UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL - PIETERMARITZBURG
EXAMINATIONS: June 2014 Main
SCHOOL OF LITERARY STUDIES, MEDIA AND CREATIVE ARTS
MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES
COURSE: Introduction to Cultural Studies           Code: MECS 202P1
DURATION: 3 Hours                                      TOTAL MARKS: 100

Internal Examiner(s): Ms. S. Moodley, Ms. F. Jackson
External Examiner(s): Dr. C. Scott

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Students are requested, in their own interests, to write legibly.
2. This question paper consists of SIX pages. Please see that you have them both.
3. This paper consists of 2 SECTIONS. Please ensure that you answer all questions in both sections.
4. Start EACH SECTION in a new booklet.
SECTION A: IDEOLOGY, PUBLIC SPHERE, DISCOURSE AND POWER (40 marks)

Multiple Choice Questions (5 x 2 marks)

For Questions One to Five below, choose the BEST answer from the options provided. Write just the Question number and the identifying letter (a, b, c, d, e) for the option you selected in your answer book.

Question One
The technological development that was key to the rise of the Habermasian public sphere was:

a) The printing press
b) The telegraph
c) The steam engine
d) The steam train
e) All of the above.

Question Two
Which of the following is NOT a principle of Habermas’s idealized conception of the original public sphere:

a) Any rationally made argument could be presented
b) Any culturally educated person could present an argument
c) Any difference of opinion would be resolved through reason
d) Any public issue could be subjected to rational debate
e) Any domestic issue could be raised for public debate.

Question Three
Which of the following would NOT count as an example of a Habermasian understanding of a public sphere:

a) A feudal court
b) An 19th century coffee house
c) An 19th century salon
d) Parliament
e) All of the above.
Question Four
Which of the following is NOT part of Habermas's argument about the decline of the public sphere:

a) Rise of monopolistic capitalism
b) Rise of consumerist public
c) Reblending of state and society
d) Rise of alternative public spheres
e) Splitting of high and mass culture.

Question Five
"Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere...Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society."

The above quotation is by:

a) Gramsci
b) Habermas
c) Foucault
d) Fraser
e) None of the above.

Short Answer Questions
Question Six
Nancy Fraser argues that Habermas's conception of the Public Sphere is ideologically based. Explain why she makes this argument and present the evidence she draws on to make it. Your answer should be about 3/4 to 1 page long (roughly 200-300 words). It should be written in well-organized paragraphs, using full sentences and formal English. (10 marks)
Question Seven
Write a short essay in which you explain Foucault's understanding of power. In your essay consider issues such as:

a) How Foucault argues against a view of power as a thing and for power as an action;

b) Foucault's view that power is productive.

Your answer should be about 1½ to 2 pages long (roughly 400 to 600 words). It should be written in well-organized paragraphs, using full sentences and formal English. (20 marks)

SECTION B: CONSTRUCTING TEXT AND IDENTITY [60 marks]
*For this section, students have the opportunity to improve their marks by drawing on the theoretical discussions dealt with in Section A of the module i.e. issues surrounding ideology, discourse, public sphere, etc.

Question Eight
Why is the concept of 'grand narrative' rejected by postmodern theory? Your response, approximately 1 page, must provide both a definition of the concept and examples from contemporary society to support your discussion. (9 marks)

Question Nine
The effect of postmodernity on the media has been characterized by:

- a diversification of the media
- an increasingly visual culture
- meaning saturation
- contestation over meaning

Explain, in 1½ pages, how these characteristics together contribute to a 'society of spectacle'. (12 marks)
Question Ten
Explain, in 1 page, what is meant by the ‘experience’ of postmodernity. Refer specifically to:
- the notion of a 3 minute culture
- the expense of memory
- the pace of change

(9 marks)

Question Eleven
Referring to at least 3 of the 6 stills provided below, explain why the film *District 9* (Blomkamp, 2009) can be described as a postmodern text. Your response, between 2 – 3 pages in length, must illustrate how the following stylistic devices employed in the film contribute to the postmodern concerns of fragmentation, reflexivity and social comment:
- disrupted narrative structure
- reinterpretation of genre/s
- intertextuality

(30 marks)