Dr. Stephanie Kane                   Spring 2009

Course description:
In this course we will read across continents and disciplines, participating in the invention and development of the emerging subfield of cultural criminology. We will draw on theories and methods at the intersection of anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, art history, and criminology. Our cultural crossings will take us to North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Africa. As we immerse ourselves in different social worlds and modes of representation, crime and justice emerge as multifaceted concepts, as diverse in their interpretation and relevance as they are universal in their appearance. Struggles over their meaning are the quintessential cultural enterprise, one that digs deeply into the material forces that shape survival, celebration, and moral and legal judgment.

In Part I, we begin with two ethnographies that analyze the conundrums of understanding the local and personal in regional and global frameworks of action. Relying on methods of participant observation and fieldwork logistics, these ethnographies create shifts of cultural perspective and epistemologies of difference and surprise. In Part II, we follow our authors into the city, the geographical heart of most criminological research. Here we study how language shapes social reality in everyday life and through a mass-mediated social drama revolving around a notorious crime. In Part III, we study our authors’ dilemmas of representing crime and justice in a variety of genres (parody and the museum exhibit, graffiti, photographs) and analyze the motivation and implications of the popular lust for brutal images.

Independent student projects will contribute knowledge about a variety of other culture areas and disciplinary arenas.

Required Reading List (in order of syllabus):
[Note: All books will be available at the Media Reserve Desk of the main library.]

Requirements:
Weekly assignments:
You are required to write 9 one page papers, which allows you to skip writing about any 3 weeks of readings. Think of each paper as a crystallization of the idea that you find most interesting or useful in the assigned readings, a departure point for scholarly discussion. This idea may correspond to one or more of the authors’ theses; it may arise out of something one or more of the author’s touched on lightly in passing; or it may arise out of a contrast between or among different authors. The point is to write succinctly about something that you think is worth exploring. Papers will not be accepted after class. Always keep copies of all your papers.

Final project (7-8 pp):
You are required to develop a major project to be presented in oral and written form in the last phase of the course. The first task is to identify a culture area or discursive terrain in and through which you will test the usefulness of the ideas presented in the readings. I am interested in the way the frameworks of analysis and issues of representation we confront in class reshape your ongoing research interests or create new ones. I expect papers to be written coherently and concisely with in-text and bibliographic citations in the standard style of your choice. Papers are due on the date of your class presentation.

In-class presentation of final project: You will present your final project in our cross-cultural mini-conference at the end of the semester. Papers will be organized into 2 panels, each with a volunteer discussant who will present the cross-cutting themes in the papers and suggest future directions. The content of the discussant’s presentation will be developed by the panel as a group beforehand. This will require that everyone be prepared with a draft a week before panel date and to make time to meet at least once outside of class.

All written papers must be typed in at least 11 point type, double spaced, and include page numbers in the footer, and name and date in the header. Always keep an extra copy.

Participation:
In addition to taking an active part in in-depth class discussion, participation grades will be based on one special activity:

Interdisciplinary practicum: Each student is responsible for participating in at least one scholarly event in another disciplinary arena and presenting a 5 minute report to the class on the topic and/or style of the event. For example, consider going to a lecture or readings group sponsored by an area studies program, or by Cultural Studies, Folklore, Anthropology or Culture and Communication. Remember, even disciplines as distant as physics or medicine can be approached as a culture!
Grade Calculation:
Weekly assignment:
   9 one-page papers - 36%
Final project:
   One 7 - 8 page paper - 38%
Participation:
   General participation in class discussion and attendance – 20%
   Interdisciplinary practicum – 6%
   Volunteer discussants – extra credit

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. Jan 14  What’s the X in X-Cultural Studies?

   Part I. Cultural Crossings and Global Circuits
   (from Panama to the World)

2. Jan 21  Kane: Prefaces 1 & 2, Introduction, Ch. 1-4 (pp. 1-65)
   (note: Ch. 5 is optional)

3. Jan 28  Kane: Ch. 6-9 (pp. 83-162)

4. Feb 4  Nordstrom: Preface, National, Ch. 1-7; International, Ch 8-10
   (pp. 3-104)

5. Feb 11  Nordstrom: Global, Ch. 11-18; Home, Ch. 19-20. (pp. 105-210)

   Part II. City Talk
   (from Washington D.C. to Amsterdam)

6. Feb 18  Modan: Part I, Ch. 1-4 (pp. 1-169)

7. Feb 25  Modan: Part I, Ch. 5-7; Part II, Ch. 8-9 (pp. 170-325)

8. Mar 4  Eyerman: Ch. 1-3 (pp. 1-101)
9. Mar 11  Eyerman: Ch. 4-6 (pp. 102-174)

/////////////////////  Spring Break March 14th – 22nd /////////////////

Part III. The Interpretation and Representation of Order, Disorder and Deviance
(from Colombia’s Pacific Coast, to Melbourne, to Marion, Indiana)

11. Apr 1   Taussig: Cement & Speed – Afterward (pp. 159-316)
12. Apr 8   Young: Ch. 1-5 (pp. 1-116)
13. Apr 15  Apel and Smith: Introduction, Ch 1-2 (pp. 1-78)

Part IV: Presentation of Research Projects

14. Apr 22  Panel 1
   *** Final Papers Due (Panel 1)
15. Apr 29  Panel 2
   *** Final Papers Due (Panel 2)

~~~~~The End~~~~~