

INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE POPC 1600, SPRING 2024

M/W/F 10:30-11:20 CENTRAL HALL (CLHL) 1008

INSTRUCTOR: JOE MACDONALD **OFFICE:** SHATZEL 342
JKMACDO@BGSU.EDU **HOURS:** THURSDAY 11A-1PM
419.372.7122

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce you to a variety of critical approaches used in the study of popular culture. Although this course will draw on your familiarity with popular culture, we will approach the subject from a scholarly perspective. The overall objective is to explore how popular culture, in all its various forms, not only reflects the world around us but also how it influences the way we perceive the world. Every day we are exposed to thousands of images, sounds and experiences that we understand as natural – as just the way the world is. But this everyday life we take for granted is anything but natural. It is both the product and the creator of a shared worldview. We will examine a wide range of subjects (such as film, television, music, advertising, the internet, and geography) using a wide range of critical approaches (such as genre theory, gender studies, semiotics, and political economy), so we can better understand how contemporary American culture shapes our lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (to be assessed with the final essay assignment):

BGP Student Learning Outcomes (<i>Humanities & Arts</i>)	POPC 1600 Student Learning Outcomes
HA1. Apply humanistic modes of inquiry and interpretation in the illustration of the discipline's connection to human values.	LO1. Explore the connection between popular culture and social values
HA2. Demonstrate a fundamental critical understanding of the role of arts, language, and/or media in culture and society.	LO2. Understand the role of popular culture and the way it reflects and influences culture and society
HA3. Examine how the social and cultural contexts of creative endeavors arise over a variety of historical periods.	LO3. Examine the social and cultural context of popular culture products and practices
HA4. Illustrate the development of verbal and non-verbal communication in the humanities and/or the arts.	LO4. Improve communication skills by reading about, writing about, and discussing popular culture

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Readings will be posted on Canvas.
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GRADING SCALE:

- A = 90-100 pts; B = 80-89.9 pts; C = 70-79.9 pts; D = 60-69.9 pts; F = 0-59.9 pts
 - Total points for the course = 100
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Please note: all assignments written outside of class must be submitted via Canvas and will be run through the TurnItIn plagiarism detection service.

- 10 pts** **Participation and attendance**
- 5 pts = participation: class discussions, group work or other small assignments
 - Group Work: Most Fridays, we will be splitting into groups. Students will be given activities to complete related to the lectures and topics from the week (EX: If a topic discussed during the week was hegemony, I might ask you to get into groups and find examples of it in the media and popular culture, then we can discuss your findings as a class.)
 - 5 pts = attendance (taken at every class)
- 10 pts** **Fandom Essay**: A 3-page essay where students may write about a fandom and/or subculture to which they belong or identify with. Students will be asked to explain why they identify with this fandom and its larger significance to popular culture. Academic sources can be used but creativity is also encouraged. **DUE: 2/16**
- 10 pts** **Research Essay**: A 5-page **Research Essay** applying one or more of the central concepts discussed in the course to analyze how a specific example of popular culture shapes the attitudes or values of its audience. Three academic sources must be discussed and cited: **DUE: 4/12**
- 5 pts** **Research Essay Proposal**: Before the essay, you will be required to submit a proposal on your chosen topic. In 250-500 words, you will explain what you want to write about and how your topic relates to Popular Culture. **DUE: 3/11**
- 5 pts** **Meeting with Instructor**: Following your proposal, students will be required to meet with me in my office to discuss my comments and any questions and concerns you may have regarding your essay. **These will take place between 3/15 – 3/29**
- 10pts** **Weekly Reaction Discussion Boards**: With the exception of Week 9 (Spring Break), You will be doing readings each week; these discussion boards are your chance to discuss your thoughts. On Canvas Discussion Boards, which will be found in the weekly module, students will write 1-2 paragraphs on any reading done during that week, and then respond to another student in a few sentences. Additionally, I may ask 1-2 students who had thoughtful or inciteful posts to read their post to the class and discuss it with us. (This will be done only with permission of the poster granted before class time.) Students have the right to skip as many as three of these during the semester; any more than three will result in a reduced grade. **Due every Thursday (Starting 1/18), on Canvas, by 11:59pm.**
- 15 pts** **Exam 1**: Covers material from weeks 1-4 including lectures, readings, and class discussions. **DATE: 2/5**
- 15 pts** **Exam 2**: Covers material from weeks 5-7 including lectures, readings, and class discussions. **DATE: 2/28**
- 20 pts** **Final exam**: This will cover everything from weeks 8-15 at length. **DATE: Tuesday 4/23, 8:00am-10:30am**

