

**SOC 459 Popular Culture [WI]**  
**Fall 2017 EXT Online**  
**09/04/17-12/15/17**

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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. 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 analytical papers and a final research paper. 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 ASSIGNMENTS:**

**All assignments are due on Lulima in Word Document format only! Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day late. Papers in other formats will not be graded.**

- 1) *Class participation (25%)*: Consistent participation in online discussions is required. Students are required to answer the discussion questions or 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 class readings. The class discussion uses the Believer-Doubter-Theorist model, in which each student takes on one of the 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 for the class in the Lulima forums. 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.

- 2) *Film Analysis Paper (15%).* **Minimum 3-page requirement.** Students will be required to write a **3-4-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. Students will receive written feedback and are expected to incorporate suggestions in subsequent assignments.
- 3) *Advertisement Analysis Paper (15%).* **Minimum 3-page requirement.** Students will write a **3-4 page analytical paper** for a chosen advertisement campaign using a theory or concept we have discussed in class. For example, the paper can discuss issues of racial and gender representations, or the use of celebrities and sensational slogans. Multiple advertisements may be analyzed for comparison purposes. Students will receive written feedback and are expected to incorporate suggestions in subsequent assignments.
- 4) *Final Research Project Proposal (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 a chosen academic style. Students are required to use a consistent citation style. ASA is recommended but other citation styles such as MLA, APA, etc. may also 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 Draft (10%):* 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.
- 6) *Final Research Paper (30%).* **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. Students who submitted a first draft also must submit a short write-up of the changes they made to the final draft.

**GRADING:**

**The following percentage scale will be used in this course:**

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

- **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) post their write-up (2 paragraphs) and two discussion questions each by 11:55pm
- **Friday through Sunday** – Other students respond to at least two discussion questions (1 paragraph each) by 11:55pm of Sunday

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week 1 (9/4) – Defining popular culture	Grazian Ch. 1	
Week 2 (9/11) - Theoretical Approaches to Popular Culture I	Grazian Ch. 2, 3	
Week 3 (9/18) – Theoretical Approaches to Popular Culture II	Grazian Ch 3 (again), 4	
Week 4 (9/25) – The Entertainment Industry and Celebrity Culture	Gabler, Neal. “Life: The Movie, How Entertainment Conquered Reality”, Introduction and Ch 1.	View: <i>Black Mirror</i>
Week 5 (10/2) – 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”	
Week 6 (10/9) – Consumer and Commercial Culture	Schor, Juliet. <i>The Overspent American</i> , Introduction and Ch. 3	Film analysis paper of <i>Black Mirror</i> due on 10/2 by 11:55pm
Week 7 (10/16) - Material Culture	Miller, Daniel. <i>Stuff</i> , Ch.1 “Why Clothing is not superficial”	
Week 8 (10/23) - 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 <a href="http://site.ebrary.com.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/lib/uhmanoa/reader.action?ppg=17&amp;docID=10288653&amp;tm=1484176674210">http://site.ebrary.com.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/lib/uhmanoa/reader.action?ppg=17&amp;docID=10288653&amp;tm=1484176674210</a>	Research paper proposal due on 10/16 by 11:55pm
Week 9 (10/30) - Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture II	Kimmel, Michael. <i>Angry White Men</i> Ch. 1	
Week 10 (11/6) - 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”	
Week 11 (11/13) - Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture II	Film: <i>Beyond the Color Line: Black Hollywood</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKJwW2yXiQY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKJwW2yXiQY</a>	Advertisement analysis paper due on 11/6 by 11:55pm
Week 12 (11/20) – Subculture and Alternative Lifestyles in Pop Culture	Garland et al. “Reflections on Violence Against Alternative Subcultures”	
Week 13 (11/27) – Participatory Culture in the Digital Age	Arvidsson, Adam. “Brands: A Critical Perspective”	First draft of research paper due on 11/20 by 11:55pm

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Week 14 (12/4) – Fan practice and Intellectual Property	Fruend, Katharina. “Fair use is legal use: Copyright negotiations and strategies in the fan-vidding community”	
Week 15 (12/11) - Globalization of Pop Culture	Yano, Christine. <i>Pink Globalization: Hello Kitty’s Trek Across the Pacific</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1	

**12/15 (Friday) Final papers due via Laulima by 11:55pm**