

Sociology of Popular Culture
SOC 3327-01, CID # 80874, 3 Credit Hours, Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Olena Leipnik
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Class location and time: CHSS 210; M, W 12:30 pm - 1:50 pm.
Office hours: CHSS 270 J: M: 2:00-3:30 pm, or by appointment.

COURSE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the critical analysis of popular culture in its cross-cultural and historical perspectives. It mainly focuses on the role and character of popular culture in American society, but also addresses globalization related issues. Different forms and aspects of popular culture are considered in their dynamic relation to the cultural mainstream, to the everyday lives of Americans, and to the core values of American society.

Upon completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

1. Understand the nature and the dynamics of popular culture, comprehend social, technological, political, and economic forces that underline cultural dynamics and patterns of cultural consumption.
2. Understand the role popular culture plays in social and individual lives, the way it influences people's attitudes, values, and lifestyles.
3. Critically evaluate the influence of popular culture on their own preferences with relation to cultural consumption.
4. Properly communicate their knowledge.

REQUIRED TEXT

Grazian, David. (2010). Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society. First edition. W. W. Norton & Company. SBN-13: 978-0393929522 ISBN-10: 0393929523

CONTENT DISCLAIMER

Due to the content of popular culture, some of the topics discussed in class and the materials that demonstrate these topics might be controversial, sensitive, or offensive in nature. Issues related to politics, religion, race, gender, and sexuality are explicitly addresses in the classroom. Some of the video, music video or lyrics, commercials, and other products of mass consumption shown and discussed in class might include scenes or otherwise present content of violence and profanity.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In this class, we regularly address topics related to individual and group identity; this increases the possibility that class participants choose to, or accidentally disclose / address their identity or life circumstances in a class discussion. We welcome the diversity as one of our biggest strengths, and we seek to provide a safe, inclusive, and enabling environment for everyone. Judgmental or derogative comments, or other actions with regard to identity, life circumstances, or opinions are unacceptable and might result in administrative actions.

CLASSWORK AND GRADING

Tests. There are two tests each worth 50 points based on the reading materials, video shown in class or assigned to watch, and what is discussed in class. Each test contains 25 questions (multiple choice, T/F, and multiple answer) worth two points each. Tests are formalized, and scantrons are used for grading. There are no essay questions on tests. Students, who are tardy for an exam are allowed to take it only if they start before the first person in the class completes it. Usage or visible presence of electronic devises during the test are strictly prohibited and will result in annulling the test score with no opportunity of re-taking it. If you are aware of a schedule conflict on the test day (job/service assignment, job interview, planned doctors visit, job/duty related travel), inform the instructor prior to the test day. Upon completing a test, you must turn your test copy in together with your scantron.

Quizzes. There are three quizzes over video shown in class, worth 20 points each. Quizzes are formalized, a scantron is required.

Synopses. For each of the 10 chapter, you will have to turn in a synopsis worth 20 points. Synopses are due by 12:30 of Monday of the week for which a chapter is scheduled.

Special topics in-class exercises. Each of the 10 special topics include an in-class exercise worth 10 points. Three of these exercises result in a brief paper that has to be turned in, and each paper is worth 20 points.

Final project. Final project includes a group work, individual work, and a final individual presentation. It is worth 80 points.

Make-up. Project work and presentation, special topics in-class exercises are not available for makeup. Quizzes, special topic papers, synopses, and the tests might be offered for makeup on the instructor's discretion. For the instructor to consider, you have to provide a documentation that excuses your absence(s) or to speak to the instructor about the expected schedule conflict at least a week prior the date when the assignment/test you is administered.

Tracking your grades. Tracking your absences and grades is your responsibility. Make sure your grades are posted on Blackboard—Gradebook. If a grade for the work you have done is missing, let the instructor know ASAP, and not later than two weeks after the test/assignment was administrated / turned in. You can discuss your grades anytime during the semester. Grades are not negotiated at any time.

Grade chart: You can earn up to 400 points for this course: 100 points (two tests) + 60 points (three video quizzes) + 100 points (ten special topics exercises) + 60 points (three special topics papers) + 80 points (one final project).

