Critical and cultural studies represent a radical and subversive intervention in the academy because of their basic goal of troubling the term “culture” and linking it to social power and the construction and dissemination of knowledge. General Overviews. Because both critical theory and cultural studies have extensive histories in the study of communication, a number of books provide good overarching guides to the developments in these fields. Some of these comprehensive overviews trace the evolution of these theoretical fields (e.g., Agger 1992, Kellner 1989) while others offer analyses of t