

American Pop Culture

30 5 / 2012

Final Exam Study Resources

Hi everyone,

As promised, here are the resources you need to study for the final exam.

First, you should refer to [this](#) post, containing all the pre-midterm materials.

Here are the post-midterm resources:

[Final Exam Study Guide](#)

[Video: The Smurfette Principle](#)

[Reading: The Smurfette Principle](#)

[Video: Pop Culture in the Arab World](#)

[Slideshow: Cultural Appropriation](#)

Happy studying! Email me if you have questions.

[Permalink](#) [0 Comments](#)

26 5 / 2012

(Final!) Class Recap, May 22

Hello everyone, First of all, congratulations to all of this year's Cultural Day participants. Your hard work really paid off, and I think you've set a new standard for future performances.

This past week, we had our last class that will introduce new material; next week will be dedicated to exam review. (As a reminder, the exam will take place Tuesday, June 5th, at 8:45am.)

We discussed the phenomenon of cultural appropriation, in which individuals adopt the images or practices of foreign cultures in order to serve some purpose of their own. We began by watching [this video](#), a TED presentation by Shereen El Feki on appropriation of western

mainstays such as Barbie dolls and MTV in the Middle East, where “Fullah” and “4Shabab” have been developed as Islamic counterparts to transmit more culturally-friendly values to Muslim Middle Easterners. We discussed the pros and cons of this appropriation, and then went on to observe instances of cultural appropriation in American culture.

[This slideshow](#) shows several images, some quite controversial, of cultural appropriation.

[Permalink 0 Comments](#)

15 5 / 2012

Class Recap: May 15th

Hi everybody,

A few announcements from class today:

1) The final exam will be on Tuesday, June 5th, at 8:45 am to 10:45 am. Although I had announced earlier that the final will only cover information we learned after the midterm, I’ve decided to make it cumulative because we’ve had to cancel a few classes recently. We will spend our last class reviewing for the exam, and I’ll release another study guide.

2) I recently learned of a U.S. State Department Scholarship program in Rabat this summer for young Moroccan women, aged 18 - 22, interested in journalism. The application is pretty simple and is due on June 4th. If you’re interested, contact me! I’d be happy to write you a recommendation letter.

Today in class, we watched [this video](#) on “The Smurfette Principle,” a trend in popular media in which one woman character is cast in a group of male characters. We discussed the ramifications of this trend, and the definitions of “trope,” “cliche,” and “token minority.” Make sure you’re familiar with this content.

We also read an excerpt from a [related article](#) from the New York Times, found here.

Please review the article and video for next week!

[Permalink 1 Comment](#)

16 4 / 2012

Midterm Study Guide and Other Resources

Hi everyone,

As promised, here’s the midterm study guide!

[LINK TO STUDY GUIDE DOWNLOAD](#)

In addition to the course packet, available in the copy room, there are a few handouts you should review. Here they are:

[Globalization and the Exchange of Cultural Goods](#)

[Globalization Statistics](#)

[Memes](#)

[Andy Warhol's painting of Marilyn Monroe](#)

And lastly, there are YouTube videos you should review. Here are the links:

[Yo-Yo Ma and Lil' Buck Performance](#)

[The History of Dance](#)

[Permalink 7 Comments](#)

29 3 / 2012

Class Summary

Hi everyone,

This week in class, we discussed the assigned reading from the course packet, two chapters from the book *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. We discussed the characteristics of this new “Digital Generation,” and particularly the way that they consume and create media online. We discussed some examples of this new media, including mashups, remixes, fan fiction, and citizen journalism. We’ll continue to discuss these topics next week.

As a reminder, your journal entries, in which you must write your own version of the “pop culture versus real life” reading we did last week, is due next week. During our next class, we will also discuss the midterm, which will be the week after vacation.

[Permalink 3 Comments](#)

21 3 / 2012

Class Summary and Assignment

Hello everyone,

Yesterday we discussed the articles found in the book *Pop Culture versus Real America*, and contrasted the messages about high and low culture found in the description of Notorious B.I.G.'s career and the classical music students. For your journal assignment this week, I want you to write a similar part of short articles illustrating your own idea of "pop culture versus real life." Each section should be one or two paragraphs. You can use Moroccan or American culture as your subject, and be creative; use our reading as a starting point, but don't just copy the ideas. Keep this question in mind: What are the differences, if any, between pop culture and the actual cultural life of a nation?

[Permalink 0 Comments](#)

09 3 / 2012

Announcement: NO CLASS NEXT WEEK

Hello everyone,

I apologize for entirely forgetting to mention this past week that there will be no class next week. I have to attend a conference in Rabat and will be away. Please spread the word!

