

Journalism 6010
Cultural Studies in Communication
Fall 2005
Midterm Question

In “What is Enlightenment?” Kant argues that “nothing is required for...enlightenment...except freedom; and the freedom in question is...the freedom to use reason publicly in all matters” (p. 42). Berlin shows that reactions against Kant’s ideal of reason, and its implication of objectivity, rationality and universality, typically embrace some conception of culture.

We might think of Marx, Gramsci, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Barthes as working within the enlightenment tradition to the extent that they link freedom to public reason. At the same time, they are also counter-enlightenment figures to the extent that they see some role for culture in the development of public reason in modern society.

In 5-7 type-written, double-spaced pages, **I would like you to compare and contrast their conceptions of culture and how they see culture’s role in the advancement and inhibition of public reason.**

A hint: all of the authors view culture through the lens of ideology.

Your discussion should **NOT** take the form of a laundry list of similarities and differences, or a simple recitation of each author’s views. Instead, I would like you to organize your response **in the form of an argument**. This means that you must fashion a thesis statement that makes a central point. This central point ought to make a claim about how these authors compare and differ on the question at hand. It should be elaborated in a set of categories/key terms. These categories/terms ought then to form the basis for organization of the body of your paper, where you provide evidence in support of your major claim.

When quoting a particular author, always introduce the quote “As Gramsci says...” And then cite the quote in the following way: As Gramsci says, ... “(page #).

Also, pay very close attention to grammar and style issues in your writing. Your paper ought to be polished, with few grammatical errors or stylistic issues. If you feel concerned about such issues, you might consult the following website, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> which has a wealth of information on typical grammar problems etc.

I will evaluate your papers according to the following criteria: **Accuracy**: have you accurately interpreted the authors’ ideas? **Comprehensiveness**: have you considered the full range of issues put into play by your argument? **Cogency**: have you organized your paper in a reasonable and persuasive manner? **Grammar**: is your writing fluid and relatively free of grammatical errors?