

CLASS #: 11486/87
SECTION #: 1009/10

**INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE
POPC 1600, Spring 2014**

MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS, 10.30 – 11.20 (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ANNEX 1010)

INSTRUCTOR: YANNICK KLUCH **OFFICE:** 8F IN HANNA HALL (BASEMENT)
YKLUCH@BGSU.EDU **HOURS:** TUESDAY, 2.30 PM – 4.30 PM
419.372.5450 (OFFICE)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce you to a variety of critical approaches used in the study of popular culture. Although this course will draw on your familiarity with popular culture, we will approach the subject from a scholarly perspective. The overall objective is to explore how popular culture, in all its various forms, not only reflects the world around us but also how it influences the way we perceive the world. Every day we are exposed to thousands of images, sounds and experiences that we understand as natural – as just the way the world is. But this everyday life we take for granted is anything but natural. It is both the product and the creator of a shared worldview. We will examine a wide range of subjects (such as film, television, music, advertising, the internet, and geography) using a wide range of critical approaches (such as genre theory, gender studies, semiotics, and political economy), so we can better understand how contemporary American culture shapes our lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Explore the connection between popular culture and social values
 - Improve communication skills by reading about, writing about, and discussing popular culture
 - Understand the role of popular culture and the way it reflects and influences culture and society
 - Examine the social and cultural context of popular culture products and practices
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Various articles available through the class' Canvas site.
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GRADING SCALE:

- A = 900-1000 pts; B = 800-899 pts; C = 700-799 pts; D = 600-699 pts; F = 0-599 pts
 - Total points for the course = 1000
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Please note: All assignments written outside of class must be submitted via Canvas, and will be run through the TurnItIn plagiarism detection service.

100 pts Participation and attendance

- 50 pts = participation: class discussions, group work or other small assignments
- 50 pts = attendance (taken at every class)

50 pts **Essay Proposal:** 2 pages max. (12 pt font, standard margins, MLA format),
DUE: Monday, March 24th

The point of this essay proposal is twofold:

- 1) To encourage you to start thinking about and researching your chosen topic early.
- 2) It allows me to give you feedback at an early stage – to suggest sources, different perspectives and/or to warn of potential problem areas.

The essay proposal must include:

- A clear statement of your topic and the theoretical approach you will use.
- A rough outline of your thesis (what you will be arguing/proving) and line of argumentation.

50 pts **Annotated Bibliography** (12 pt font, standard margins), *DUE: Monday, March 24th*

You are required to submit an annotated bibliography along with your essay proposal. An annotated bibliography is a list of sources you might use in your paper. Each source has to be listed as a MLA works cited list entry and has to be briefly summarized. You must have a minimum of five sources in your annotated bibliography. You must have at least one book (or a chapter or an essay from a book) included, and you must include at least one article from an academic journal. NO internet sources are allowed. Please staple your annotated bibliography to your essay proposal.

Each of your five entries should include:

- A correctly formatted MLA works cited list entry for the source.
- At least one sentence summarizing the specific main ideas of the source (thesis/main arguments).
- At least one sentence explaining how you plan to use the source in your essay.

50 pts **Instructor Meeting**

In week 11 and 12, you will be required to schedule a ten minute meeting with your instructor. This brief meeting is designed to provide you with individual feedback about your essay proposal and your general progress in the course.

100 pts **Essay:** 5 pages minimum (12 pt font, standard margins, MLA format),
DUE: Wednesday, April 9th

For this essay you are required to select a specific aspect of popular culture (tv show, film, sports team, music artist etc.) for analysis. How does this element of popular culture shape the way we understand the world around us? The aspect of popular culture may be anything you find interesting – historical, contemporary, media based, subcultural etc. You may not, however, simply repeat an argument made in class or in the readings. A hard copy of this essay is due in class, not by email. A digital copy of your paper must also be uploaded to Turnitin.com. Failure to upload your essay to turnitin.com will result in a failing grade for this assignment (0 points).

Example essay topics: Gender Values in *Justin Bieber* songs; *Captain America* and Globalization; Beauty Ideals and Sexuality in *One Tree Hill*; The Hegemonic Belief of “The One” in *How I Met Your Mother*; etc.

You must have an original thesis and you must use at least three scholarly sources – no internet sources are allowed! If you need help finding research material, please see me and I will try to suggest some starting places.

150 pts

Response Quizzes

Response quizzes will be given at the start of eight random class sessions. Each quiz will be in essay format and will be about the readings assigned for class that day (if quiz is given Monday or Wednesday) or that week (if quiz is given Friday). The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure everyone comprehends the readings and is going to class prepared to discuss them. Eight quizzes will be given but only your top five scores will count towards your grade. Each quiz is worth 30 points.

