

Culture/Politics: graduate and junior-faculty conf. on British Studies (Berkeley, 28–29 Jan. 2005)

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British Studies, UC Berkeley, January 2005

Culture/Politics

Graduate and Junior-Faculty Conference on British Studies
Center for British Studies, University of California at Berkeley
January 28-29, 2005.

Special workshops by:

- Frank Mort (Professor of Cultural History at the University of Manchester)
- Lynda Nead (Professor of History of Art at Birkbeck College at the University of London)
- Becky Conekin (Senior Research Fellow at London College of Fashion)
- Jed Esty (Assistant Professor of English at University of Illinois).

Recent decades have witnessed the increasing interest in, and problematization of "culture" and "politics" as heterogeneous analytical domains. Across the humanities and the social sciences, scholarly dissatisfaction with the privileged position of the social and the accepted understandings of the political led to various familiar 'turns,' methodological shifts, and a resurgence of interest in theory and criticism. The scale of these transformations was colossal.

Today the encounter of "culture" and "politics" continues to raise pressing questions, as, for instance, in the recent exchange in *New Left Review* between Francis Mulhern and Stefan Collini: premised on a set of detours from, and returns to, the "culture and society" tradition of British intellectual history, the debate provides a new occasion to address the terms of its own construction—not just "culture" and "politics," but the impinging notions of "history," "literature," "criticism," "society," the "intellectual," the "nation," the "aesthetic," and so on. It is also a debate that obliges

scholars across the disciplines to re-conceive of their own objects of inquiry, and to view today's intellectual work as actively participating in the construction of "culture" and "politics" as meaning-bearing concepts.

This conference seeks to explore the culture-politics nexus in modern and contemporary British history. It aims to do so by bringing together graduate students and junior-faculty from across the disciplines whose empirical work operates in, or seek to problematize the culture-politics nexus and the myriad ways in which it is approached. To what extent does British history **happen** in the breach between cultural and political fields, and how might this reconfigure the received categories of historical research? How has the culture/politics complex worked to make sense of the conditions of modernity? How have desires to preserve and/or collapse the distinction between culture and politics shaped the protocols of modern British studies broadly conceived?

Rather than mere theoretical reflection, we particularly invite empirically-grounded work which engages these issues at the level of particular historical and/or textual operations.

Proposed papers are welcome from across the disciplines, such as, but not limited to: history, literary studies, the history of art, sociology, women's studies, anthropology, political science, film studies, queer studies, architecture, geography, economics, health studies, and legal studies. Papers may address, but should not be limited to, issues ranging from histories of gender and sexuality; history of science; mechanisms of government and governmentality; liberalism and its alternatives; Brits and "others"; immigration; Britain and its empire; foreign policy; health and the body; leisure; representation and the literary imagination; popular culture, music, and cinema; "north" and "south"; the social and its investigators; work and workers; war and British society.

Special guests: The conference will include special workshops and seminars, with pre-circulated material, by distinguished scholars (listed above) whose work has significantly contributed to some of the ways in which these questions have been framed and understood.

Proposals for panels and single papers are welcome, but we also highly encourage proposals for unorthodox formats such as round-table discussions, seminars, screenings and performances.

*Deadline: October 1, 2004

*Proposals should be sent to: culturepolitics@hotmail.com

Individual proposals should include a one-page abstract and CV. Panel proposals should include names and CVs of all participants, abstracts of individual papers (and brief panel summary), and all audio-visual and/or other special requirements.

Questions and inquiries to either Daniel Ussishkin (ussishki@socrates.berkeley.edu) or Ben Graves (bgraves@uclink4.berkeley.edu.)

Ben Graves (Department of English, UC Berkeley)

Daniel Ussishkin (Department of History, UC Berkeley)

Co-Organizers

Reference:

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