i> (excerpt)* Recommended: Herbert Marcuse, <i>One-Dimensional Man</i>
7	3/4 - 3/6	<b>Sexuality</b> Linda Coco, "Silicone Breast Implants in America"* George Leonard, "The End of Sex"* Rachel Aviv, "The Science of Sex Abuse"* Recommended: Eli Zaretsky, <i>Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life</i>
8	3/11 - 3/13	<b>Rebellion</b> 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> <b>MID-TERM EXAM--MARCH 13</b>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
9	3/18 - 3/20	<b>Corporatization</b> Derek Bok, "The Purely Pragmatic University"* Recommended: Paolo Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>
		<b>SPRING BREAK--NO CLASS MEETINGS FROM MARCH 24-28</b>
10	4/1 - 4/3	<b>Spin</b> Roberto González, <i>American Counterinsurgency</i> (pp. i-iv, 1-78) Stuart Ewen, <i>PR! A Social History of Spin</i> (excerpt)* Recommended: J. Stauber and S. Rampton, <i>Toxic Sludge Is Good for You</i>
11	4/8 - 4/10	<b>Groupthink</b> Roberto González, <i>American Counterinsurgency</i> (pp. 78-130) Laura Nader, "1984 and Brave New World Revisited"* Recommended: Irving Janis, <i>Victims of Groupthink</i>
12	4/15 - 4/17	<b>Language</b> David Thomson, "Worlds Shaped by Words"* Nicholas Carr, <i>The Shallows</i> (pp. 1-98) Recommended: N. Chomsky and E. Herman, <i>Manufacturing Consent</i> Film: "Good Night and Good Luck"
13	4/22 - 4/24	<b>Distraction</b> Nicholas Carr, <i>The Shallows</i> (pp. 99-228) Recommended: Sherry Turkle, <i>Alone Together</i>
14	4/29 - 5/1	<b>Obedience</b> 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>
15	5/6 - 5/8	<b>Deprogramming</b> Jeff Halper, <i>An Israeli in Palestine</i> (Chapters 4-8) David Graeber, "Occupy and Anarchism's Gift of Democracy"* Howard Zinn, "A Quiet Case of Social Change"* Film: "The Take" Recommended: Howard Zinn, <i>A People's History of the United States</i>
16	05/13/14	<b>Summary, Review, and Discussion</b> Jeff Halper, <i>An Israeli in Palestine</i> (Chapters 9-10) <b>TERM PAPERS DUE MAY 13</b>
Final		<b>FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, MAY 20 (2:45-5:00 PM) IN REGULAR CLASS MEETING ROOM</b>

## Departmental Goals

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Learn about the goals of the anthropology department and how it can benefit your education.

**Goals** <http://www.sjsu.edu/anthropology/departmentinfo/goals/index.html>

### Credit Hours

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five 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.

## University Policies

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Here are some of the basic university policies that students must follow.

### Dropping and Adding

Find the procedures and deadlines for adding and dropping classes.

**Catalog Policies** <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>.

**Add/drop deadlines** [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/)

**Late Drop Policy** <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>

### Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

All students must obtain the instructor's permission if they wish to record lectures or distribute materials from the class.

**University Policy S12-7** <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>

### Academic integrity

Learn about the importance of academic honesty and the consequences if it is violated.

**University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2** <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf>

**Student Conduct and Ethical Development website** <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>

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

Here are guidelines to request any course adaptations or accommodations you might need.

**Presidential Directive 97-03** [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf)

**Accessible Education Center** <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec>

## Resources

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The university provides resources that can help you succeed academically. Just look here.

**Academic Success Center** <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/>

[Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu

[Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter

[Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling