SOC 2503 POPULAR CULTURE
Section 4250
TTH 11:00-12:15 CWH 108

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Required Readings

Course Description/Objectives
The study of popular culture is greatly more complex than simple narratives of entertainment and leisure. Popular culture, or mass culture as it is commonly known in contradistinction to “high” culture, is one central theme underlying contemporary research in social theory, social movements, political sociology, ethnicity and gender. Sociology takes practical and theoretical issues from popular culture. This course is an historical, methodological, and theoretical introduction to the study of popular culture, rather than the expressions of the “popular” per se. It examines various forms of popular culture as the generation, circulation, and consumption of “meanings.” Culture in general is approached as “texts” and “practices” in multiple forms. The forms of popular culture are as varied as the forms of social relations, sentiments, and ideologies they construct and disseminate. Among the forms explored in popular culture are the techno culture of information media, the consumer culture of shopping malls, the visual culture of Hollywood and television series, the fan culture of popular music, the gendered culture of fictions and magazines, the spectacular culture of mass entertainment and sensational journalism, the industrialized culture of the working class, and the “Americanization” of global culture. We will selectively explore these cultural expressions from the methodological and theoretical traditions of culturalism, Marxism, postmodernism/poststructuralism, feminism, and popular politics. The study of “popular” at the level of analysis and criticism is theoretically informed and reflects the time-space zones in which the “popular” is situated. In short, we are interested in knowing what role popular culture plays in society; what forms of social life it depicts; how it molds social relations; how it fractures identities and blends differences; what it reveals about class, gender, and race relations; why the “popular” is popular at this time and this place; what interpretive methods or theories have been developed; and what effects the mass production of consumptive culture has on social life. There are no uniform approaches and answers to these questions. Your appreciation and criticism of the “popular” will depend ultimately on your own cultural sensibility and subject position you cultivate in relation to the potpourri of cultural commodities and practices. You may consider this course as a route to such cultivation. This course stresses analysis, interpretations, and theories of popular culture in texts and practices. It aims at introducing sociological contributions to the cultural studies, providing an overview of the methods and theories of cultural analysis, and fostering a critical appreciation of popular culture.

Program Objectives
1. Students are to demonstrate competency in general theories, focused on theoretical applications in popular culture studies.
2. Students are to demonstrate competency in popular culture, relevant to multiculturalism as one of the substantive areas of sociology major field.
3. Students are to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in writing.
4. Students are to demonstrate competency in critical thinking.

General Information
1. Class attendance and participation are important in this course. You are expected to be present and on
time for class. Attendance will be taken frequently on a random basis. You will find exams difficult if you do not attend class on a regular basis. A pattern of absence and tardiness will adversely affect your course grade. If you anticipate periodic or prolonged absence in the course of the semester, you are strongly advised not to take this course. You will not be able to sail through this course without reading the texts carefully on time and maintaining a regular attendance.

2. You are always welcome to elicit comments, critique, and opinions in class. I appreciate your reaction to the issues raised in texts and lectures. If you are befuddled, the class will welcome your efforts at clarification. Please bring the text under discussion to class. I often make textual references. I expect each of you to prepare and comment on your readings in class.

3. If you have a disability that will make it difficult for you to participate in class, to abide by the course policies or perform successfully, please advise me immediately. I will work with you and the Office of Multicultural and Disabled Services to provide you with reasonable accommodations. Similarly, please let me know if a problem arises during the course of the semester, so we can resolve it at the earliest possible time.

4. Needless to say, completing all readings, papers, and exams on time does not by itself warrant a passing grade. In order to pass, your overall coursework must be of passing quality. “A” is reserved for those who justify an outstanding work. Incompletes are given only in accordance with the University guidelines and only under extraordinary and documented circumstances in which a student is unable to complete the latter portion of course work. There is no extra-credit work in this course; you are to focus on class requirements.

