

SOC 459 Popular Culture
[Writing Intensive Focus]
Fall 2016
TR 1:30-2:45 PM (Bus Ad D102)

Instructor: Penn Pantumsinchai

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Office Hours: Thursdays at noon until class time or appointment by email

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. This is a Writing Intensive (WI) designated course, and will require students to write at least 16 pages or a minimum of 4,000 words total. This requirement will be satisfied by film reaction papers, ethics papers, and a final research paper.

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:

Required textbook:

Grazian, David. 2010. *Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society*. W. W. Norton & Company. (Available online or in UH bookstore).

Supplementary readings will be available on Laulima (marked * in the course schedule).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments are due at 1pm before class starts on Laulima! Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day late.

- 1) *Attendance and Class participation (20%):* Attendance is mandatory for this course. Students with medical, legal, or personal reasons for absences must provide documentation for an excused absence. As part of this grade, students will be required to do a mini-class presentation (one student per class; sign-ups will be available at the

beginning of the semester) on something about popular culture they love or hate (e.g. a TV show series, video game, movie, celebrity, etc.). This is a casual presentation that will allow the class to get to know the student better, as well as open up discussion on related topics.

- 2) *Film Analysis Papers (2 at 15% each)*. **Minimum 3-page requirement.** Students will be required to write a **3-4-page analytical paper** for each film/TV show we watch in class. The paper should not be a summary of the film but a critical analysis on the themes present in the film. Students will receive written feedback for each paper and are expected to incorporate suggestions in subsequent assignments.
- 3) *Final Research Project Proposal and Meet with Instructor (5%)*. **Minimum 1-page requirement.** Students will choose a topic for their final research project on a topic in popular culture per the instructor's approval. The proposal should be **1-2 pages 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 ASA format. Following up with the proposal, **students are required to meet individually with the instructor for written and oral feedback.** The meetings will be scheduled on 10/4 during class time.

ASA Citation Style Guide

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

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

- 4) *Final Research Paper Draft (5%)*: Students are required to submit a working draft of their final research paper. The instructor will comment and critique on the draft as well as provide suggestions for improvement. Students are expected to incorporate suggestions into their final draft. The more complete the draft, the better, as the instructor can provide more focused feedback. (This also means less work during exam time!).
- 5) *Final Research Project Presentation (15%)*: Students will present their final research project to the class in a 10-minute presentation as well as answer questions from classmates.
- 6) *Final Research Paper (25%)*. **Minimum 10-page requirement.** Students will write a 10-15 page final research paper on a topic in popular culture that the instructor has approved during the proposal stage. The final draft should have incorporated suggestions from the instructor based on the working draft that was submitted earlier. The paper should follow the conventional social science research paper structure and include an introduction, a clear thesis statement/research question, a literature review, methods, an analysis, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The bibliography is NOT included in the 10-page minimum requirement. Sections of the paper will be submitted one at a time for instructor feedback.

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>

KOKUA FOR STUDENTS

If you have a disability that requires additional accommodations for the class, please let me know immediately. Please feel free to e-mail me any time if you have any concerns. I would be more than happy to help you in any way you need. The University's KOKUA Program (Office of Student with Disabilities) can also be reached at (808) 956-7511 and is located in Room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services on campus.

