University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Introduction to cultural studies - lecture II, PG_00189793		
Field of study	Cultural Studies		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2026	Academic year of realisation of subject	2026/2027
Education level	Bachelor's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	1	Language of instruction	Polish
Semester of study	2	ECTS credits	3.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	exam
Conducting unit	Division of Culture Studies -> Institute of Culture Studies -> Faculty of Languages -> Rector		
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Magdalena Sacha	
	Teachers		

Lesson types

Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
Number of study hours	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15

E-learning hours included: 0.0

Learning activity and number of study hours

Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
Number of study hours	15	2.0	58.0	75

Subject objectives

The aim of the lecture is to introduce students to the theoretical foundations, assumptions, and main issues of contemporary cultural studies, starting from the concepts of culture through the key topics that are the subject of contemporary discussions among cultural scholars and anthropologists. The lecture is complemented by exercises, directing the attention of the listeners to theoretical issues: the content discussed in the lecture is expanded with detailed readings and skills in working with scholarly texts during the exercises.

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[KULL3_K04] They are prepared to address issues related to the practice of a cultural studies professional in a proper, responsible, and ethical manner.	The student is able to correctly, responsibly and ethically analyze and resolve problems related to the profession of a cultural studies specialist within the scope learned during the lecture Introduction to Cultural Studies.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
[KULL3_U03] They are able to communicate using specialized terminology in the fields of cultural and religious studies, as well as the arts.	Students familiarize themselves with basic theoretical concepts in the field of cultural studies and art history, and are able to use these concepts both orally and in writing.	[SU4] test/exam - oral or written
[KULL3_U02] They possess the skills necessary to conduct research on culture and to draw conclusions through the appropriate selection and use of theories, methods, and research tools of cultural studies, as well as advanced information and communication technologies.	The student has the skills to conduct research on culture and formulate conclusions thanks to the appropriate selection and use of theories, methods and research tools of cultural studies, as well as advanced information and communication techniques within the scope learned during the lecture "Introduction to Cultural Studies".	[SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
[KULL3_W03] They know and understand cultural studies terminology at an advanced level.	The student knows and understands the terminology in the field of cultural studies at a level appropriate to the scope of the introduction to cultural studies program.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written
[KULL3_W01] They have advanced knowledge of the subject's specifics, the theories of cultural studies, and its place among the sciences of culture and religion.	The student is ready to critically evaluate the knowledge he/she has about culture and recognize its value in solving cognitive and practical problems within the scope learned during the lecture on Introduction to Cultural Studies	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
[KULL3_K01] They are ready to critically evaluate his knowledge of culture and to recognize its value in solving cognitive and practical problems.	The student is ready to critically evaluate the knowledge he/she has about culture and recognize its value in solving cognitive and practical problems within the scope learned during the lecture on Introduction to Cultural Studies	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion

Subject contents

The recommended curriculum content should be compatible with the preceding semester. The lecturer decides on the detailed planning of the proposed material each time.

1. Types of culture in a stratified society: elite, folk, popular (high / low).
2. Culture as a symbolic system. Culture and language: signs - their types and functions.
3. Theoretical approaches combining culture and language: basic characteristics. Ethnolinguistics, structuralism, semiotics, cognitive science.
4. "Old" and "new" media in culture: transformations from orality to literacy. The concept of secondary orality.
5. Myth, magic, religion, ritual, rites of passage. Magical thinking in primitive communities versus contemporary myths and mythologies.
6. Individual and collective identity. The concept of person, ethnicity, nation, social and national character.
7. Types of culture: national, regional. Countercultures versus elite culture and "mass" culture.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Regular attendance (a maximum of two absences per semester is allowed).	20.0%	20.0%
Passing the final exam	80.0%	80.0%

Recommended reading

Basic literature	Aleida Assman, Wprowadzenie do kulturoznawstwa. Podstawowe terminy, problemy, pytania, Poznań 2015. Wojciech J. Burszta, Antropologia kultury. Tematy, teorie, interpretacje, wyd. I, Poznań 1998. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Małe miejsca, wielkie sprawy. Wprowadzenie do antropologii społecznej i kulturowej, Warszawa 2009. Pojęcia i problemy wiedzy o kulturze, red. A. Kłoskowska, Seria: Encyklopedia kultury polskiej, Wrocław 1991
Supplementary literature	Rafał Augustyn, Wykłady o kulturze, Kraków 2021
eResources addresses	

Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed

- Please explain the origin (etymology) of the concept of culture and outline the difference between its original meaning in antiquity and its contemporary understanding.
- Please explain the difference between evaluative and descriptive definitions of culture according to Aleida Assmann. Which understanding of culture among the six discussed is most convincing to you and why?
- Please discuss the arguments presented at the conclusion of Waldemar Kuligowski's lecture "The Concept of Culture" in defense of the use of the concept of culture. What is your stance on these arguments? Do you believe that the use of the term "culture" is still justified, or should it be abandoned?
- What is the anthropological encounter with Otherness? Reflections on the margins of the theses contained in chapter 1 of Wojciech Burszta's "Cultural Anthropology".
- The problematic relationship between NATURE and CULTURE. Reflections on the margins of the theses contained in chapter 2 of Wojciech Burszta's "Cultural Anthropology".
- Please discuss the concept of cultural patterns proposed by Ruth Benedict. How can the use of Apollonian and Dionysian patterns in studying indigenous tribes be justified (or critically challenged)?
- What is symbolic culture, and what subsystems of symbolic culture does Antonina Kłoskowska distinguish?
- Understanding religion what role does religion play in human societies? How does its instrumental and autotelic form manifest?
- Please discuss the concept of numinosum according to Rudolf Otto. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this concept?
- "Homo religiosus" and "scapegoat" two concepts by two prominent scholars. Please characterize them and comment on their applicability in interpreting the contemporary role of religion.
- Please list three types of culture in a stratified society. Then, choose one of the three types and characterize its origin, users, and the most interesting forms of representation through art, everyday life, and behaviors, in your opinion. Are there relics of the chosen type of traditional culture in contemporary mass culture?
- The concept of ethos. The characteristics of chivalric ethos and its remnants in contemporary Western culture.
- Please discuss the most important features of human language (described in chapter 3 of Wojciech Burszta's "Cultural Anthropology"). Which features, in your opinion, have most significantly contributed to the development of human cultures?
- What theses are proposed by the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (described in chapter 3 of Wojciech Burszta's "Cultural Anthropology")? Please discuss the arguments for or against this hypothesis.
- Please discuss the functions of language according to the schemes proposed by linguists, anthropologists, and philosophers in the 20th century.
- The language of propaganda historical development, characteristics, and contemporary threats.
- Please discuss the concept of les rites de passage by Arnold van Gennep (described in chapter 5 of Wojciech Burszta's "Cultural Anthropology"). Do we observe such rites or their relics in contemporary culture?
- Cultural vision of death among the Slavs, in Polish Romanticism, and today. What is the concept of "inverted death" in contemporary Western society (Ph. Aries)?
- The concept of cyclical time and linear time: how does the notion of time organize society, culture, and religion? What is the contemporary vision of "slow life" time?
- The concept of proxemics in relation to the organization of space in different cultures.

Work placement

Not applicable

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