Class Requirements

Discussion Essays

1. You will submit three discussion essays on the designated dates, each discussing in your own words themes and issues of the readings and lectures for the previous weeks. These essays are meant to prepare you for the exams and project paper, and for you to articulate via writing your comprehension of learned materials. You may base your essays on the study questions distributed in class. You are to show succinctly that you have grasped the covered portion of course materials at the level appropriate to a college course. Please edit your essays before submitting them; essays are to be thoughtful and well written.

2. Your discussion essay should: (a) incorporate or refer to the assigned portions of texts; (b) be at least 1½ page long, single-spaced, stapled, and 11 or 12 font-size with proper margins no wider than 1.2 inch; (c) show your name and essay number on the back of the last page (i.e., I do not want to see your name when I read your paper); (d) begin writing from the top margin (i.e., do not waste space by writing essay title, course name, etc., on the front page); (e) begin with purpose statements, stating clearly in two or three sentences what your essay is going to analyze, show, apply, contrast, or contest; and (f) be written in paragraphs without line break (i.e., begin a new paragraph with a short indent instead). You will lose 6 points (10%) at the outset if you do not adhere to these specifications; there is no exception.

3. You can be selective in your essay theme but be as complete as possible. You may end your essay with a question related to the readings or lectures that you would like for us to discuss in class. Avoid ending your essay by rephrasing what you already have written; you will lose points for unnecessary repetitions or rephrases at any part of your essay. You can name authors but avoid using frequent or long quotes.

4. Keep in mind that discussion essay requires you to incorporate or refer to the themes/issues presented in the assigned texts and discussed in class. Essays deemed irrelevant to the content of the course will not be accepted. If you are using external sources in addition to the class materials, you must insert author’s name and publication year in parenthesis where it is appropriate and provide a separate page with a complete reference. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and subjected to the University disciplinary actions. Internet web pages are not acceptable sources for your essay; your essay will not be accepted if it is based on such information.
5. Discussion essays are not for sharing your personal experience unless you can show direct relevance. I suggest you do that in class. Essays are to be integrating (show how factual statements or concepts interrelate to support a perspective under discussion), comparative (contrast assigned articles and point out thematic differences and similarities), applying (interpret a popular culture from a definite perspective, or discuss how such a perspective might explain it), critical (take a position and argue against what you consider as critical deficiencies in particular themes), or inquisitive (discuss the kind of questions, answers, implications, inferences, assumptions, etc. relevant to popular culture that can be derived from your readings). In other words, do not simply repeat the points made in the texts and lectures in sequence but contrast, integrate, apply, explore, question, look for common themes, etc. For example, do not merely define conceptual terms or describe statements unless you are making a specific argument, and avoid narrating unrelated themes unless you are making specific contrasts under a general theme. Essays are to be organized, succinct, consistent, and as complete as possible.

6. You will have at least a week to work on a discussion essay following readings and lectures. Essays should be turned in on time, which means during class meetings on the designated due dates, and must be brought to class (not e-mailed to me or brought to the department office). I accept essays submitted earlier than the due date, but all late essays, if submitted within a week past the due date, are penalized -10%. I do not accept late essays after a week past the due date in which case you will score 0 point. This late-essay policy is strictly observed to ensure class fairness and timely progress. Always keep a copy of the essay you have turned in. If you need out-of-class assistance, please see me during office hours or make an appointment after class. I am always willing to assist you.

Project Paper

1. Some lessons about popular culture simply cannot be learned well unless you try to be an interpreter and bring the “popular” under scrutiny. Many research in popular culture come from observations. This class requires you to work in a pair (or triple, depending on the class size) to complete a paper. You and your partner are to explore a particular motif(s) in the select area of popular culture (music, lyrics, television series, advertisements, fictions, magazines, tabloids, fashion, film, tourism, leisure, sport, popular consumption, or any popularized practice, site, and event, old or new). The semester will end with the presentations and discussions of the paper that will extend or review our knowledge of popular culture studies. The paper and presentation do not require library research beyond the methods and theories presented in class, but you may explore other sources as well (e.g., newspaper commentaries, reports, reviews, or journals relevant to your topic). If you use sources in addition to the class materials, you must provide complete references.