CLASS SCHEDULE

How to Use Reading Schedule: Readings must be done by the day they are listed.
(Example: “Why Study Pop Culture?” must be read before class on 1/10)

WEEK 1	TOPIC WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE AND WHY DO WE STUDY IT?
1/8	INTRODUCTIONS
1/10	TOPIC: Intro to popular culture studies: why study it? READING: “Why Study Popular Culture?” (Caticha)
1/12	TOPIC: Hegemony READING: “What Do Women Watch?” (Maher)
WEEK 2	TOPIC: Globalization and Semiotics
1/15	BGSU CLOSED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
1/17	TOPIC: Globalization and Americanization READING: “Jihad vs. McWorld” (Barber)
1/19	TOPIC: Semiotics READING: “The Thematic Paradigm” (Ray), “Careful, You Might Run Out of Planet” (Goewey)
WEEK 3	TOPIC: Politics, Class, Marx, and Consumerism
1/22	TOPIC: Political Economy READING: “Marxism in a Nutshell” (Gasper), “The Invisible Poor” (Newman)
1/24	TOPIC: Consumption READING: “The Parable of the Democracy of Goods” (Marchand)
1/26	TOPIC: Fandom I – Consumerism READING: “I Love <i>Rick and Morty</i> and I Hate Its Fans” (Fitzmaurice)
WEEK 4	TOPIC: Fandom and Genre
1/29	TOPIC: Fandom II – Fan Fiction READING: “The Promise and Potential of Fan Fiction” (Burt)
1/31	TOPIC: Genre – Mediums and The Genre Cycle READING: “Monster Movies: A Sexual Theory” (Evans)
2/2	TOPIC: GROUP EXAM REVIEW
WEEK 5	TOPIC: AUDIENCE THEORY (EXAM 1 FEBRUARY 5TH)
2/5	TOPIC: EXAM 1 (On Topics Discussed in Weeks 1-4)
2/7	TOPIC: Knowing Your Audience READING: “Interactive Audiences” (Jenkins)
2/9	TOPIC: Encoding/Decoding READING: “Watching TV Makes You Smarter” (Johnson)
WEEK 6	TOPIC: Race, Gender, and Sexuality (FANDOM ESSAY DUE FEBRUARY 16TH)
2/12	TOPIC: Race READING: “Black-ish Pushes The Televised Black Family Forward” (Dozier)
2/14	TOPIC: Gender READINGS: “Baby” (hooks), “Desert Hearts” (McCullough)
2/16	TOPIC: Sexuality and Queer Theory READING: “How Queer is Star Trek?” (Tremeer) FANDOM ESSAY DUE
WEEK 7	TOPIC: The Body and Disability Theory
2/19	TOPIC: Stereotyping READING: “Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes” (Snyder)
2/21	TOPIC: The Body READING: Three short reviews of the book <i>Golem Girl</i> by Riva Lehrer: Kirkus Reviews The Booklist Reviews