A: 360 – 400 points

B: 320 – 359 points

C: 280 – 319 points

D: 240 – 279 points

F: 239 points or fewer.

COURSE / INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

Toward the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete the IDEA evaluation form. Through the semester, you are welcome to share with the instructor your feedback on which learning strategies work for you best and which do not, and ideas on how to improve your leaning experience in this class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with Disabilities Policy. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered, and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy. Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to: cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials, removing or attempting to remove a test, its answers, or any portion of the test from the testing venue.

For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>, or <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

ATTENDANCE POLICY & CONDUCT IN CLASS

Roll is taken at every class meeting as is required by university policy. Try not to be late to class. If you are tardy, you still may come in. If you need to leave earlier, let the instructor know before the class period starts. If you leave the classroom after signing the roll, you are considered absent. Signing the roll for another person or having another person signing for you is considered an abuse of academic ethics. Unauthorized absence of more than 2 class periods is considered a failure to meet the attendance requirements. There is no reduction of points for missed classes, but extra credit points might not be count toward your final grade. You are responsible for tracking your own attendance. If you miss a class due to illness or family/personal issues, you do not have to email the instructor (unless special arrangements for you were made for that day); instead, make sure that when you are back to class, you have a document that covers your absence. Only documented absences are considered authorized.

All students with no exceptions are expected to follow the rules of conduct for students at SHSU. Section 5.2.22 of The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline: defines classroom disturbances: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. Come to class on time, prepared, participate in class activities, be respectful to and considered of others. You are expected to take the notes in class. The use of electronic devices for taking notes is at the instructor’s discretion. Taking pictures in class (for instance, of the PowerPoint presentation on the screen) and/or recording the lectures and class activities are prohibited unless the instructor explicitly invites you to do so. Cell-phone use, surfing online, side conversations, regular cases of tardiness or living class earlier without a legitimate reason discussed with the instructor early in the semester, aggressive or otherwise challenging behavior are a violation of the rules of conduct. Cheating or the use of electronic devices during the test/quiz will result in the annulment of the test/quiz score with no further opportunity of taking this test. Violation of the classroom rules of conduct, including the electronic communicational devices no-use policy will result in reduction or annulation of the extra-credit points. If after two verbal warnings and an email from the instructor a student continues violate the policy, the instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the student’s grade. Each case of violation will result in deduction of five points. The instructor reserves the right to ask any student(s) to leave class if she believes that the behavior of the student(s) is disrespectful or disruptive to the class and the learning environment.

COURSE OUTLINE & CALENDAR

Week, dates	Reading and other assignments	chapter
Week 1 Aug 23	Sociological study of culture	-
Week 2 Aug 28, 30	The social organization of popular culture	1
Week 3 Sep 4, 6	A functionalist approach to popular culture Special topic: Sports	2
Week 4 Sep 11, 13	A critical approach to popular culture Special topic: : Music video / paper	3
Week 5 Sep 18, 20	An interaction approach to popular culture Special topic: The construction of gender and race. Video quiz 1	4
Week 6 Sep 25, 27	Creating popular culture Special topic: Political advertisement. Test 1	5
Week 7 Oct 2, 4	How the media and culture industries work Special topic: Music genres and the key metaphor / paper	6
Week 8 Oct 9, 11	Cultural consumption and social class Special topic: “Trash” culture. Video quiz 2	7
Week 9 Oct 16, 18	Audiences and the quest for meaning Special topic: Religion and pop culture	8
Week 10 Oct 23, 15	Cultural consumption and style in everyday life Special topic: Conspicuous consumption / paper .	9
Week 11 Oct 30, Nov 1	Popular culture and mass media in the digital age Special topic: Death in popular culture. Video quiz 3	10
Week 12 Nov 6, 8	The social media and popular culture Special topic: Laugh in culture. Test 2	A/r
Week 13 Nov 13, 15	Group and individual work on projects	-
Week 14 Nov 20, 21	Project presentations. November 22 – 24 Thanksgiving break	-
Week 15 Nov 27, 29,	Project presentations	-
Weeks 16 Dec 4 – 8	Final examination week. This class has no final.	-

The syllabus is a subject to change. You will be notified of any changes.