

SOC 459 Popular Culture
Fall 2018 EXT Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

'Popular culture' is a phrase used ubiquitously in media and in our daily lives, but what does it exactly mean? What does 'popular' constitute? This course will critically examine various aspects of popular culture, with particular focus on the media, consumerism, branding, and commercialization. Together, we will use sociological theory to examine how popular culture affects our daily lives in terms of our beliefs, practices, and identity formation. The media's role in disseminating or fabricating popular culture is also of interest. All class readings and coursework are available on Lulima.

INSTRUCTION FORMAT:

This course is offered entirely online. Students must have internet access in order to access class content online via Lulima. Despite the online nature of the class, students are required to consistently participate in online discussions and interact with other students and the instructor. Students are expected to study and participate as much as a regular in-person course. Students must read all the assigned readings, as well as watch assigned videos. Students may take advantage of e-mail and Lulima's chat room in order to communicate with students and the instructor.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will learn (1) to write clearly and articulately in an academic manner to induce thoughtful discussion and (2) how to write a good analytical paper, and (3) use sociological concepts to critique and understand popular culture in everyday life. When the class ends, you will have gained (1) a deeper understanding of the influences popular culture has on us, big or small, and (2) theoretical tools to be able to sociologically analyze and deconstruct the mass media.

COURSE MATERIALS:

No textbook is required for this course. All readings will be posted to the Lulima Resources folder.

COURSE FORMAT

The online structure of the course will have a consistent schedule each week. All written assignments have separate due dates – see the course schedule at the end of the syllabus.

- **Monday** – Instructor will post course materials for the week (PPTs, etc.) by 11:55pm.
- **Tuesday and Wednesday** – Students read and review course materials and assigned readings. Students respond to the instructor's weekly exercises by 11:55pm of Saturday.
- **Thursday** – Discussion leaders (Believer, Doubter, Theorist or BDT) post their write-up (2 paragraphs) and one discussion question each by 11:55pm. **This will start Week 3.**
- **Friday through Sunday** – Other students respond to at least two discussion questions (1 paragraph each) by 11:55pm of Sunday.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) *Class participation (30%)*: Consistent participation in Laulima's Discussion and Private Messages section is required every week. Students are required to answer the weekly exercises posted by the instructor based on the course content. Students are also required to sign up at least 2 times to be discussion leaders for the class readings. The class uses the Believer-Doubter-Theorist (BDT) discussion model, in which each student takes on one of those three roles per class to discuss a reading (more instructions will follow). **Students must submit a minimal 2 paragraph write-up based on their role and post at least one discussion question in the appropriate Laulima BDT forum thread.** In response to the discussion questions by the Believer-Doubter-Theorist, all other students must select at least two questions to respond to each week. **Each response post must be at least 1 paragraph (4-5 sentences) long.** Students are recommended to write a draft of the response in a word document, and proof-read it before posting online. Students are welcomed to make more than one post per topic.
 - a. Discussion leaders have the responsibility and obligation to post their write-up and question for the class **on time!!** By not posting your question, your classmates will not be able to participate in class discussions and may lose out on participation points. Everyone is responsible to each other in this discussion model – **do not let your classmates down.** If you notice this week's discussion leader failed to post anything by Thursday (the BDT deadline), **it's your responsibility as a classmate to email them and ask them to post their question ASAP.** Again, everyone is responsible to each other and must keep each other in check!
 - b. Barring any medical emergencies, discussion leaders who fail to post their write-up and question for the class will be penalized severely – your final participation grade will be subtracted 5% for each failure to post at the end of the semester. The class participation grade is worth 25% of the course grade.
 - c. If by chance, a discussion leader does not post anything by Saturday, the rest of the class can select to be either the Believer, Doubter, or Theorist themselves and post their own write-up. This is to ensure that you get credit for doing the reading. This option of doing your own write-up is only available if you've emailed the discussion leaders and received no response, and nothing is posted by Saturday. If the assigned discussion leaders post a write up and any question, you must answer them.

All assignments are due on Laulima in Word Document or PDF format only! Papers in other formats will be docked 5%. Late submissions will be penalized 10% for each day late.

