Identity, culture and media

Module 3, January –March 2015

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Course description:

The main objective of this course is to introduce to media studies students cultural theory and media sociology perspectives on a variety of contemporary phenomena that concern media practices. The concept of identity—a concept that has obtained major attention by the humanities and the social sciences over the last decades—is used to discuss a variety of contemporary issues relevant to media studies such as globalization, modernization, citizenship, creativity, media production and consumerism. Using different examples from the media world, and a variety of cutting edge texts on media studies, the course aims at contributing to a critical understanding, analysis and evaluation of media effects and media uses in today's world.
Course program:

1. Introduction: culture and identity today; social life, media uses and media representations
   Readings:

1. Late modern identity in Giddens and in Sennett
   Readings:
   - Antony Giddens, modernity and self-identity - chapter 7, the emergence of life politics
   - Richard Sennett, the culture of late capitalism – chapter 2, talent and the specter of uselessness

1. Understanding globalization; where do media and identity issues fit
   Readings:
   - Anthony King, Culture, globalization and the world system (1997) - Introduction: Spaces of Culture, Spaces of Knowledge
   - Chapter 3. Roland Robertson, Social Theory, Cultural Relativity and the Problem of Globality

1. Consumer culture and its critique
   Readings:
   - Thorstein Veblen, the theory of the leisure class (1899/2007) – chapter 2, pecuniary emulation
   - Zygmunt Bauman, consuming life (2006) - chapter 1, Consumerism versus Consumption
   - Chapter 2, Society of Consumers

1. Creativity, subjectivity and new media
   Readings:
   - Gauntlett, making is connecting (2011) – Introduction,
• chapter 6, social capital and communities
• Sennett, the craftsman (2008) – chapter 1, the troubled craftsman

1. Media representations and media discourse of the self and others

   Readings:
   • Nick Couldry, why voice matters (2010) - chapter 1, voice as value, chapter 6, sociologies of voice
   • Luc Boltanski, distant suffering, morality, media and politics (2004) –chapter 6, the critique of sentimentalism

1. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism

   Readings:
   • Ulrich Beck (2011) Cosmopolitanism as Imagined Communities of Global Risk
   • Michael Billig (1995), Banal nationalism –chapter 4, National Identity in the World of Nations

1. Global crises and identity

   Readings:
   • Susan Carruthers, The media at war (2011) –chapter 1, mobilization, the media before war
   • Yiannis Mylonas, Crisis, austerity and opposition in mainstream media discourses of Greece (2014) http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17405904.2014.915862

1. Citizenship, civic culture and digital networks

   Readings:
   • Peter Dahlgren, media and political engagement (2009) – chapter 3, citizens and agency, chapter 5, civic cultures, an analytical
   • Maria Backardjeva, Reconfiguring the mediapolis: New media and civic agency (2011), http://nms.sagepub.com/content/14/1/63
• Yiannis Mylonas, A critical study of informal new media uses in Sweden (2014),
http://www.cultureunbound.ep.liu.se/v6/a57/cu14v6a57.pdf