2. You will soon be placed in a pair. You should negotiate with your partner and select a topic, or it will be assigned to you. There are a number of ways you can approach popular culture that will become more apparent and complex as we journey through it. Use your common sense and imagination in selecting a topic (e.g., “beauty” and “woman” in cybersex, cosmetics advertisements, or teen fashion magazines in relation to stereotyping and behavioral consequences this might have upon gender and age relations; recurrent themes in popular series like X-files in relation to the fascist representation of politics as a clandestine operation; sitcoms and talk shows that trivialize serious social problems and relations; romance novels, Westerns, James Bond, and Terminator that promote patriarchy or produce winner versus loser binary relations in audiences; cop shows that criminalize racial-ethnic minorities; films like Total Recall and Matrix that nullify reality by transforming simulations into a hyper-reality; lyrical contents of “black music” in relation to political resistance and racial identity; or interpretive rationales of why such texts and practices are “popular,” “cultural,” or “political” at this particular historical juncture).

3. I expect the papers and presentations to be critical, explorative, revealing, interpretive, and/or analytic report on the area of popular culture or some aspects thereof. You are required to incorporate or apply selectively the themes or approaches presented in class readings and discussions (or discuss critically why such themes and approaches are not suitable to your topic or approach). In short, your paper should demonstrate your understanding of particular issues in cultural studies by applying or contesting class materials. This demands careful thoughts and imaginations on your part since there is
no readymade formula. You will co-author the paper with your partner, 12-14 pages long (or 18 pages if working in a triple), divided into interrelated subheadings, and double-spaced with proper margins. Project papers are to be organized, consistent, succinct, and as complete as possible.

4. This assignment is a semester-long project that requires you to work with your partner to accomplish a task. You and your partner should be able to negotiate the times available to meet outside of class, although we will try to spend limited time in class discussing paper plans and progress. Keep in mind that this assignment requires you to apply or contest studies in popular culture in relation to a topic of your interest, and your paper will be evaluated accordingly.

5. You and your partner will give a brief oral report in class on Thursday, October 2nd about your project plan. You should be able to state clearly: (a) what your area of investigation or topic is; (b) why it is interesting; (c) what you as a pair hope to find; (d) your initial research or thought; (e) how you would proceed; and (f) what additional sources other than the class readings, if any, you are exploring or like to explore. This is a tentative, general report on the procedure and content of your paper.

6. On Tuesday, November 4th, you and your partner will submit a progress report (about 2 pages, single-spaced). The report should state: (a) the final topic; (b) an outline of the paper; (c) description about accomplished portions of work, including by whom and how; (d) organizing method or perspective that has been adopted; (e) ideas about how you would integrate or apply it to the paper; (f) description about the remaining work, by whom and how it is to be accomplished; (g) additional sources other than class readings, if any, you have been exploring; and (h) difficulties, if any, you have encountered that I need to know about. You will have only a few minutes in class to draft the report, which means you and your partner should arrange meeting times to complete it before the due date.

7. You should begin writing your portion of the paper no later than mid-October, so that you and your partner will be able to compile a draft by November 18th. Class presentations will begin on November 25th, immediately before and after Thanksgiving. You and your partner must plan on presenting the paper before that date. The final draft of the paper is due on Thursday, December 4th. Please consider all designated dates as a hard expectation and plan your schedules accordingly. Always keep a copy of all papers you have turned in.

Study Questions

1. On Thursdays, you will be given two take-home study questions, covering the readings, discussions, and lectures. Study questions are meant to test your overall comprehension of learned materials, to enhance your analytic thinking, and to prepare you for exams. You are encouraged to organize your answers on a separate notebook (not due). Keep this notebook updated and review it for exams. You may utilize study questions as an outline for your discussion essays or as a conceptual guideline for the project paper.