- 2) *Film Analysis Paper (15%)*. Students will be required to write a **2-page analytical paper** for a film/TV show that will be assigned. The paper should not be a summary of the film but a critical analysis on the themes present in the film.
- 3) *Advertisement Analysis Paper (15%)*. Students will write a **2-page analytical paper** for a chosen advertisement campaign analyzing the gender and racial representations.
- 4) *Proposal for final project (5%)*. Students will choose a topic to conduct a literature review on, and by extension a research proposal to study said topic. The proposal should be **1 page long** and include a clear thesis statement or research question, and a background section detailing why the topic is academically interesting and socially relevant. The proposal must cite two academic sources and include a bibliography in a chosen academic style. ASA is recommended but other citation styles such as MLA, APA, may be used.

ASA Citation Style Guide

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

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

- 5) *Final Research Paper Proposal (35%)*. Students will write a 10-page research proposal on a topic in popular culture that the instructor has approved during the proposal stage. Students must conduct a literature review of their chosen topic, and write a research proposal to study said topic. The proposal must have the following sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Expected Findings and Analysis, Conclusion, and a References section. The literature review should cite at least 5 academic sources. The bibliography is NOT included in the 10-page minimum requirement.

GRADING:

The following percentage scale will be used in this course:

A+:	97-100%	B+:	87-89%	C+:	77-79%	D+:	67-69%
A:	93-96%	B:	83-86%	C:	73-76%	D:	60-66%
A-:	90-92%	B-:	80-82%	C-:	70-72%	F:	<i>less than 60%</i>

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in the class and is prohibited by the University. Such actions could result in the failure of the assignment or even the class. It could also result in suspension or expulsion from the University. The University of Hawai‘i’s Student Conduct Code Section IV.B.1 explains cheating and plagiarism as follows:

The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the UH faculty, staff or student (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

STUDENT CONDUCT

As a class, we will often cover controversial topics that may provoke emotional reactions or heated discussions. The University of Hawai‘i is committed to creating a safe and civil environment through which students can freely express their ideas and opinions. While class participation is highly encouraged and expected, it is important to remember that students are also expected to behave and participate in a civil manner. Students should treat fellow classmates as equals and approach all discussions with an open-mind. “The University expects students to maintain standards of personal integrity that are in harmony with the educational goals of the institution; to respect the rights, privileges, and property of others; and to observe national, state, and local laws and University regulations” (UH Manoa Student Conduct Code).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Topics	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 – Defining popular culture	Grazian Ch. 1, 2	
Week 2 - Theoretical Approaches to Popular Culture	Grazian Ch. 3, 4	
Week 3 – The Entertainment Industry and Celebrity Culture	Gabler, Neal. “Life: The Movie, How Entertainment Conquered Reality”, Introduction and Ch 1.	BEGIN BDT DISCUSSIONS
Week 4 – Mass Media and the Culture Industry	Chomsky and Herman. <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i> , Ch 1. “A Propaganda Model”	View: <i>Black Mirror</i>
Week 5 – Consumer and Commercial Culture	Schor, Juliet. <i>The Overspent American</i> , Introduction and Ch. 3	
Week 6 – Material Culture	Miller, Daniel. <i>Stuff</i> , Ch.1 “Why Clothing is not superficial”	Film analysis paper of <i>Black Mirror</i> due
Week 7 - Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture I	Valenti, Jessica. <i>The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women</i> , Ch 1, “The Cult of Virginity”. Available online at http://site.ebrary.com/eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/lib/uhmanoa/reader.action?ppg=17&docID=10288653&tm=1484176674210	
Week 8 - Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture II	Kimmel, Michael. <i>Angry White Men</i> Ch. 1	
Week 9 - Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture I	Benshoff, Harry and Sean Griffin. <i>America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies</i> Ch 3, “The Concept of Whiteness and American Film”	Advertisement analysis paper due
Week 10 - Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture II	Film: <i>Beyond the Color Line: Black Hollywood</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKJww2yXiQY	Proposal for final project due
Week 11 - Subculture and Alternative Lifestyles in Pop Culture	Garland et al. “Reflections on Violence Against Alternative Subcultures”	
Week 12 – Participatory Culture in the Digital Age	Arvidsson, Adam. “Brands: A Critical Perspective”	
Week 13 – Fan practice and Intellectual Property	Fruend, Katharina. “Fair use is legal use: Copyright negotiations and strategies in the fan-vidding community”	

Week 14 – Globalization of Pop Culture	Yano, Christine. <i>Pink Globalization: Hello Kitty's Trek Across the Pacific</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1	
Week 15 – FINAL EXAM WEEK – NO MATERIALS. JUST WORK ON YOUR PAPER!		

Final research proposal due on Laulima.