Module outline

Definitions
- What is popular culture (various definitions)
- Hegemony
- Ideology
- Discourse
Raymond Williams definitions of culture

Three definitions

- Intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic development
  - philosophers, poets, artists

- Culture as a way of life or particular period of time
  - sport, holidays, religious festivals, fan activity

- Works and practices of artistic activity
  - pop music, street dance, ballet, websites
Defining Popular culture

- Well liked by many
- Anything not high culture
- Mass commercially produced culture
- Culture from the people (authentic)
- Struggle between subordinate and dominant groups
- Postmodern culture

How do you know that something is well liked by many people?
Anything Not High Culture

• Have to determine what is High/popular culture
• These classifications may change
• Class distinctions (Bourdieu)
Mass commercial culture

- Popular culture as mass culture
- Commercially produced for mass consumption
- Sees consumption as passive (we can disagree)
- Americanisation – popular culture as American culture
Originating from the People

- Folk/authentic culture
- Who are the people?
- Raw materials themselves are commercially provided
Subordinate v dominant group

- Gramsci – hegemony
- Resistance and incorporation
- Subordinate/dominant/negotiated (discourses/subjectivities)
Hegemonic Theory

- Articulation
  - What we take from pop culture to cement our identity
- Tension in dominant culture
- Hegemonic ideologies are at work in the media

End of Session 1 Part 1
What is Ideology

- Body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people
- Some cultural texts/practices present particular viewpoints
- Conceals the workings of power

Ideology in the practices of everyday life

Barthes – ideology as myth
Discourse

- Power and inequality
- Hall: ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic
- Through discourses we make sense of the world
- Foucault: Subjects do not produce discourses but discourses produce subjects?
Identities

- Essentialist versus non-essentialist definitions of identity
- Identity = who am I
- Different/similar to others, groups of people
- Identity is relational
- We may have multiple identities
- Badges/symbols of our identity
Examples of popular culture and identity

- Food we consume establishes an identity
- What we eat tells a lot about who we are
- All forms of popular culture that do the same:
  - E.g. Music, Fashion, Television, social media, game playing, cosplay, tattoos, religion, shopping etc. — identity
Summary

- Various definitions of popular culture
- Different ways of analysing and understanding popular culture
- Popular culture is not fixed
- Lived cultural practices are important
- Ideology is also a key concept
- We will look at popular cultural texts and popular cultural practices
- Based on student feedback we are also looking at definitions of identity today.
References