150 pts

Mid-Term Exam 1 (Date: Monday, February 17th)

150 pts

Mid-Term Exam 2 (Date: Friday, April 4th)

200 pts

Final Exam (Date: Tuesday, May 6th, 08.30 – 10.30 AM)**C L A S S S C H E D U L E**

WEEK 1	
1/13	INTRODUCTIONS
1/15	WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE AND WHY STUDY IT?
1/17	FORMS OF POPULAR CULTURE
WEEK 2	
1/20	MLK DAY - BGSU CLOSED
1/22	INTRODUCTION TO SEMIOTICS
1/24	SEMIOTIC READINGS: THE MEANING OF OBJECTS READING: "THE SEMIOTICS OF HOME DÉCOR" "SEEN THROUGH ROSE-TINTED GLASSES: THE BARBIE DOLL IN AMERICAN SOCIETY"
WEEK 3	
1/27	SIGNS OF CONSUMPTION READING: "CAREFUL, YOU MIGHT RUN OUT OF PLANET"
1/29	CULTURAL ECONOMY: MARXISM READING: "MARXISM IN A NUTSHELL"
1/31	THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL: CULTURE INDUSRTY READING: "THE SIGNS OF SHOPPING"
WEEK 4	
2/3	CONSUMPTION AND LEISURE READING: "HYPE" "THE ADDICTIVE VIRUS"
2/5	HEGEMONY: INTRODUCTION READING: "WHAT DO WOMEN WATCH?"
2/7	WORKSHOP: IDENTIFYING HEGEMONIC BELIEFS
WEEK 5	
2/10	INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION & AMERICANIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE READING: "GLOBALIZATION AND POPULAR CULTURE" (CHAPTER 10 IN POPULAR CULTURE: A USER'S GUIDE: SECOND EDITION), READ PGS. 321 – 325
2/12	PERCEPTION OF GLOBALIZATION READING:

	<p>“AMERICAN TELEVISION IN EUROPE” “GLOBALIZATION AND POPULAR CULTURE” (CHAPTER 10 IN POPULAR CULTURE: A USER’S GUIDE: SECOND EDITION), READ PGS. 335 – 339</p>
2/14	REVIEW FOR 1. MID-TERM EXAM
WEEK 6	
2/17	1. MID-TERM EXAM
2/19	SCREENING: GENDER STUDIES
2/21	<p>GENDER STUDIES: WOMEN READING: “UNREALISTIC BODY IMAGES” “GENDER ROLE BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES”</p>
WEEK 7	
2/24	<p>GENDER STUDIES: MEN READING: “MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL ...” “BEER COMMERCIALS: A MANUAL ON MASCULINITY”</p>
2/26	<p>WORKSHOP: GENDER IN POPULAR CULTURE READING: BRING MAGAZINE OF YOUR CHOICE</p>
2/28	<p>THE BODY AND SEXUALITY READING: “THE GENDER OF SEXUALITY” “THE BEAUTY MYTH”</p>
WEEK 8	
3/3	<p>RACE AND ETHNICITY READING: “BEING AN OTHER” “SELLING HOT PUSSY”</p>
3/5	<p>CLASS AND IDENTITY READING: “CLASS AND VIRTUE”</p>
3/7	<p>STEREOTYPES IN POPULAR CULTURE READING: “SELF-FULFILLING STEREOTYPES”</p>
WEEK 9	
3/10	SPRING BREAK - BGSU CLOSED 3/10—3/14
3/12	
3/14	
WEEK 10	
3/17	ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP
3/19	<p>GENRE THEORY READING: “THE WESTERN”</p>
3/21	<p>THE HORROR GENRE READING: “MONSTER MOVIES: A SEXUAL THEORY” “WHY WE CRAVE HORROR MOVIES”</p>
WEEK 11	
3/24	<p>THE SUPERHERO GENRE READING: “SUPERHERO WORSHIP”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ESSAY PROPOSALS & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE</p>
3/26	SCREENING: TEEN DRAMA SERIES
3/28	<p>THE TEEN DRAMA SERIES GENRE READING:</p>