2. Three or four paragraphs for each study question, on average, would suffice, but keep in mind that specific questions require specific answers. Avoid giving unnecessary definition to the terms you are using and get to the points immediately. You may discuss your answers in review sessions or during my office hours.

Exams

1. You will take three written exams, consisting of five questions of which you answer four. All exam questions are drawn directly from the study questions distributed in class for the midterm under examination. You will have no more than seven study questions before each scheduled exam. In other words, you will have exam questions in advance and have time enough to study and discuss them in class. Keep in mind that you will have to demonstrate your understanding of the course materials in paragraphs for full credit. The third exam, which is not comprehensive, will be given at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 10th, the day designated by the University for our class final.

2. Exam policy: (a) there is no early exam; (b) makeup exams must be taken at an appointed time within a week following the scheduled exam; (c) all makeup exams are penalized (-10%) unless you provide a documented excuse verifying the necessity of your absence; (d) to ensure fairness, makeup exam questions are not the same as scheduled exam questions and would only reflect the study questions; (e) under no circumstance a makeup is given after a week past the designated exam date; (f) a missing
exam thereafter means “failure” (not an incomplete) for that portion of coursework. There is no exception to this policy. It is to your advantage not to miss an exam.

3. Please bring a blue book (exam book) and arrive 5 minutes early on the designated exam dates. I must sign on your blue book before the exam; a blue book without my signature on it is invalid and will not be considered. Do not attempt to cram up study questions. You will not be able to handle this, and I will not be able to help you. Notice exam dates deadlines below, and plan your schedule accordingly.

Readings
1. Class meetings will primarily include lectures, text reviews, and discussions. You are required to do assigned readings thoroughly prior to class; be prepared to discuss them and answer questions in class. You are likely to find some excerpts and articles difficult to follow through. Several influential European writers you will encounter have a tendency of phrasing ideas in a complex form. You are not expected to grasp the details on your first reading. However, I do expect that you are acquainted with general conceptual terms and overall themes before you come to class. Be prepared to raise generic issues and questions in class.

2. Lectures are delivered on the assumption that you have completed your readings thoroughly. Be prepared to answer questions in class. Each lecture will identify issues/themes that the text under discussion raises, and it often centers on an extended clarification and elaboration of the material you have read. In addition, conflicting standpoints and relevant materials not discussed in texts will be introduced in class.

3. All readings are assigned on every Thursday for the following week along with the study questions (JS=John Storey, Cultural Studies & The Study of Popular Culture; RD=Reader). Reading for the first and second weeks are JS pp. 1-8 (read before this Thursday); RD pp. 3-5, 7-19 (read before Tuesday, Aug. 26). You are required to have the readings prepared on time for class.

Deadlines and Exam Dates
1. 08/19 course introduction
2. 08/26
3. 09/02
4. 09/09 1st discussion essay due, Thursday September 11
5. 09/16
  09/18 review discussion: Thursday September 18
6. 09/23 Midterm Exam I: Tuesday September 23, 8/21 to 9/18
7. 09/30
  10/02 oral report on project paper: Thursday October 2
8. 10/07
9. 10/14 2nd discussion essay due, Tuesday October 14
  10/16-10/17 fall break
10. 10/21
  10/24 review discussion: Thursday October 24
11. 10/28 Midterm Exam II: Tuesday October 28, 9/25-10/24
12. 10/30
13. 11/04 progress report due, Tuesday November 4
14. 11/11
15. 11/25 3rd discussion essay due, Tuesday November 25
  11/26-11/28 Thanksgiving
16. 12/02 presentation and discussion.
  12/04 project paper due, Thursday December 4; presentation and discussion

Final Exam: 8 a.m. Wednesday December 10, 10/30 to 12/04
Evaluation
1. Your course grade is based on:
   Three Midterm Exams…………… 200 points each, 600 points.
   Three discussion Essays……………60 points each, 180 points.
   Progress report……………………..20 points.
   Project paper and presentation……..100 points.
2. The grading scale is: 792-900 (88%): A
   702-791 (78%): B
   612-701 (68%): C
   522-611 (58%): D
3. Class attendance is considered if your cumulative points fall near or on the borderline.
Popular Culture
Study Question 1 (Exam I)

