

**SOC 459-241 Popular Culture****Online Course Syllabus**

**University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Summer Online Extension  
June 4<sup>th</sup> to August 11th, 2012**

**Instructor: Michael Dziesinski**

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**Office Location:** Saunders Hall, Room 232

**Office Hours:** Via email anytime, or by appointment in my office and Skype

**Email:** dziesins@hawaii.edu

**Course Website:** <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal/>

**Class Meeting Times:** Course is conducted online, Mon – Sat

**Prerequisite:** Sociology 300

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**Course Description**

This course examines popular culture from various sociological perspectives. Popular culture appears in many forms in our daily life such as the Internet, the media, film, music, comic books, video games, clothing fashions, and even the food we eat. We will explore the roles and influence popular culture has upon daily life by defining and analyzing the phenomenon with the aid of various sociological approaches that have been used to explain popular culture. Who has the power to classify what is ‘popular’, what is ‘high brow’ culture, and what is ‘low brow’ entertainment? Does popular culture manifest ‘from the bottom up’ - is popular culture created for and by the people? Or is popular culture dictated ‘from the top down’ - by elites in positions of power that shape the cultural tastes of the masses? Who are the producers and consumers of popular culture? And with the global accessibility offered by the Internet, has the boundaries between producer and consumer blurred?

**Method of Instruction – Online**

Why an online format? With the topic of popular culture, an online format has several advantages over a classroom environment.

*1) Advantages*

One advantage of an online course is that every student has full access to the class source material via an Internet connection any time of day, at his or her convenience, without the hassle of commuting to campus or finding a parking spot. Another advantage, is instead straining to see a projector in a classroom, sharing a textbook, or needing to photocopy, most all of the materials you will need to complete this course are available on laulima.hawaii.edu.

### 2) Considerations

There are a few considerations for an online course. One is that you should have reliable access to an Internet connection with decent bandwidth, as you will need to watch online video. Further, you will need to be able to log in several times a week in order to satisfy the requirements for this class. Missed deadlines will not be excused by “my internet was down”- you should make arrangements for Internet access alternatives before critical deadlines. Another consideration is you should have a working knowledge for basic Internet usage and computer software. *See below for a list of required computer software for this class, all of which are free to download.*

### 3) Responsibilities

It should be noted that an online course has the same responsibilities as a course conducted in a regular classroom. As with a classroom, there is a class participation grade for this online course. And with an online format, participation is in the form of weekly discussions with your online classmates about the popular culture readings and topics. ***If you do not contribute in the weekly discussions in a meaningful way, you will not pass the course.***

## Course Objectives

- 1) To gain a deeper understanding of the various aspects popular culture and its role in our daily lives.
- 2) To question common notions about a) the propagation and power of popular culture, b) the producers and consumers of popular culture, and c) local popular culture versus global popular culture.
- 3) To encourage students to think about how popular culture intersects with their own social lives, both personal and professional.
- 4) Promoting skills to critically read source materials, to write and lead discussions in a clear and concise manner, and to apply analytical thinking on the topic of popular culture.

### Course Outline

<u>Week One</u> <u>6/04 to 6/09</u>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Defining Popular Culture</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Introduction and online course orientation.	
	"In Defense of Shameless Pleasures," LA Times, 7/27/08	
	Herbert Gans, "Introduction: Mass culture, popular culture, and taste culture," pp. 3-16	
	John Storey, <i>Cultural Theory and Popular Culture</i> . "Chapter 1: What is popular culture?" pp.1-19	
	Video Assignments: Hawaii in pop culture (note that most all of the clips this week are short, 2-4 minutes each).	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #1	due 6/06 due 6/09
<u>Week Two</u> <u>6/11 to 6/16</u>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Theories on Popular Culture</i> <i>Marxism, Hegemony, and Structuralism.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	John Storey, <i>Cultural Theory and Popular Culture</i> . "Chapter 4: Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," pp. 69-95	
	John Storey, <i>Cultural Theory and Popular Culture</i> . "Chapter 5: Marxism," pp. 97-123	
	Video Assignments in folder: Core sociological theories explained.	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #2	due 6/13 due 6/16
<u>Week Three</u> <u>6/18 to 6/23</u>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Power and Popular Culture</i> <i>Feminism and Post-Modernism.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Angela McRobbie, <i>Postmodernism and Popular Culture</i> , "Introduction" & "Part I," pp. 1-23	
	Angela McRobbie, "Feminism, Postmodernism, and the 'REAL ME'," pp. 61-74	
	Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism'," pp. 80-91	
	Marie D Smith, "Decoding Victoria's Secret'," pp. 56-62	
	Video Assignment 1: "Feminism In Pop Culture v. Feminists In Pop Culture."	
	Video Assignment 2: "Marilyn, Madonna, Gaga!"	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #3	due 6/20 due 6/23