	"HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: NOTES ON TEEN MOVIES"
WEEK 12	
3/31	REALITY TV READING: "VOTING DEMOCRACY OFF THE ISLAND"
4/2	REVIEW FOR 2. MID-TERM EXAM
4/4	2. MID-TERM EXAM
WEEK 13	
4/7	HEROES AND CULTURAL VALUES READING: "WHAT MAKES SUPERMAN SO DARNED AMERICAN?" "THE THEMATIC PARADIGM"
4/9	CELEBRITIES AND CULTURAL VALUES <i>FINAL ESSAYS DUE</i>
4/11	SUBCULTURES AND COUNTER-CULTURES READING: "GOTH: SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL, THE CURE, AND THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS" "SHE RIPS WHEN SHE SKATES: FEMALE SKATEBOARDERS AS ..."
WEEK 14	
4/14	FANDOM READING: "HARRY POTTER AND FAN FIC"
4/16	AUDIENCES AND RECEPTION THEORY
4/18	SCREENING: "PROM NIGHT IN KANSAS CITY"
WEEK 15	
4/21	RITUALS AND CEREMONIES READING: "THE SHOCK OF EDUCATION: HOW COLLEGE CORRUPTS"
4/23	NEW MEDIA: PARTICIPATORY CULTURE AND VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES READING: "THE INTERNET – EVERYTHING BAD IS GOOD FOR YOU" "CYBERHOOD VS. NEIGHBORHOOD"
4/25	POSTMODERNISM READING: "THE SIMPSONS: ATOMISTIC POLITICS AND NUCLEAR FAMILY" "THE EVOLUTION OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: FROM GOD TO THE SIMPSONS"
WEEK 16	
4/28	GEOGRAPHY: PRIVATE SPACE? READING: "WATCH ME! WEBCAMS AND THE PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF PRIVATE LIVES" "PRIVACY IS NOT DEAD"
4/30	WORKSHOP: THE STUDY OF POPULAR CULTURE – CONCLUSIONS
5/2	REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM
FINALS	
5/6	FINAL EXAM, 08.30 – 10.30 AM IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM

*This syllabus is our starting point. The instructor reserves the right to modify the course and assignments as the semester progresses, if needed. **Check your email at least once every 24 hours** for important information like schedule changes.*

*All TA-taught sections of Introduction to Popular Culture are coordinated by a faculty supervisor. **If you have any questions or concerns about this course**, please contact Becca Cragin at bcragin@bgsu.edu or 419.372.7860.*

CLASS POLICIES

University Academic Honesty Policy:

The Code of Academic Conduct (Academic Honesty Policy) requires that students do not cheat, fabricate, plagiarize or facilitate academic dishonesty. For details, refer to:

- *BGSU Student Handbook* (http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/book/Student_Handbook.pdf)
- *The Academic Charter, B.II.H* (<http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/file921.pdf>)

Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken every class, and more than one week's worth of unexcused absences (your "free passes") will lower your participation grade; students with an excessive number of unexcused absences may have their overall grade reduced, up to a failing grade for the course. "Free passes" are to be used for: oversleeping, work conflicts, interviews, etc.

- The only absences that are excused are those due to:
 - Severe weather (see the university's policy at <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/execvp/file8135.pdf>);
 - Religious holidays (with advance notice; see the policy at <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/file919.pdf>);
 - Participation in athletic events (with advance notice and documentation);
 - Illness (with documentation) or family emergencies (with documentation)

First Day Attendance Policy:

In accordance with the University's First Day Attendance Policy, instructors in the Department of Popular Culture will record the names of students who do not attend the first session of this class and request that they be "dropped" so that seats are made available for other students. An exception will be made if a non-attending student has an excusable circumstance and has contacted the instructor prior to the first class meeting.

Makeup Examination / Late Assignment Policy:

For **unexcused** absences when assignments are due/exams given:

- Late assignments/Makeup exams will be marked down one letter grade per day late, including Saturdays and Sundays

For **excused, brief** absences (1-3 classes missed) on days when exams are given / assignments are due:

- Makeup exams will be written exams, and must be made up within 1 week of returning to class
- Late assignments must be completed within 1 week of returning to class

For **excused, extended** absences (4+ classes missed) on days when exams given / assignments are due:

- Makeup exams will be written exams, and must be made up within 2 weeks of returning to class
- Late assignments must be completed within 2 weeks of returning to class

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor with ample time to schedule and complete makeup examinations by the deadlines listed above.

Disability Policy:

Portions of this course can be modified to make learning easier for students with disabilities. A student who requires accommodations must do the following at the *beginning* of the semester:

1. Verify their eligibility through the Office of Disability Services for Students, 413 South Hall, 419-372-8495, (<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/disability/index.html>) and
2. Take the documentation to the instructor and discuss the accommodation(s).

Recording/Electronic Devices Policy:

Students may not use recording devices or other electronic devices (cell phones, laptop computers, etc.) in class without permission. Please turn alarms and ringers completely off at the start of class.

Classroom Food/Drink Policy:

Students may eat and drink during class, if they do so quietly.