

SOC 459 Popular Culture
[Writing Intensive Focus]
Spring 2017
TR 1:30-2:45 PM (Saunders 541)

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Office Hours: By appointment only or e-mail

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:

Course packet available for purchase. Supplementary readings will be available on Lulima.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments are due at 1pm before class starts on Lulima! 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.
 - a. As part of the participation grade, students are required to sign up at least twice 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. A sign-up sheet will be available. Students are encouraged to sign up for readings they are interested in.

- b. As part of the participation grade, students will do a mini-presentation (one student per class) about a pop culture obsession, 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 a chosen academic style. Following up with the proposal, **students are required to meet individually with the instructor for written and oral feedback.** The meetings will be scheduled 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 and answer questions.
- 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	Student presenter
T 1/10	Introduction		Sign up for presentations and discussion roles	NA
R 1/12	Defining Pop Culture	Grazian, Ch 1.		
T 1/17	Theoretical Approaches to Pop Culture I	Grazian, Ch 2 *Gitlin, Todd. "Supersaturation, or, The Media Torrent and Disposable Feeling."		
R 1/19	Theoretical Approaches to Pop Culture II	Grazian Ch. 3		
T 1/24	Viewing: <i>Black Mirror: 15 Million Merits</i>	*Gabler, Neal. "Life: The Movie", Introduction and Ch 1.		
R 1/26	Writing Workshop			NA
T 1/31	The Entertainment Industry and Celebrity Culture	*Kurzman et al. "Celebrity Status"	Film analysis paper of <i>Black Mirror</i>	
R 2/2	Mass Media and the Culture Industry The Role of Mass Media and Moral Panics	*Goode & Ben-Yehuda. "Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction"		
T 2/7	Consumer and Commercial Culture	*Schor, Juliet. "The Overspent American". Introduction and Ch. 3		
R 2/9	Writing Workshop			NA
T 2/14	Collecting and Material Culture	* Miller, Daniel. <i>Stuff</i> , Ch.1 * <i>Contemporary Collecting</i> , Ch 8.	Sign up for meeting with instructor	
R 2/16	Library Session **Location TBD **Bring draft of research paper proposal or idea of one at least			
T 2/21	Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture I Class evaluation	*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)	Research Paper Proposal	
R 2/23	Meet with Instructor for feedback on paper proposal			

T 2/28	Film viewing: TBD	* Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"		
R 3/2	Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture II	Valenti, Jessica. "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=1475641634463	Research Paper introduction/ background/ methods sections	
T 3/7	Class Cancelled!			
R 3/9	Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture I	*Kimmel, Michael. <i>Angry White Men</i> ch. 1	Research Paper Discussion	
T 3/14	Race and Ethnicity in Pop Culture II	*Collins, Patricia Hill, <i>From Black Power to Hip-Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism</i> introduction		
R 3/16	Subculture and Alternative Lifestyles in Pop Culture Representations of Subculture in Media	*Thorton, Sarah. <i>Club Cultures</i> excerpt.	Film analysis paper	
T 3/21	Participatory Culture in the Digital Age I	*Campbell, Colin. "The Craft Consumer: Culture, Craft, and Consumption in a Postmodern Society." *Ritzer and Jurgenson, "Production, Consumption, Prosumption."		
R 3/23	Participatory Culture in the Digital Age II Participatory Culture, Fan Practice, and Intellectual Property	*Jenkins, Henry. "Media Literacy and the Harry Potter Wars"	Research Paper Literature Review	
T 3/28	Spring Break			
R 3/30	Spring Break			
T 4/4	Writing Workshop *Bring draft of research paper for peer-review session			NA
R 4/6	Globalization of Pop Culture I	*Goldstein-Gidoni, Ofra. "The Production and Consumption of 'Japanese Culture' in the Global Cultural Market"	Complete Draft of Final Research Paper	
T 4/11	Globalization of Pop Culture II	*Coca-Globalization excerpt *Yano, Christine. <i>Pink Globalization</i> . Introduction and Ch. 1	Final presentations sign-up	

R 4/13	Postmodernism and Pop Culture	*McRobbie, Angela. <i>Postmodernism and Popular Culture.</i>		
T 4/18	Writing Workshop			
R 4/20	TBD			
T 4/25	Wrap Up			
R 4/27	Final Presentations			
T 5/2	Final Presentations			

5/5 Final papers due via Laulima at 11:59pm