

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communication and Media Studies COMS 473 L01
POPULAR CULTURE
SUMMER 2018

Wed., July 4 - Wed., August 15 (excluding August 06th)
MW 1:00-3:45

Instructor: Maria Victoria Guglietti
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Office Hours: Noon to 1PM before class or by appointment

Course Description

A Communications Studies approach to the study of popular culture, including music, sport, television, film, comics, literature, gaming, theatre and public performance, the Internet and social networking, fashion, and advertising. Students will be introduced to critical tools for the deconstruction and evaluation of the social and cultural significance of popular cultural texts.

The class will explore a series of keywords related to the study of popular culture: high and low, selection, standardization, hegemony, ideology, participation, resistance, race, gender, taste, populism and convergence. These keywords will become the lenses that students will use to explore different popular culture expressions. In addition, the class will discuss the constitution of popular culture as an object of study.

Additional Information

Prerequisite: COMS 371

Objectives of the Course

- to learn key concepts related to popular culture studies.
- to develop a critical awareness of the dynamics of power in popular culture.
- to practice and improve critical reading skills.
- to enhance media literacy.

Textbooks and Readings

Storey, J. (Ed.) (2009). *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. 4th Ed. London, UK.: Routledge.

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of laptops for note taking is allowed in class. Students are expected to bring their laptops to work online during book reading discussions and in-class group activities. The use of cell-phones is not permitted during class time.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
25%	<p>In-class group activities: In groups of four, students will complete five open book assignments in class; each will require the theoretical analysis of a case study. Group activities are one hour long and are structured as questionnaires that require the application of theories studied in class. Each group assignment is 5%. The themes and deadlines of the activities are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining popular culture- July 11 2. Power and popular culture- July 18 3. Representation and popular culture- July 30 4. Exclusion and popular culture- August 8 5. Inclusion and popular culture- August 13 <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	July 11, 18 and 30; August 8 and 13.
20%	<p>Midterm- closed book- one hour The midterm will cover weeks 1 to 3 and will comprise both long and short answers.</p>	July 23
10%	<p>Case study presentations- 10 minutes each In groups of three, students will plan and deliver an oral presentation of a popular culture artifact or phenomenon. The presentation will introduce the class to the case study and introduce at least three connections to key concepts and theories studied in class. Each group is responsible to bring at least three questions for in-class discussion. The presentations will receive a group mark. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	TBD by groups. Dates available: July 16, 25 OR August 1.
15%	<p>Reading response- approx. 2-3 pages- individual assignment Students will write a reading response to a popular culture studies text from a selection provided by the instructor. The goal of the assignment is to reflect on the way popular culture studies produces knowledge about popular culture. Unlike a traditional paper, the response will address a questionnaire that will guide students in their critical reading and assessment of the academic text. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	TBD by students. Dates available: July 18 OR August 1
5%	<p>Participation- This grade will be assessed based on student's documented participation in at least five in-class reading discussions. Reading discussions will take place every class, and will require students to form groups of three members to discuss and answer a question assigned by the instructor. Students will sign in their names next to the question assigned as proof of participation.</p>	Ongoing. At least 5 instances of documented participation in class.
25%	<p>Final take-home exam- no word limit This final exam will be an evaluation of a cultural artifact or phenomenon through the systematic application of the theories studied in class. Unlike a typical discussion paper, students will articulate their analysis as a series of answers to a list of questions provided by the instructor. The final exam will be posted on D2L on August 8.</p>	August 15 at NOON

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments will be uploaded to D2L unless otherwise required except for the midterm.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments.

Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Students that anticipate delays in the submission of an assignment should arrange with the instructor, **PRIOR to the deadline**, an appropriate time to submit their work (at least a day in advance). **No late assignments will be accepted without a prior agreement between the instructor and student. Without this agreement late assignments will receive a zero.**

Any medical condition that causes the student to miss a test or an assignment's deadline should be justified with a medical certificate. If a test is missed and the medical certificate is presented the student will arrange with the instructor the time and form of a make-up test.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline. Students may use this day **ONLY ONCE** during the semester. Students using this day of grace must email the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day to avoid a late penalty, and write "grace" on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments will receive a percentage grade.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%

3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital library, at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333</p> <p>403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</p>
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</p> <p>403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Monday Room SA 147 1:00 to 3:45	Wednesday Room SA 147 1:00 to 3:45
Week 1 July 4		Topic: Introduction to the class and assignments. What is popular culture theory? How do we read it? How do we use it? Reading: Hall & Whannel, The Young Audience, pp. 45-51 ¹
Week 2 July 9, 11	Topic: High and Low. Introduction to case study group presentations, sign-in. Reading: Leavis, Mass civilization and minority culture, pp. 12-19	Topic: Selection Readings: Williams, The analysis of culture, pp. 32-40 Assignment: group activity 1.
Week 3 July 16, 18	Topic: Standardization Reading: Adorno, On popular music, pp. 63-74 Assignment: case study presentation 1, 2 and 3	Topic: Hegemony Readings: Storey, Rockin' Hegemony, pp. 88-97. Assignment: group activity 2; reading response (individual assignment)
Week 4 July 23, 25	Quiz 1 (60') Topic: Ideology Reading: Ang, Dallas and the ideology of mass culture, pp. 173-182	Topic: Participation/Resistance Readings: De Certeau, The practice of everyday life, pp. 545-555. Assignment: case study presentations 4, 5 and 6.
Week 5 July 30, August 1	Topic: Race Readings: Hall, What is this "black" in black popular culture? pp. 374-382. Assignment: group activity 3	Topic: Gender Readings: Gledhill, Pleasurable negotiations, pp. 98-110. Assignment: case study presentations 7, 8 and 9; reading response (individual assignment) ²
Week 6 August 6, 8	No class. Alberta Heritage Day	Topic: Taste Readings: Bourdieu, Distinction and the aristocracy of culture, pp. 498-507. Assignment: group activity 4 Distribution of take-home final exam instructions on D2L
Week 7 August 13, 15	Topic: Popular/Populism Readings: Fiske, The popular economy, pp. 564-580 Assignment: group activity 5	Class cancelled. Lecture dedicated to the completion of final take home. FINAL TAKE HOME DUE AT NOON (D2L dropbox)

¹ All readings are from Storey (2009), unless otherwise indicated.

² Deadline only for students who did not hand in their responses on July 18.