[Permalink 0 Comments](#)

04 3 / 2012

Update

Hello everyone,

Because we attended the Dr. Quarmby's lecture on Elizabethan England and the Moroccan Ambassador last week, there is no homework this week.

I've got two announcements:

The course reader for this class, which contains several articles we'll read, is finally available in the copy room. You can make a copy of the entire packet now, or copy individual articles as you need them.

Also, this Tuesday at 1:30 will be a meeting for student's interested in this year's Cultural Day. Please show up at the English office if you'd like to participate!

[Permalink 1 Comment](#)

27 2 / 2012

Last-minute Announcement

Hello everyone,

Tomorrow, I've decided to bring the class to a lecture as part of the faculty's program, "The Global Shakespeare Project." The lecture, by Dr. Kevin Quarmby, will take place at 9:00 am to 10:30 and is entitled " 'With a greedy ear devour up my discourse:' The Moroccan Ambassador at Elizabeth I's Court and his report on Shakespeare's London." Although not directly related to pop culture, this will be an interesting look into the themes of cultural exchange, which we will be discussing.

We will meet at the usual time, and I will pass back, collect, and assign homework. We'll then make our way to the lecture. You are also invited to attend a skype conversation with American students at 2:00 the same day.

[Permalink 0 Comments](#)

22 2 / 2012

Class Recap and Journal Entry 2

Hello everyone,

We had a great, varied class discussion yesterday about the implications of the spread of American pop culture yesterday. Some of the questions we discussed were:

- What is it about American pop culture that appeals to people around the world?
- When genres of American culture, such as hip hop for example, are reworked and adapted in different culture, do they remain American? (One student suggested that the content changes, while the "form" or "structure" remains the same.)
- What are the moral implications of the spread of American culture abroad? Is it harmful to other cultures?
- When certain American genres or styles are adapted throughout the world, can we also call it "globalization" or even "modernization?"

We also discussed an article, found [here](#), that discusses Americans' view on their pop culture and its spread throughout the world. Key facts to know are: Americans are roughly split on whether they view pop culture negatively or positively. However, a large majority are not concerned about its effect on other cultures.

We did a small poll in our class to determine how we think on these issues. Here are the results:

On the question, "Do you view American culture negatively or positively?"

- 18 answered "positively."

- 3 answered “negatively.”
- 8 were undecided.

On the question, “Do you think American pop culture has a negative or positive effect on other cultures?”

- 3 answered “positively.”
- 13 answered “negatively.”
- 12 were undecided.

Based on these results, we see that the class feels generally more positive about American pop culture than Americans, but that they are much more concerned about its effect abroad.

Here is our journal entry for this week. It requires a reading, which can be downloaded [here](#).

Your assignment for this week is to read the handout entitled “Globalization and the Exchange of “Cultural Goods.” I would like you to respond to the main concepts discussed in the excerpt, in one to three paragraphs.

Do you agree with the author’s argument that most non-cultural exchanges are “morally neutral?” Likewise, do you agree that the exchange of cultural goods is “always laden with moral meaning?” Why or why not? You must give one real life example to illustrate your views.

[Permalink](#) [0 Comments](#)

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Language and Society in the U.S



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[May 30, 2012](#)

Final Exam Study Resources

Hi everyone,

As promised, here are the resources you need to study for the final exam.

First, you should refer to [this](#) post, containing all the pre-midterm resources.

Here are the post-midterm resources:

[Final Exam Study Guide](#)

[Video: American Tongues](#)

[Video Clips: American Accents in Movies](#)

Happy studying! Email me if you have questions.

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[May 19, 2012](#)

May 16th Class Recap

Hi everyone,

This week in class, we watched clips of film and television shows that demonstrated various American regional accents, then discussed some of the key characteristics of those accents. Here are the movies - please rewatch them and review your notes!

[Boston accent](#) (Good Will Hunting)

[New York accent](#) (Saturday Night Fever)

[Southern accent](#) (Forrest Gump)

[Midwestern accent](#) (Fargo)

[Chicago accent](#) (Saturday Night Live skit: "Superfans")

Remember next Wednesday, May 23rd, is Cultural Day! We won't have class then, so plan on meeting the following week to discuss the final exam, which will take place on **June 6th at 11:45 pm.**

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[May 2, 2012](#)

May 2nd Class Recap

Hi all,

Here is the video we watched in class today. It's in three sections on YouTube.

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

Your assignment is to answer the following questions on the video for next week:

1. Name some of the historical sources of American accents. Which European and African speech varieties gave rise to which American accents?
2. In which part of the U.S. are regional accents more defined? Why?
3. Name some regionalisms in the United States. Where are the regionalisms from, and what do they mean?
4. Name some stereotypes about certain language varieties (for example, southern accents, New York accents).
5. How are attitudes toward accents apparent in American films and entertainment?
6. What are some of the consequences of speaking a non-standard dialect in the U.S.?

