

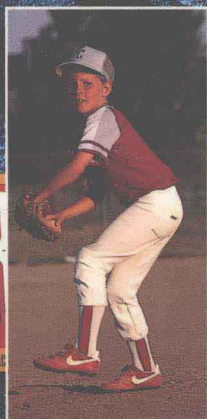
INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION Instructor's Manual Included

DIANA GEORGE • JOHN TRIMBUR

# READING CULTURE

CONTEXTS FOR CRITICAL READING AND WRITING

SECOND EDITION

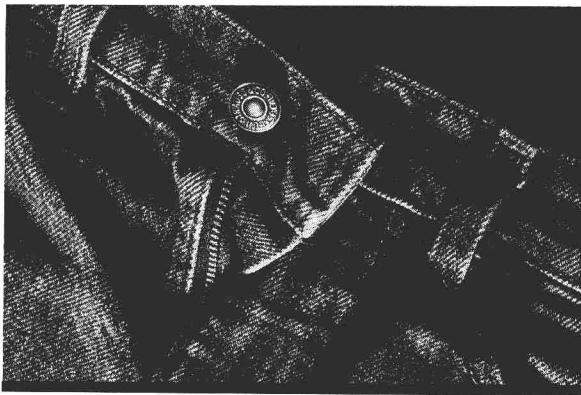


PROFESSIONAL  
EDITION

NOT FOR  
SALE



# READING CULTURE



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SECOND EDITION

**DIANA GEORGE**

Michigan Technological University

**JOHN TRIMBUR**

Worcester Polytechnic Institute



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## **Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing**

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION



*Reading Culture* is a textbook that asks students to read and write about everyday life in contemporary America. It asks students to look at culture as a way of life that organizes social experience and shapes the identities of individuals and groups. We will be using the term *culture* in this textbook to talk about how people make sense of their worlds and about the values, beliefs, and practices in which they invest their energies and allegiances. One of our central aims is to provide students with reading and writing assignments that will enable them to identify the social patterns and emotional investments in their familiar ways of life and to understand how these ways of life fit into the diverse, mass-mediated, multicultural realities of contemporary America.

*Reading Culture* assumes that students are already immersed in a wealth of cultural data and that their experiences of everyday life can usefully be brought to attention as material for reflection and deliberation. The reading and writing assignments in *Reading Culture* are designed to promote a critical distancing so that students can begin to observe and evaluate as well as participate in the everyday life of contemporary America. To this end, *Reading Culture* asks students to read in a double sense. First, the range of writing about culture we have assembled here asks students to read carefully and critically, to identify the purposes and assumptions writers bring to the study of culture and the rhetorical patterns they use to enact their aims. Second, *Reading Culture* asks students to read the social world around them, to identify the patterns of meaning in the commonplace, and to put into words the familiar experiences of everyday life that often go without saying.

*Reading Culture* is organized into eleven chapters. The first chapter, "Reading and Writing About Culture: Music," provides both a general introduction to the study of culture and a case study of rap music. The reading selections in the case study offer background information and differing editorial positions. They serve to illustrate how writing about culture seeks to influence public opinion. The case study also includes a step-by-step sequence of reading and writing activities that introduce students to a number of useful reading strategies—underlining, annotating, and summarizing—and writing strategies—exploratory writing, synthesis, and deliberative judgment.

The ten chapters that form the main part of *Reading Culture* are arranged under a number of broad topics. The two chapters "Generations" and

“Schooling” explore the personal experience of growing up and learning in contemporary America. The next group of chapters, “Images,” “Style,” “Television Culture,” and “Public Space,” explore the visual world in which students learn how values and institutions are conveyed in popular media as well as in clothing and hair styles and even the ways in which we organize public spaces. In the chapters that remain, “Storytelling,” “Work,” “History,” and “Multicultural America,” students can investigate how the narratives Americans tell about themselves and those that are told about them come to be part of national mythmaking.

We have chosen the reading selections presented here—many of them anthologized for the first time—to provide students with a range of provocative and engaging approaches to the study of culture. The readings include selections from newspaper and magazine journalism, literary essays, memoirs, textbooks, academic books and articles, oral histories, fiction, and songs.

*Reading Culture* is designed to be used flexibly and creatively. Instructors may wish to ask students to work on the chapters in *Reading Culture* as they are arranged, but this is only one possible order. In the Alternate Contents, we have classified the reading selections in terms of genre and rhetorical modes, and the Instructor’s Manual suggests ways to pair or group readings across chapters.

Each reading selection is introduced by a headnote that provides a context for reading and a Suggestion for Reading that directs students to notice particular themes or rhetorical features in the selection. The reading selections are followed by Suggestions for Discussion that raise issues for students to talk about in class or in small collaborative groups. The Suggestions for Writing ask students to consider a range of angles on the issues presented in the reading selection. Typically these writing assignments ask students to interpret a key point or passage in the reading selection, to relate the reading selection to their own experience, and to connect the reading to other readings and to the cultural realities of contemporary America. The Instructor’s Manual contains additional resources instructors may wish to draw upon and further suggestions for writing and research activities.

## Acknowledgements

There are a number of people we want to thank for their insight and advice. Robert Schwegler deserves credit for helping us conceptualize this project. Joseph Trimmer explained how to make a textbook and offered useful suggestions as a reviewer and as a friend. Constance Rajala made us believe that the project was worth doing. Our editor Marisa L'Heureux has been both supportive and acute in her advice and admonitions. Patricia Rossi brought the book to its final form. We appreciate, as well, the careful readings we received at several stages by the many reviewers of this book: Dana Beckelman, *University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*; James Berlin, *Purdue University*; Patrick Bizzaro, *East Carolina University*; Jean Carr, *University of Pittsburgh*; John Dick, *University of Texas at El Paso*; Lester Faigley, *University of Texas, Austin*; Donald Gray, *Indiana University*; Sally Harrold, *Southwest Oregon Community College*; David Jolliffe, *University of Illinois at Chicago*; Lisa McClure, *Southern Illinois University*; Christina Murphy, *Texas Christian University*; Thomas Recchio, *University of Connecticut*; Karen Rodis, *Dartmouth College*; Jeff Schiff, *Columbia College*; John Schilb, *University of Maryland*; Charles Schuster, *University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*; Joe Trimmer, *Ball State University*; and Richard Zbaracki, *Iowa State University*; Reviewers of the second edition were Diane Crotty, *University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh*; Kathy Evertz, *University of Wyoming*; David J. Knauer, *Northern Illinois University*; Lori Ann Miller, *University of California, Irvine*; Michael W. Munley, *Ball State University*; Richard Penticoff, *University of Idaho*; and Rebecca Shapiro, *Purdue University*.

Others have helped as well. Stephen Jukuri, who takes his teaching very seriously, dug through attics to find resources for this second edition and asked his students to help us revise this text. For their kind words and good advice, we do thank them. Bill Williamson took time from his own schedule to make sure that we met our press deadlines. We want to thank Bill Baller for help with the readings on the Vietnam War and Bruce Herzberg and members of the English Department at Bentley College for a helpful discussion of composition readers and multicultural education. Robert Crooks provided us with particularly useful and detailed suggestions.

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Finally, with respect and sadness, we wish to thank Jim Berlin for convincing us that this project was not simply worthwhile but necessary. He taught the earliest versions of *Reading Culture* and helped us see what was useful and what was not. We will miss him, but we will also try to keep his voice of encouragement and healthy skepticism with us as we write and teach.

Diana George  
John Trimbur



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