<b><u>Week Four</u></b> <b><u>6/25 to 6/30</u></b>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Youth Culture, Subculture, Counterculture</i> <i>Pop Culture from the Margins.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Ralph Donald, "Masculinity's Dirty Dozen," pp. 64-82	
	Henry A. Giroux. 1998. Teenage Sexuality, body politics, and the pedagogy of display; Representing youth as a problem," pp. 24-55	
	Bernard Beck. "Chapter 4: Race and Ethnicity," p.120-142	
	Douglas Kellner. "Sport, Media Culture and Race," p.143-154	
	Video Assignments: Pop culture and teens, minorities in Hollywood, Chappelle & Hollywood.	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #4	due 6/27 due 6/30
<b><u>Week Five</u></b> <b><u>7/02 to 7/07</u></b>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Commercial Culture</i> <i>The Mass Media, Advertising, and Commercial Pop.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Lawrence Grossberg, MediaMaking, Mass Media in Popular Culture: "Preface" & "Part 1: Media In Context," pp. 1-33	
	Barbara Ehrenreich, "Why Don't We Like the Human Body," pp. 84-87	
	Joseph D. Rumbo, "Consumer resistance in a world of advertising clutter: The case of Adbusters"	
	Angela McRobbie, "The moral panic in the age of the postmodern mass media," pp. 198-219	
	Optional: Roland Marchand, "Advertisements as Social Tableaux," pp.164-200	
	Video Assignments: gender roles in the media, the depiction of beauty, ad-busters and culture jamming, videogame and columbine moral panics.	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #5 <i>Final Project topic must be approved.</i>	due 7/03* due 7/07 due 7/07
<b><u>Week Six</u></b> <b><u>7/09 to 7/14</u></b>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>The Production of Popular Culture</i> <i>Radio, Film, TV, and Producers of Meaning.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Joshua Gamson, Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America, "Part Two: The Production of Celebrity," pp. 57- 107	
	Joshua Gamson, "The Assembly Line of Greatness," pp. 259- 277	
	Video Assignment: Frontline, The Merchants of Cool <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/</a>	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #6	due 7/11 due 7/14

<b><u>Week Seven</u></b> <b><u>7/16 to 7/21</u></b>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>The Consumption of Popular Culture</i> <i>The Internet, Fans, and Participant Culture.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Henry Jenkins, <i>Fans Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture</i> , “Interactive Audiences? The ‘Collective Intelligence’ of Media Fans” pp. 134-151	
	Joli Jensen, “Fandom as Pathology” pp. 301-312	
	“Video Games Are Their Major, So Don’t Call Them Slackers” NY Times 11/22/05	
	Video Assignment: Henry Jenkins on the media landscape, Star Wars-The People Vs. George Lucas, social media and pop culture.	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #7	due 7/18 due 7/21
<b><u>Week Eight</u></b> <b><u>7/23 to 7/28</u></b>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Globalization of Popular Culture</i> <i>Hollywood, Bollywood and Tokyo.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	JN Pieterse, “Globalization and Culture, Three Paradigms”	
	Douglas McGray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool”, Foreign Policy 2001	
	Allen J. Scott, "Hollywood in the Era of Globalization" Yale Global, 11/29/02	
	Ian Condry, “Japanese Hip Hop and the Globalization of Popular Culture”	
	Daya Kishan Thussu, "Globalization and Bollywood: the hype and the hope" pp. 97-116	
	Video Assignments: Is Japan Cool, Bollywood, what is globalization, Japanese hip hop.	
<b>Assignments:</b>	First Wiki post Reaction Paper #8	due 7/25 due 7/28

