

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
SIMPON FRASER UNIVERSITY
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS FOR ANIL NARINE**

Committee: Kirsten McAllister (senior supervisor); Zoë Druick (supervisor)

Delivered: April 19th 2007 1PM

Due: April 26th 2007 1PM

(hardcopies and email copies to McAllister, Druick and Denise Vanderwolf)

Oral Examination: April 11th 12:30, Room K8648

FOUR QUESTIONS IN TOTAL; 2500-3000 words each

.....
Comprehensive #1

Trauma and Representation

Answer two of the following questions:

1. Distinguish the experience of trauma from traumatic imagery that circulates in popular culture. For subjects who have not experienced the traumatic events presented in documentaries, mainstream dramatic films, news programs and popular television shows, what is "traumatic" about viewing the images?
2. Paying attention to the dynamics of production, distribution and presentation as well as the social and institutional practices of viewing, select three media from the lists below. Discuss the ramifications of their differences for the representation and public circulation of traumatic experiences and events.

Select one of the following:

Dramatic Film
Documentaries

Select two of the following:

Photography
Art Installations
Testimonies
Memorials

3. Describe the main issues and debates regarding the *ethics* of production, representation and viewing traumatic experiences and events in relation to "commodification," "therapeutic healing," "education" and "bearing witness." In the conclusion, reflect on the implications for your own ethics of writing about and researching trauma.
4. Both "silences" about as well as the representation of violent and dehumanizing events contribute to the formation of collective identities and

cultures. This is the case for, on the one hand, (1) societies where the state has sanctioned violence against certain groups, and on the other hand, (2) amongst the victims.

In this context, compare and contrast the critiques of the ways that the American media and state institutions have represented 9/11 (or other traumatic events) to the critiques of the ways that politically persecuted groups have represented their experiences of persecution.

Do the strategies differ? Do the results for their collective identities differ? What is at stake for each group? Discuss how the political struggles within each of these groups as well as global media flows complicate the process.

Comprehensive #2

Popular Culture and Citizenship

Answer two of the following:

1. In the 20th century, Marxism was a crucial discourse within studies of popular culture. Yet there are many nuances and differences between theorists and schools. Choose three of the following thinkers and compare their positions on popular culture and politics:
 - a) Theodor Adorno
 - b) Raymond Williams
 - c) Fredric Jameson
 - d) Guy Debord
 - e) Roland Barthes
 - f) Mikhail Bakhtin

Conclude your comparison by providing an assessment of the significance of Marxism today for studies of popular culture.

2. How would you teach the genealogy of "cultural studies" to a third year undergraduate class? Include, for example, the following:
 - a) A description of the course that would .
 - b) Outline the key readings and debates with which you think the students should be familiar.
 - c) Provide a detailed description of the types of assignments you would give them, including, for example, the learning outcomes and an explanation of how the assignments would be designed to fulfill the learning outcomes.
 - d) For each week, provide a list of the readings, an outline of the lecture topics and goals.

How would you teach the course so they could understand and appreciate the complexities of the historical and contemporary controversies (including the political and social controversies) that cultural studies has provoked in the academy?

3. How do the museum and the cinema operate as institutional sites of both citizenship and pleasure in everyday life? What theories have been most useful, in your assessment, for understanding them?
4. How have the city and the mass media, particularly television, operated as imperfect yet necessary public spaces or spheres in the modern period? What kind of citizenship does each invite or allow for? Paying particular attention to the interplay of official and vernacular cultures or "landscapes," discuss the points of contact between virtual and physical environments, the media and the modern city.