

Pop Culture: SOC 459

Fall 2018

Instructor: Holly Sevier

What do video games, Halloween costumes, swear words, and beliefs about space aliens have in common? The answer is that they all lie in the realm of the popular. This course represents an opportunity to critically examine the materials, beliefs, and practices of ordinary life while developing skills as an effective communicator. The readings and multimedia material presented to the class will help us form questions about the many roles pop culture plays in our lives, provide a theoretical sociological background for our ideas, and give us a springboard for developing effective writing and presentation skills.

Goals of Class:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Analyze the materials, beliefs, and practices of ordinary life through a sociological lens; &
- 2) Communicate findings clearly and effectively in both written and verbal formats.

In addition to the above goals, there are three learning goals at the UHM Sociology Program-level that we can strive to achieve. In brief, these are:

- 1) Ability to evaluate sociological theories and use them to analyze and understand aspects of the social world.
- 2) Ability to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and draw valid conclusions from analyses.
- 3) Students will have clear and effective verbal and written communication skills.

Homework:

A regular reading routine is essential for this class. Each week you will be assigned readings from the class textbook and additional primary sources and you will need to write reading notes in order to be prepared for class discussions. In addition, you will need to submit your essays in a timely fashion and be prepared for class presentations. While the amount of writing is small, the expectation is that work will be of a high standard both grammatically and in content, with points deducted for absent, late, or sub-par work.

Textbook for Course:

Mix it Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society. 2017 (2nd Edition).

Author: David Grazian. ISBN: 978-0-393-64481-4

Grading

Students this semester will be given the option of selecting either a verbal or written track. The amount of work for each track is the same, although there is a significant risk in taking the verbal track since a single final presentation represents a large part of your final grade. Regardless of which track you select, all students will be expected to do both written work and make presentations during the semester in order to fulfil the Sociology Department Student Learning Outcome #3: "Students will have clear and effective verbal and written communication skills". Students who do not complete the first two assignments and the planning paper will not be able to continue to the final stages and receive a top grade.

Verbal Track (60% of final grade)

Assignment 1: Two-page written assignment. Why I am Choosing Verbal Track. 10%

Assignment 2: Two-page written assignment. Why I am Choosing This Topic. 10%

Planning Paper: Four-page written assignment. 15%

Theory Presentation: Four minute presentation on theory related to your topic. 10%

Final Presentation: Ten minute final presentation. 15%

Or...

Written Track (60% of final grade)

Assignment 1: Two-page written assignment. Why I am Choosing Written Track. 10%

Assignment 2: Two-page written assignment. Why I am Choosing This Topic. 10%

Planning Paper: Four-page written assignment. 15%

Theory Paper: Four-page paper on theory related to your topic. 10%

Final Presentation: Ten-page final paper. 15%

Reading responses (25% of final grade): You will be assigned readings based on textbook and primary source materials every week, for which you will need to complete reading response sheets. These need to be uploaded to Lulima in the designated folders. *Only reading responses that are received on time will receive credit.* There will also be opportunities to do additional readings and complete reading response sheets for extra credit.

Attendance and participation (10% of final grade): Attendance is mandatory because it leads to student success. A roster will be available at the beginning of class for you to sign. 1-2 absences are excusable. Each successive undocumented absence thereafter will result in the loss of 1 percentage point up to a maximum of 10%. If you are absent for more than twelve classes without documentation you **will** fail.

New Words (5%): You will be required to learn, accurately spell, and fit into speech 10 new college-level terms or words by the 3rd week of class. As this is based on your own personal learning curve, you need to find the words yourselves from within the weekly assigned readings or other appropriate sources. Words need to be posted on Lulima so we can discuss them as necessary.

Use of Technology in the Classroom: All cell phones must be switched off unless you need to keep yours on for familial reasons such as you are a caregiver, parent, or your partner is about to drop a baby. Notes may be taken by hand or on a laptop. Anyone seen using their laptop for non-immediate or non-educational purposes will be disallowed of the use of their laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.

KOKUA: Any student who feels they need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities), to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting work that has been **copied in whole or in part** from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea; paraphrasing a passage so closely 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. Papers that evidence plagiarism, even unintentional, will not be tolerated and may result in an F grade.