

# CST 612-01: Voices of Power

Fall 2008

CRN 82363

W 6:00-8:50 p.m., Curry 331

## **Dr. Roy Schwartzman (Dr. Roy)**

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## Office Hours:

M 12:00- 1:30, W 11:00-12:30

and by appointment

## **Course Purpose**

This course probes the ways that power infuses areas of life that people often uncritically take for granted as arenas for free play and enjoyment. We concentrate on the foundations, methods, and repercussions broadly known as ideology critique, defined as the systematic uncovering and responding to the values of particular interests presented as universally or unconditionally valid. Ideology critique provides a tool to reveal and resist repressive forces that infuse the domain on pleasure.

The Communication Studies Department mission is: “We research, teach, and practice communication to cultivate the ethical voices of people that speak in critical, constructive, and transformative ways to identities, relationships, and communities.” Consistent with this mission, this course equips you to recognize how artifacts associated with pleasure influence and are influenced by the power structures inherent in relationships and community activities. We explore ways that power can be systematically deconstructed and reformulated in ways that liberate silenced or marginalized perspectives. This course strives to realize one of the department’s taglines “the power of voices” by critically analyzing and responding to the voices of power in public discourse.

## **Course Objectives**

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- comprehend and apply in communication contexts the theoretical perspectives arising from Marxism, the Frankfurt School, and major theorists influenced by those teachings;
- engage in critical dialogues regarding the ways power infuses recreational objects and activities;
- recognize how everyday activities and practices reflect and structure relations of social power;
- recover the voices and perspectives that are suppressed, ignored, or marginalized by dominant social constructions;
- research and employ primary source material to craft your own perspectives on how systematic repression operates and how to uproot it.

## **Textbooks**

Our readings will be from primary source materials (journal articles and books) that will be placed on eReserve, hard copy reserve, and linked via our Blackboard course site. To develop your research skills, you are expected to locate and obtain (print or download) some journal articles via the Jackson Library electronic databases. The complete reading list is posted

separately on Blackboard. In cases where we cover large sections of a book, you may choose to purchase the purchase the entire book. Amazon.com is often the most rapid, cost-effective means of buying books you choose to purchase.

### Instructional Methods

We are participating in a graduate-level seminar. That means everyone will share the responsibility of coming to class fully prepared and ready to shoulder responsibility for keeping discussion going. A seminar also means that you collaborate fully with your classmates and professor in and beyond class, actively seeking opportunities to discuss, challenge, and test ideas. Consider our seminar as an intellectual incubator. A graduate seminar is a proving ground for testing creative ideas. I will strive within the bounds of legality and morality to engage you intellectually and to provide a safe, stimulating environment for creative thought. Class sessions will be highly interactive, with students as well as the professor responsible for generating and sustaining lively interactions. We will push ideas to their limits, rigorously exploring implications and applications. My role is that of a Socratic gadfly: to prod you toward going beyond uncritical assumptions and to extend your cognitive capabilities. Prepare to operate beyond your intellectual “comfort zone” by being ready for new ideas. That means you should arrive at every class meeting equipped to ask/answer questions and offer original insights relevant to the course material.

A *vital* component of our course is the electronic collection of resources housed on the Blackboard course site. You are expected to:

- Check our course site regularly by logging in to <https://blackboard.uncg.edu>
- ALL course documents are housed on that site—no paper copies of the syllabus, assignment guidelines, readings, or other documents will be distributed.
- Maintain a properly functioning, current e-mail address. E-mail is the only way I can communicate regularly and efficiently to you beyond class. Make sure your e-mail address is listed correctly in Blackboard, since all class-wide e-mails will be sent through the Blackboard system. Blackboard defaults to your UNCG student e-mail (eSpartan) account. I strongly recommend you keep that account as your Blackboard e-mail setting and [check your UNCG e-mail at least once each day](#). (Various other e-mail systems—notably Hotmail—have a record of incompatibility with Blackboard. Don’t take that risk!) Remember—CHECK YOUR E-MAIL!

### Special Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Disability Services located at 215 Elliott University Center (<http://www.uncg.edu/ods>; 334-5440). Accommodations will be made only for students who have documented special needs through the Office of Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services can refer you to appropriate diagnostic testing as well as document existing needs. To assure your needs are met, please register with Disability Services as early as possible.

### Assignments and Grading Scale

#### Course Grading Scale

A+ = 971+	A = 931-970	A- = 900-930
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B+ = 871-899	B = 831-870	B- = 800-830
C+ = 771-799	C = 731-770	C- = 700-730
D+ = 671-699	D = 631-670	D- = 600-630
F = < 600		

Grades are based on points earned, not percentages. (Blackboard displays both, so pay attention to the points.) Grades are posted in the Blackboard gradebook as soon as they are tabulated for each assignment. Late work is penalized at least letter grade per day late (weekends and holidays included). Remember that grades are the result, not the objective, of your efforts.

