COURSE CONTENT

Course Code / Title : HS2004 Culture, Self and Identity
Pre-requisites : HS1001 Person and Society
No. of AUs. : 3
Contact Hours : 39 (2 hours lecture and 1 hour tutorial)

Course Aims

In a broad sense, culture refers to the socially (as opposed to genetically) transmitted bases for the behaviors that characterize the human species. In a narrower sense, it refers to the ways of life that are cultivated by people in particular times and places and which provide frameworks within which human beings go about everyday life. This course will teach Year 1 and Year 2 Sociology majors about the sociological significance of culture in terms of its material, ideological, and practical aspects; its production, transmission and consumption; and its relation to people selves and identities. Such knowledge is important for anyone who wishes to be critically aware of how and why people think and act as they do, and to be able to act on that knowledge and informed and active citizen.

The course should provide working answers to the following questions:

- What is culture? How does culture relate to individual and collective human life?
- How have social scientists approached the study of culture? What methods do sociologists use to study culture?
- How does culture relate to the human mind, as well as to social institutions?
- How does culture relate to self and identity?

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe what culture is and how it relates to individual and collective human life.
2. Evaluate different ways social scientists have approached the study of culture, including what kinds of things cultural sociologists study and what methods they use.
3. Describe how culture is related to human minds and social institutions.
4. Describe the relation among culture, self and identity.
Course Content

Week 1  
Introduction to the course  
Key concepts:  
Social construction of culture, culture and meaning

Week 2  
Meaning and culture  
Key concepts:  
History of culture as a concept  
Culture as a meaning structure  
Definitions of Culture and cultures

Week 3  
Methodological approaches to culture  
Key concepts:  
Discourse and semiotics  
Ethnography and field research

Week 4  
Mind, meaning, and action  
Key concepts:  
Cognitive and micro-oriented approaches to culture  
Culture as a problem-solving mechanism, culture as local

Week 5  
The production and consumption of culture  
Key concepts:  
How culture is produced; how production is cultured  
Cultural industries and cultural production  
Cultural consumption, consumerism  
Status and identity

Week 6  
The circuit of culture  
Key concepts:  
Circuit of culture and its ‘moments’ (production, consumption, regulation, representation, identity)

Week 7  
Culture and control  
Key concepts:  
Culture as a source of control  
Center and periphery  
Cultural hegemony

Week 8  
Culture and contestation  
Key concepts:  
Alternative and oppositional cultures  
Dimensions and methods of contestation/resistance
Week 9  
This week will be a work week on presentations. We will meet with groups individually to discuss their projects and to give intermediate feedback.

Week 10  
Conceptualizing self and identity  
Key concepts:  
Self and identity as sociological concepts  
Culture, self and identity in an information age  
Gender, age and class as components of identity

Week 11  
Postcolonialism, hybridity, cosmopolitanism  
Key concepts:  
Conceptualising hybrid and postcolonial identities  
Contemporary cosmopolitanism and difference

Week 12  
Identity and the Singaporean nation  
Key concepts:  
Self and identity in Singapore; national identity  
Ideological state apparatuses

Week 13  
Semester-end review/revision

Course Assessment

CA1  (LAMS activity) : 10%
CA2  (LAMS activity + online quiz) : 10%
CA3  (Analytic essay) : 20%
CA4  (Analytic essay) : 20%
CA5  Course participation : 10%
Final Examination : 30%
Total : 100%