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

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
T 8/23	Introduction		Sign up for mini-presentations
R 8/25	Defining Pop Culture	Grazian, Ch 1. *Holmberg, Carl. "Sexualities and Popular Culture", Ch 1.	
T 8/30	Theoretical Approaches to Pop Culture I	Grazian, Ch 2 and Ch. 3 *Gitlin, Todd. "Supersaturation, or, The Media Torrent and Disposable Feeling."	
R 9/1	Theoretical Approaches to Pop Culture II	Grazian Ch. 4 and Ch. 5 *Debord, Guy. "The Commodity as Spectacle" (11-15)	
T 9/6	Viewing: <i>Black Mirror: 15 Million Merits</i>	*Gabler, Neal. "Life: The Movie", Introduction and Ch 1. Donald Trump section.	
R 9/8	Writing Workshop	Grazian Ch. 6	
T 9/13	The Entertainment Industry and Celebrity Culture	95,000 Words of Donald Trump (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/06/us/politics/95000-words-many-of-them-ominous-from-donald-trumps-tongue.html) *Kurzman et al. "Celebrity Status"	Film analysis paper of <i>Black Mirror</i>
R 9/15	Mass Media and the Culture Industry The Role of Mass Media and Moral Panics	Grazian, Ch. 7, Ch. 8 *Goode & Ben-Yehuda. "Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction"	
T 9/20	Consumer and Commercial Culture	Grazian Ch. 9 *Schor, Juliet. "The Overspent American". Introduction and Ch. 3, and Ch. 4	
R 9/22	Writing Workshop	*Walter, Benjamin. "Unpacking my Library"	
T 9/27	Collecting and Material Culture	* Miller, Daniel. <i>Stuff</i> excerpt. * <i>Contemporary Collecting</i> , Ch 8.	Sign up for meeting with instructor

R 9/29	<p>Library Session with David Brier **Meet at Hamilton Library, Room 113 **Bring draft of research paper proposal or idea of one at least</p>		
T 10/4	<p>Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture I Class evaluation</p>	<p>Grazian Ch. 10 *Raymond, Diane. "Popular Culture and Queer Representation" Monica Lewinsky on the Culture of Humiliation http://www.vanityfair.com/style/society/2014/06/monica-lewinsky-humiliation-culture</p>	<p>Research Paper Proposal</p>
R 10/6	<p>Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture II</p>	<p>* Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Valenti, Jessica. "The Cult of Virginity" (available online) *Arvidsson, Adam. "Netporn: The Work of Fantasy in the Information Society"</p>	
T 10/11	<p>Instructor Travel Film viewing: TBD</p>	TBD	<p>Research Paper Introduction/Background/Methods</p>
R 10/13	<p>Instructor Travel- Class Cancelled!</p>		
T 10/18	<p>Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture I</p>	TBD	
R 10/20	<p>Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture II</p>	TBD	<p>Research Paper Discussion</p>
T 10/25	<p>Subculture and Alternative Lifestyles in Pop Culture Representations of Subculture in Media</p>	TBD	
R 10/27	<p>Participatory Culture in the Digital Age I</p>	<p>*Campbell, Colin. "The Craft Consumer: Culture, Craft, and Consumption in a Postmodern Society." *Ritzer and Jurgenson, "Production, Consumption, Prosumption."</p>	<p>Film analysis paper</p>

T 11/1	Participatory Culture in the Digital Age II Participatory Culture, Fan Practice, and Intellectual Property	*Jenkins, Henry. "Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture" *Pantumsinchai, Penn. "Conflicting Desires and Prosumer Control."	Class evaluation
R 11/3	Globalization of Pop Culture I	*Goldstein-Gidoni, Ofra. "The Production and Consumption of 'Japanese Culture' in the Global Cultural Market" *Hyunjoon, Shin. "Have you ever seen the Rain? And who'll stop the Rain? The globalizing project of Korean pop (K-pop)"	Research Paper Literature Review
T 11/8	<i>Elections Day</i> Go Vote!		
R 11/10	Writing Workshop *Bring draft of research paper for peer-review session		
T 11/15	Globalization of Pop Culture II	*Coca-Globalization excerpt *Yano, Christine. Pink Globalization. Introduction and Ch. 1	Complete Draft of Final Research Paper
R 11/17	Postmodernism and Pop Culture	*McRobbie, Angela. <i>Postmodernism and Popular Culture.</i>	
T 11/22	TBD		Final presentations sign-up
R 11/24	<i>Thanksgiving holiday</i> Eat a lot!		
T 11/29	TBD		
R 12/1	Writing Workshop		
T 12/6	Wrap Up		
R 12/8	Final Presentations		
T 12/13 noon-2pm	Final Presentations		

12/15 Final papers due via Laulima at 11:59pm