### Summary of Assignments

Discussion Leader	200 points
Midterm Exam	250 points
Research Paper Proposal	25 points
Peer Review	50 points
Research Paper	400 points
<u>Daily Exercises/Participation</u>	<u>75 points</u>
Total	1000 points

**Brief Description of Assignments** (Painstakingly detailed guidelines will be available on Blackboard in the <Assignments> content item. ALL assignments should be submitted as hard copies unless instructed otherwise.)

- **Discussion Leader**  
Become the resident experts on a theory/theorist and associated concepts, guiding the class through applying it to one or more specific examples. Guidelines include a list of key concepts and themes to cover. The written component is a 2-5 page paper based on at least 5 scholarly sources (not Wikipedia or Uncle Goober's web page).
- **Midterm Exam**  
All short answer/essay, administered via Blackboard. You will have a 3-4 day window of availability. The midterm questions will be taken directly from the study guide posted on Blackboard at least one week in advance.
- **Research Paper Proposal**  
You construct a formal prospectus detailing your plan for the research paper, including an annotated bibliography.
- **Peer Review**  
Provide a thorough, detailed constructive critique of a classmate's research paper draft. This review process mirrors the procedure used in selecting papers for publication and presentation.
- **Research Paper**  
Develop an original, research-based paper suitable for publication or professional conference presentation. (Note: My students have a strong record of publication and presentation in professional venues, which I will continue to encourage.)
- **Daily Exercises/Participation**  
You earn points by completing mini-tasks related to course content. Example: Tour the UNCG campus and prepare a critique of how spatial design enables and inhibits creative physical activity (using Certeau's critical methods).

### Attendance

I'd like the course to proceed so that you will *want* to attend. You should look forward to learning material that you can apply immediately when you walk out of the classroom. I assume that you are an adult ready to accept responsibility. It is your responsibility to attend class. You are ALWAYS responsible for material covered, assigned, or performed whether you are in class or not on any particular day. This responsibility includes orientation to course policies. If you add the class late, please meet with me as soon as possible to catch up on what you missed.

This is a graduate-level course that meets only once per week. Attendance for the entire duration of every class meeting is expected. Each absence beyond the equivalent of one full class meeting will result in a 5% deduction from your course grade. A tardy (late arrival or early departure) is equivalent to half an absence; tardies of more than half a class period count as a full absence. If special circumstances require an exception, please meet with me as soon as possible so we can arrange proper accommodations.

The only four legitimate reasons for absence are: (1) mandatory religious obligations, (2) personal illness, (3) personal emergency, (4) official activities where you are representing the university (e.g., academic conferences). All of these reasons are documentable. An absence or tardy due to any of the documented reasons listed above must be cleared with your professor prior to the absence/tardy. If that is not possible, the absence or tardy should be cleared no later than one class period after the absence or tardy is incurred. That is the statute of limitations on absences. Providing excuses several days or weeks after an absence or tardy carries no weight. I am not obligated to consider excuses presented after the statute of limitations. Notification of an absence does not guarantee that the absence will be excused.

### **Academic Honesty**

It is the responsibility of everyone in the UNCG community to understand and uphold the university's Academic Honor policy. All students should become familiar with the Honor policy by reading the appropriate sections of the current *UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *UNCG Policies for Students*. You will sign or (in the case of electronic work) assent to a statement of academic integrity for all major work submitted in this course. Violation of the Honor Policy will result in full and appropriate penalty.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. All students must do their own work to maximize their learning experience. To submit a paper, oral presentation, electronic assignment, or any item that is in part or in whole the work of another unaccredited person is plagiarism. Students found guilty of plagiarism will be penalized to the fullest appropriate extent of university regulations and be reported under the guidelines on academic dishonesty found in the current *Undergraduate Bulletin*.

To avoid plagiarism, those who use words or ideas (including spoken, printed, electronically retrieved, or recorded sources) from another person's work must document the source.

To document a direct quotation, writers must:

1. include quotation marks around the material or indent it within the text to indicate their use of the source;
2. provide parenthetical notation indicating the date (required), page number (if available); and
3. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either in the introduction to the quotation or within the parenthetical citation.

To document a direct quotation in an oral presentation, speakers must:

1. say the word "quote" to verbally replace written quotation marks; and

2. include the name of the author (if available) or the title (if no author is given) either immediately before or after the quotation; and
3. outline oral presentations consistent with the above rules for written material.

Instead of quoting writers or speakers, you may paraphrase the facts and ideas of others by fully digesting the concepts, then stating them in your own words and sentence structure; but you must still credit the sources as in the above notes.

### **Style Statement**

This course requires usage of the APA (American Psychological Association) style as described in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for all materials submitted for academic credit. Use of another style may result in a reduced grade. APA citation guidelines may be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Other citation/formatting styles may be used only with advance approval of the professor.