1. Discuss the ways in which “popular culture” is approached in cultural studies in relation to the following statement. “Culture in cultural studies is defined politically” (i.e., popular culture is not simply the commercialized culture imposed on the brainless mass from above; and it is not simply spontaneously emerging folk culture from below), and “cultural texts and practices are not inscribed with meanings” (i.e., the production and consumption of meanings are not fixed or permanent; they are subject to articulation and disarticulation.)

2. Selectively discuss two themes/points from your readings in elaboration of the statement below. Mathew Arnold and Frank Raymond Leavis epitomized the reactionary stance of “cultured minority” in defense of “high culture” (e.g., their critique of the loss of cultural deference and subordination), and argued against the rise of urban mass culture and “mass civilization” that in their views leads to “anarchy” and the collapse of “cultured minority.” What weakness do you see in their particular or overall argument/stance? Discuss.

Study Question 2 (Exam I)

1. Dwight Macdonald offers a number of diagnostics on the roles/effects of commercialized mass culture in mass society. Discuss three ways through which mass culture undermines the vitality of Art. In other words, discuss how commercialized mass culture undermines high culture and trivializes lofty aesthetic tastes.

Study Question 3 (Exam I)

1. Answer either (a) or (b). Your answer must be as concrete as possible; ask yourself: “What does that really mean?” That is, show your understanding.
   a. According to Hall, television discourse passes through three moments, i.e., encoding by media professionals, the visual texts becoming polysemy (subject to multiple significations or readings), and audience decoding. Discuss how each moment is constructed, i.e., what is being involved in each moment? Pay attention to reference codes by which the first and third moments are constructed, and the position Hall takes on the relationship between “language” and “reality” as the second moment.
   b. According to Hall, the first and last moments of television discourse, encoding and decoding, may not coincide as intended by media professionals, suggesting that there are always interpretive spaces for different readings of the visual text. There are three reading positions: dominant-hegemonic position, negotiated position, and oppositional position. Discuss what is being involved in each position. You may also draw from Morley’s study.

2. Ang in her study about viewing Dallas shows that an audience typically dwells on the level of connotation. She thus stresses “emotional realism” as the source of pleasure, i.e., the probable reason why Dallas is so popularized. Discuss briefly how the audience experiences “emotional realism,” i.e., what is being involved in here and in reference to what, and focus on the following questions. Generally speaking, what role does the ideology of mass culture play in relation to the audience? Why is this ideology central for those audiences of popularized television series? Do you think that the general audiences today feel “shame” or “guilt” in watching popularized television series without self-justification?

Readings
Reader: pp. 39- 41; Article # 6 & 7 (read before Tuesday).
Popular Culture: Exam I
Indicate the question number you are answering. Return this exam sheet.

1. Discuss the ways in which “popular culture” is approached in cultural studies in relation to the following statement. “Culture in cultural studies is defined politically” (i.e., popular culture is not simply the commercialized culture imposed on the brainless mass from above; and it is not simply spontaneously emerging folk culture from below), and “cultural texts and practices are not inscribed with meanings” (i.e., the production and consumption of meanings are not fixed or permanent; they are subject to articulation and disarticulation.)

2. Selectively discuss two themes/points from your readings in elaboration of the statement below. Mathew Arnold and Frank Raymond Leavis epitomized the reactionary stance of “cultured minority” in defense of “high culture” (e.g., their critique of the loss of cultural deference and subordination), and argued against the rise of urban mass culture and “mass civilization” that in their views leads to “anarchy” and the collapse of “cultured minority.” What weakness do you see in their particular or overall argument/stance? Discuss.