<u><b>Week Nine</b></u> <u><b>7/30 to 8/04</b></u>		
<b>Topic:</b>	<i>Local Popular Culture, Global Popular Culture Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism, and Soft Power.</i>	
<b>Reading List:</b>	Henry Jenkins, <i>Fans Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture</i> , "Pop Cosmopolitanism" pp.152-172	
	Tyler Cowen, "For some countries, America's popular culture is resistible" NY Times 2/22/07,	
	Sharon Lafraniere, et. al. "China Reins In Entertainment and Blogging" NY Times 10/26/11	
	Meaghan Morris, "Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema: Hong Kong and the making of a global popular culture"	
	Michael J Norris, "Exploring Japanese Popular Culture as a Soft Power Resource"	
<b>Assignments:</b>	Video Assignments in folder.	
	First Wiki post	due 8/01
	Reaction Paper #9	due 8/04
<u><b>Week Ten</b></u> <u><b>8/06 to 8/11</b></u>		
<b>Topic:</b>	Final Project Presentations	
<b>Reading List:</b>	-	
<b>Assignments:</b>	Upload Project Presentations	due 8/8
	Upload Final Projects	due 8/11, Midnight of Friday

\* *The instructor may change the course schedule/reading list as needed.*

### Required Readings/Media

All weekly reading assignments listed in the course outline will be posted on the Laulima site for this course as PDFs or clickable web links in the Assignments Section. *You should complete reading/watching all assigned materials **before posting in the weekly discussions.***

### Required Computer Software

- A multi-platform web browser that is up-to-date. Check for software updates within the browser if you are not sure.
  - Firefox [www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/](http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/)
  - Chrome [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome)
  - Safari [www.apple.com/safari/](http://www.apple.com/safari/)
- For multi-media materials, this course will link to web sites outside Laulima and will require video or streaming plug-ins for your browser. While some sites might have custom video players, these are the most common on the web.
  - Adobe Flash Player [www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/downloads.html](http://www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/downloads.html)
  - QuickTime Player [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### Course Requirements

There are four components to your grade in this course.

- 1) **Reaction Papers.** Each student will write a reaction paper for the assigned reading/video materials for that week of class and post it the Assignments Section of the Laulima site by Saturday of that week at 12:00am Hawaii time.
  - a. You will find the assigned questions for that week's the reaction paper in the Reaction Papers & Final Project menu in Laulima. You do not have to answer all three questions but you should try to cover two of the three topics introduced in the weekly questions.
  - b. The reaction paper is not a summary of the reading material assigned, nor a copy/paste of the Weekly Wiki and Discussions.
  - c. The reaction paper should indicate that the student has read/watched the weekly materials and provide an analysis that contributes to the weekly class discussion on the topic.
  - d. Apply the concepts you learned in this week's assigned articles to the video links provided for the content unit. Feel free to include examples from your own life to make your arguments.
  - e. In addition to the assigned materials, outside material can be used as sources to support your arguments, provided they are properly cited in the ASA format\* within the paper.
  - f. Each reaction paper should be a minimum of 350 words, roughly a page if printed out as a double-spaced document.

- g. There are 9 reaction papers in total.
- 2) **Weekly Wiki posts and the Discussion Forums.** Students are required to contribute to a discussion on the weekly assigned reading topic by contributing to a collaborative wiki found on the Laulima. Unlike reaction papers, the wiki and discussion forum presents the opportunity for online classmates to directly interact and collectively discuss/analyze the weekly topic as they build a *wiki* on the sociology of popular culture.
- Due Wednesday of each week, each student must first contribute a wiki entry relevant to the discussion about the assigned reading/videos of that week. It is due Wednesday in order to give your classmates time to read and respond to your initial weekly wiki post on the topic. Other students may, add, expand, edit or sub-pages on the weekly wiki topic. Content must be at least a few paragraphs in length.*
  - After the first batch of posts on Wednesday, each student should post a second time in the discussion forums. This post is required to explain the content of the initial wiki posts on Wednesday. The discussion forum is also the place to debate any edits and respond to another student's wiki posts.*
  - To recap, you are expected to post **at least twice a week, once on the wiki and once in the discussion forums.** You are encouraged to post more than the minimum two posts, as a lively debate on weekly topic is the point of this participation assignment. The two posts are to be on separate days in the week, should indicate you are actively reading the assigned material and other students' posts, and your posts should respond to the weekly topic in a meaningful way. *If your two posts are time-stamped the week the topic was assigned, you receive full class participation credit. If you met your minimum posts and decide to go back later and update the wiki on a topic, you are more than welcome to do so. However, if you did not post at least twice the week of the assignment, trying to post on past-due topics later in the semester will grant no participation points for that week.**
- 3) **Project Proposal.** Please submit a 1-2 page project proposal. The final project can be drawn from any popular culture topic covered during the semester. Apply the relevant sociological theories to explain the issue you wish to investigate. See details about option one and two for your project under the *final project* heading below. Your proposal should include the following:
- Proposal Structure for both Option One and Two**
    - Working project title.
    - A thesis statement or research question you seek to answer.
    - A paragraph or two stating the background on your topic, why it's academically interesting, and what you propose to do to delve further into the topic with your project. For the background, you'll need to find 3-5 sources to inform and support your research argument.
  - Option One, additional preparation**
    - Cover Page and Outline. Please provide a cover page and preliminary outline of your proposed research paper.