We'll also discuss the answers to the exam next week, so don't forget to bring them with you!

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[April 19, 2012](#)

The Link is Fixed

Apologies for the broken link to the study guide download! It's now fixed.

[0 notes](#) & [1 Comment](#)

[April 18, 2012](#)

Midterm Study Guide and Other Resources

Hi everyone,

Here is the midterm study guide, to help you study for the exam next week.

[LINK TO MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE](#)

Here are some readings to help you study. (The two major readings are available in the copy room. Unfortunately, they're photocopies so I can't post them here!)

[States with Official English Laws](#)

[Linguistic Society of America Statement](#)

[Excerpt from "We have but one language here"](#)

Good luck and email me if you have questions!

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[March 29, 2012](#)

Class Summary and Assignment

Hello everyone,

This week, we discussed the answers to the six questions on the reading "Understanding the American Linguistic Mosaic." We continued to examine the immigration history of the U.S. as it relates to language, and also discussed issues of language maintenance and loss in American language communities. We concluded the class by watching the introduction to the documentary "American Tongues," in preparation for our unit on American dialects.

For next week, please read the Linguistic Society of America's "Declaration of Linguistic Rights," a two page handout. Please also complete the three questions on the handout on language minority communities in the U.S. Both of these readings are available in the copy room.

Also, next week we will discuss the midterm, which will be the week after vacation.

See you next week!

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[March 21, 2012](#)

Class Summary and Journal Assignment #3

Hello everyone,

We began our exploration of American language and society by reviewing the history of colonization and immigration in the U.S. We then turned to the reading you did for last week, entitled "Understanding the American Linguistic Mosaic," and I assigned six questions for the class to answer collectively. If you were in class today, you were part of a group and assigned one question. If you did not attend, simply choose one of the questions below and answer it on your own. As we discussed in class, you are encouraged to discuss your question with your group members, but each one of you is responsible for turning in an original, one- to three-paragraph journal answering the question in your own word.

Here are the questions. Relevant page numbers are listed afterward in parentheses.

- 1) What are the two visions of the United States with regard to language? (pp. 29-30)
- 2) Why does Glazer characterize American civilization as a "potent countermaintenance force?" (p. 31)
- 3) Name and explain two cultural factors in language maintenance. (pp. 32-33)
- 4) Describe the English colonists' attitude toward Native American languages and cultures. (p. 37)
- 5) What were some of the reasons the Irish overcame discrimination in 19th century America? (p. 39)
- 6) Describe the "paradox" in U.S. language policy. (pp. 34-35)

Also, as a reminder, visit culturalday2012.tumblr.com if you are interested in participating in cultural day. Meetings are at 1:00 on Tuesdays.

See you next week!

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[March 20, 2012](#)

Journal Assignment #2

Hello everyone,

During our last class we finished the presentations and began to discuss issues of language and language planning in the U.S. Your journal entry was to imagine you are an American voter asked to comment on proposed legislation to make English the official language of the United States. State whether you support or oppose this law and provide reasons to support your position.

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[March 2, 2012](#)

Class Summary and Extra Info

Hello everyone,

We looked into the topic of social dialects in our last class, and groups of you present on different sections of the article “Language, Society and Culture.” We discussed how an individual’s age, occupation, gender, social class, and ethnicity can affect his or her speech, and how different context cause speakers to alter the style or register of their speech.

The remaining five groups will present at the beginning of class on Thursday. If you haven’t presented yet, be ready and please keep your presentation around five minutes or under.

As promised, here are some resources for you to understand the “Valleygirl” and “Vocal Fry” verbal trends that I mentioned in class

Two videos showing excellent example of the Valleygirl pattern of intonation and vocabulary, as well as some context on its origin in California:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if5XbL2I1Ic>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHf089j19H4>

An [interesting article](#) from the New York Times on women and their role in spreading vocal trends, an [explanation of vocal fry](#), and an [online radio show](#) whose host provides an excellent example of the phenomenon.

For homework this week, make sure you read and understand the six-page reading available in the copyroom, entitled “Understanding the American Linguistic Mosaic.”

Have a good weekend and see you next week!

[0 notes](#) & [0 Comments](#)

[February 26, 2012](#)

Homework for This Week

Hello everyone,

We had another great class discussion last week, reviewing the concepts of overt and covert prestige in the concept of Moroccan society. We also began to review an article that contains many key concepts for this class. Next week, we will begin by having groups present on their section of the article.

Your homework for this week is to answer the “study questions” 1 - 5 on page 198 of the handout. I passed it out in class, so find another student with the article if you were absent this week. See you on Thursday!

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