ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

2020-2021 FALL

ELL 237 Concepts in Culture

This course looks at patterns of social and intellectual development that fall under the general rubric of culture (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic and social status, history, geography, language), and it explores how sign systems operate, as well as the ideologies and structures of power that underlie different kinds of rituals and representation, from words, gestures, graffiti and advertisements, to art, music, fashion, food, and sports. Selected examples from literature and/or the media—film, television, newspapers and magazines, the Internet—will be studied, in order to understand not only their logic and organization, but also how audience sensibilities but also the ways in which audience sensibilities shape or are shaped by desires and cultural assumptions. Texts may include primary and critical or theoretical works, films and videos, music, and cultural artifacts; topics may range from historical concepts to current issues such as environmental concerns, demographic changes, social problems, or the effects of technology.

**Assessment:** There will be onemidterm and one final examination. In addition to these, students are asked to do a term project, which requires an analysis of an advertisement or series of advertisements that has utilised the COVID- 19 pandemic. This project will be composed of a presentation as well as a fully developed response essay. You may conduct this project as groups of two or alone for the presentation part, but the essays have to be individual and original. There will also be 1-2 short assignments given throughout the term to be graded as quizzes. **Any form of plagiarism or cheating in general in any of these assignments will get you a direct F from the assignment, and an F for the course if it happens twice**.

Midterm Exam 30%

Final Exam 30%

Term project 20%

Assignments 10%

Attendance and participation (with video **and** sound) 10%

**Textbook:** The primary textbook for the course will be Arthur Asa Berger’s *Signs in Contemporary Culture: An Introduction to Semiotics*. Additional material will also be provided. All texts will be made available to you in Pdf format, and you are required to do the reading for the relevant texts each week.

Week 1 Definition of a Sign

 Chapter One “Definition”

Week 2 Chapter Two – How Signs Work

Chapter Three - Signs, Symbols, and Signals

Week 3 Chapter Four – Metaphor: Communication by Analogy

 Chapter Five – Metonymy: Communicating by Using Associations

Week 4 Chapter Eight – Forms of Signs

Chapter Nine - Visual Aspects of Signs

Week 5 Continued

Week 6 Psychoanalytic Theory and Cultural Criticism

Week 7 Sociological Theory and Cultural Criticism

Week 8 Marxism and Cultural Criticism

Case Study: J. Marc Schmidt, “Socio-Political Themes in *The Smurfs*”

Week 9 **Midterm Examination**

Week 10 Sonia Maasik & Jack Solomon, “Brought to you B(u)y: The Signs of Advertising”

Week 11 Jack Solomon, “Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising”

Week 12 Raymond Williams, “Advertising: the Magic System”

Week 13 Student Presentations on how the advertising companies utilise the current pandemic to promote products

Week 14 Gary Cross, “Barbie, G.I. Joe and Play in the 1960s”