- ii. Organize your sources into a short bibliography, 5 or more citations, in ASA format. These can be books or links to articles. Citations of Wikipedia will not be accepted, go find the original sources and read them.
  - c. **Option Two, additional preparation**
    - i. Methods, For those choosing option two, you'll need to describe how you will conduct your proposed field research. How large will your interview sample be? What type of interviews will you conduct? Structured? Open-ended? How long will each interview take and how many questions do you plan to ask?
    - ii. Interview Instrument. In order to conduct interviews you'll need to design a series of questions that get to the heart of your research hypothesis. You should be careful to phrase questions so they are not leading or biased. Also, you should consider what impact you, the researcher, will have on the outcome of the data collection.
- 4) **Final Project**. Students must choose a topic in popular culture and have it approved by week 5 of the semester. Students have two options for the final Project. All projects should use the ASA format\* for citation. I will provide further details for the Final Project in week 3.
  - a. *Option One, Research Paper*. Students pick a research topic on popular culture and write a 1,200 word research paper, about five double spaced pages. This paper should be structured with an intro and a clear thesis statement, a literature review, a body, and a conclusion. The paper may use any outside books or text resources, provided they are properly cited. *You must upload a PDF and Word .doc file of your paper to Laulima by the published deadline.*
  - b. *Option Two, Field Project*. Students pick a research topic based on popular culture and conduct a small-scale survey or set of interviews on the topic. The raw data should be 5-10 brief, but unique interviews on the topic. Students will need to write a 350 word research plan based on the topic, design survey/interview questions, collect the data, and report their findings in a structured PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint should include the Research question, a Literature Review, Data Results, and a Conclusion. *You must also upload 1) a PDF **AND** Word .doc file of your collected data (survey instrument and results), and 2) the PowerPoint presentation of your Field Project to Laulima by the published deadline.*
  - c. *Class Reactions to student projects*. I'd like to encourage the class to post the final project a bit early to get constructive feedback by your classmates. This way, if there are any issues with the project you can correct them in the final revision you submit at the end of class.

\* **Note:** *Guidelines for the American Sociological Association's (ASA) format for research papers and citation can be found here:*

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/3asa.pdf>

## Grading

The final grade for the course will be based on the total number of points earned in the four components of the course. The weight assigned for each component is as follows:

Component	Number	x Point Value	= Total points
Reaction Papers	9	40	360
Wiki & Forum Posts	18 (min.)	15	270
Project Proposal	1	90	90
Final Project	1	280	280
<b>Total Possible</b>			<b>1000</b>

### Final Grade Point Scale

A+	=	970 or Above
A	=	930 to 969
A-	=	900 to 929
B+	=	899 to 870
B	=	830 to 869
B-	=	800 to 829

C+	=	770 to 799
C	=	730 to 769
C-	=	700 to 729
D+	=	670 to 699
D	=	630 to 669
D-	=	600 to 629
F	=	Below 599

## University Policies

### 1) KOKUA – Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities who may feel the need for assistance during the semester, please feel free to contact me in private. Further, we can work with the KOKUA Program to offer additional assistance. If you are not familiar with the KOKUA program, here is their contact information:

<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>

### 2) Academic Integrity - Cheating & Plagiarism

Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Hawaii's Policy on Academic Integrity. *"The integrity of a university depends upon academic honesty, which consists of independent learning and research. Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. The following are examples of violations of the Student Conduct Code that may result in suspension or expulsion from UH Manoa."*

The original source, and further detail on these policies, can be found here:

<http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>

It is the responsibility of each student to know the University of Hawaii code of conduct, and in relevance to this class, the rules regarding and the consequences of cheating and plagiarism.

Ignorance of these rules will not excuse any misconduct. To quote from page 6 of the University of Hawaii Student Code of Conduct:

*“Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or dry labbing, which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms or fabricating data to fit the desired or expected results.”*

The original source, in full, is here:

[www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/sites/www2.../policies-student-conduct.pdf](http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/sites/www2.../policies-student-conduct.pdf)