3. Answer either (a) or (b). Your answer must be as concrete as possible; ask yourself: “What does that really mean?” That is, show your understanding.
   a. According to Hall, television discourse passes through three moments, i.e., encoding by media professionals, the visual texts becoming polysemy (subject to multiple significations or readings), and audience decoding. Discuss how each moment is constructed, i.e., what is being involved in each moment? Pay attention to reference codes by which the first and third moments are constructed, and the position Hall takes on the relationship between “language” and “reality” as the second moment.
   b. According to Hall, the first and last moments of television discourse, encoding and decoding, may not coincide as intended by media professionals, suggesting that there are always interpretive spaces for different readings of the visual text. There are three reading positions: dominant-hegemonic position, negotiated position, and oppositional position. Discuss what is being involved in each position. You may also draw from Morley’s study.

4. Ang in her study about viewing Dallas shows that an audience typically dwells on the level of connotation. She thus stresses “emotional realism” as the source of pleasure, i.e., the probable reason why Dallas is so popularized. Discuss briefly how the audience experiences “emotional realism,” i.e., what is being involved in here and in reference to what, and focus on the following questions. Generally speaking, what role does the ideology of mass culture play in relation to the audience? Why is this ideology central for those audiences of popularized television series? Do you think that the general audiences today feel “shame” or “guilt” in watching popularized television series without self-justification?
Study Question 1 (Exam II)

1. Culturalism stresses lived culture as experienced by ordinary men and women in that society, reconstruction of culture as a shared way of life in an organic community at that time, and the role of human agency in active production of culture. In what ways does Hoggart’s reconstruction of the lives of working class people or Thompson’s approach to the working class (you may deal with both or one) illustrate the general orientation of culturalism? In other words, how Hoggart or Thompson would interpret “culture”? Illustrate your answer.

2. Selectively discuss a couple of points from your reading in support or elaboration of the followings. “According to Williams, in order for us to appreciate fully the "felt sense of quality of life, our understanding of culture should stress the interrelations among culture as an ideal, culture as an assessment of recorded texts/practices, and culture as a way of life. So, we cannot abstract “high culture” away from lived culture or period culture. Furthermore, cultural “patterns” (shared ways of thinking, doing, and living) undergo selection process that link lived culture and period culture. William sees this process as historically dynamic.”

3. Selectively discuss what Foucault means by power. Your answer should align with the followings. “Recall the point about culture being political, i.e., culture as an arena of conflicting discourses of articulation and disarticulation (difference or resistance on one hand and assimilation or incorporation on the other). How are resistances related to power? For example, we can interpret various supporting discourses on homosexuality as resistances to the currently dominant heterosexual norm that normalizes people into acceptable sexual practices. How does power operate or how is it realized? For example, the history of sexuality reveals many authoritative discourses extracting information and confessions, instructing what sexual behaviors are positive and what are negative, and deciding what can be acted upon and even thought of in the field of sexuality.” (You do not need to focus on sexuality; feel free to give other examples for illustration but focus on power, knowledge, and resistance.)

Study Question 2 (Exam II)

1. “Symptomatic reading” involves understanding a text (written and visual) critically. Traditionally, textual criticism has seen its role as making explicit what is implicit in texts as though textual meanings were fixed in time. From the standpoint of symptomatic reading, the question of reading a text is not one of making clear what is in the text so as to be sure of the text’s meaning. The task of critical reading is not about completing what a text leaves unsaid by adding more information to it. What then is involved in critical reading? The phrase “symptomatic reading” points to that which is problematic, conflictive, or repressed in texts.

2. Answer either (a) or (b)

(a) Conventionally, we tend to privilege the original source or starting point to determine the authenticity of significations. But that is certainly not the case for Bennett and Woollacott’s analysis of “Bond as a popular hero.” They stress the flexibility of Bond as a signifier and inter-textual determination of meaning (i.e., how meanings of one text is marked variously by other discourses within specific social conditions of reading). What do they seek to convey in their analysis and how?

(b) In reference to “reading romantic fiction,” selectively discuss three points that you think would characterize feminist responses to reading romance. What would you say in general about feminist orientations to reading romance? Do you agree?

3. Althusser attempts to link ideology, institution (ISA), and subject in his argument that ideology is inextricably linked to material practices and to the creation of subjects on which its perpetuation depends. Discuss what Althusser means by ideology in reference to the theses he advanced in the article. (Be imaginative. Tell me what he is arguing for or about.)

4. Using Will Right’s structural (binary and narrative) analyses of both classical western (Reader pp. 123-134) and more recent Westerns (JS pp.57-60) as a model, analyze “Last Castle.” To what extent the film approximates or deviates Right’s analysis of Westerns? (You do not need to discuss Right’s analyses in detail, but you need to show to what extent Wright’s account of Westerns fits “Last Castle”? Be imaginative.)
Popular Culture Exam II
Answer 4 questions (Indicate which ones you are answering. You need to demonstrate your understanding for full credit.)

1. Culturalism stresses lived culture as experienced by ordinary men and women in that society, reconstruction of culture as a shared way of life in an organic community at that time, and the role of human agency in active production of culture. In what ways does Hoggart’s reconstruction of the lives of working class people or Thompson’s approach to the working class (you may deal with both or one) illustrate the general orientation of culturalism? In other words, how Hoggart or Thompson would interpret “culture”? Illustrate your answer.

2. Selectively discuss a couple of points from your reading in support or elaboration of the followings. “According to Williams, in order for us to appreciate fully the "felt sense of quality of life, our understanding of culture should stress the interrelations among culture as an ideal, culture as an assessment of recorded texts/practices, and culture as a way of life. So, we cannot abstract “high culture” away from lived culture or period culture. Furthermore, cultural “patterns” (shared ways of thinking, doing, and living) undergo selection process that link lived culture and period culture. William sees this process as historically dynamic.”

3. Selectively discuss what Foucault means by power. Your answer should align with the followings. “Recall the point about culture being political, i.e., culture as an arena of conflicting discourses of articulation and disarticulation (difference or resistance on one hand and assimilation or incorporation on the other). How are resistances related to power? For example, we can interpret various supporting discourses on homosexuality as resistances to the currently dominant heterosexual norm that normalizes people into acceptable sexual practices. How does power operate or how is it realized? For example, the history of sexuality reveals many authoritative discourses extracting information and confessions, instructing what sexual behaviors are positive and what are negative, and deciding what can be acted upon and even thought of in the field of sexuality.” (You do not need to focus on sexuality; feel free to give other examples for illustration but focus on power, knowledge, and resistance.)

4. “Symptomatic reading” involves understanding a text (written and visual) critically. Traditionally, textual criticism has seen its role as making explicit what is implicit in texts as though textual meanings were fixed in time. From the standpoint of symptomatic reading, the question of reading a text is not one of making clear what is in the text so as to be sure of the text’s meaning. The task of critical reading is not about completing what a text leaves unsaid by adding more information to it. What then is involved in critical reading? The phrase “symptomatic reading” points to that which is problematic, conflictive, or repressed in texts.

5. Answer either (a) or (b)
   (b) Conventionally, we tend to privilege the original source or starting point to determine the authenticity of significations. But that is certainly not the case for Bennett and Woollacott’s analysis of “Bond as a popular hero.” They stress the flexibility of Bond as a signifier and inter-textual determination of meaning (i.e., how meanings of one text is marked variously by other discourses within specific social conditions of reading). What do they seek to convey in their analysis and how?

6. Using Will Right’s structural (binary and narrative) analyses of both classical western (Reader pp. 123-134) and more recent Westerns (JS pp.57-60) as a model, analyze “Last Castle.” To what extent the film approximates or deviates Right’s analysis of Westerns? (You do not need to discuss Right’s analyses in detail, but you need to show to what extent Wright’s account of Westerns fits “Last Castle”? Be imaginative.).