	<u>Publisher's Weekly Reviews</u>
2/23	TOPIC: Disability Theory READING: "Portrayals of Autism on Television" (Singer)
WEEK 8	TOPIC: Midterm Exam (EXAM 2 FEBRUARY 28TH)
2/26	TOPIC: GROUP EXAM REVIEW
2/28	TOPIC: EXAM 2 (On Topics Discussed in Weeks 5-7)
3/1	TOPIC: How To Write Essay Proposals
WEEK 9	SPRING BREAK
3/4	BGSU CLOSED: SPRING BREAK
3/6	SPRING BREAK
3/8	SPRING BREAK
WEEK 10	Subcultures and Countercultures (RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE March 11th)
3/11	TOPIC: Introduction to Subcultures and Counter Cultures; What is the difference? READING: N/A <u>RESEARCH ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE</u>
3/13	TOPIC: Subcultures READING: "Goth: Suburban High Schools, The Cure, and The Secret of Happiness" (Spitz)
3/15	TOPIC: Counter-Cultures READING: "The Beatles and the Counterculture" (Corry) MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR (3/15-3/29)
WEEK 11	TOPIC: Geography (MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR CONTINUE)
3/18	TOPIC: Location's Influence on Popular Culture READING: (Blog Post) "Anime Expo" https://www.anime-expo.org/2023/08/08/anime-expo-2023-celebrates-32nd-anniversary-with-attendees-from-over-60-countries-over-400-exhibitors-and-1000-hours-of-programming/
3/20	TOPIC: Mapping READING: "Cultural Mapping: What Is It and What Does It Tell Me?" (McIntyre) https://www.tota.world/article/1148/
3/22	TOPIC: Private/Public Space READING: "Borders of the Bat: Batman's Liminal Heroism" (Gaine)
WEEK 12	TOPIC: Heroes, Celebrities, and Myths (MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR CONTINUE)
3/25	TOPIC: The Outlaw Hero READING: N/A
3/27	TOPIC: The Official Hero READING: "What Makes Superman So Darned American" (Engle)
3/29	TOPIC: Myths READING: "Creating The Myth" (Seger)
WEEK 13	TOPIC: More Myths, Rituals and Ceremonies
4/1	TOPIC: Mythical Rituals READING: (Blog Post) "Cult, Art, and Ritual of Greek Religions" (Hackney) https://blogs.uoregon.edu/rel399f14drreis/2014/10/07/cult-art-and-ritual-of-greek-religions/
4/3	TOPIC: Different Cultural Traditions READING: (Blog Post) "A Brief History of the Chinese New Year" (Richardson) https://worldtreasures.org/blog/a-brief-history-of-the-chinese-new-year
4/5	TOPIC: Modern Ceremonial Traditions READING: "The Ultimate List of Wedding Blogs" https://www.idaliaphotography.com/ultimate-list-of-wedding-blogs/
WEEK 14	TOPIC: Postmodernism (RESEARCH ESSAY DUE APRIL 12TH)
4/8	NO CLASS (TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE)
4/10	TOPIC: Nostalgia READING: (Blog Post) "Millennials Splurge for Nostalgia" (The NOW Gen Blog and Podcast) https://thenowgen.121corp.com/marketing/millennials-splurge-for-nostalgia/
4/12	TOPIC: Hyperreality READING: (Blog Post) "Hyperreality in Popular Culture" https://mediaandsociety.org/hyperreality-in-popular-culture/

	ACADEMIC ESSAY DUE
WEEK 15	TOPIC: New Media (FINAL EXAM REVIEW APRIL 19TH)
4/15	TOPIC: Social Media and the Imagined Community READING: "My So-Called Blog" (Nussbaum)
4/17	TOPIC: Participatory Culture READING: "The American Idol Effect: Audience Participatory Content" (Krishnan)
4/19	LAST CLASS FINAL EXAM REVIEW
FINALS	
	FINAL EXAM, 8am-10:30am, Tuesday, April 23rd CLHL 1008

*This syllabus is our starting point. The instructor reserves the right to modify the course and assignments as the semester progresses. **Check your email once every 24 hours** for important information.*

*All TA-taught sections of Introduction to Popular Culture are coordinated by a faculty supervisor. **If you have any questions or concerns about this course**, please contact Prof. Becca Cragin at bcragin@bgsu.edu.*

CLASS POLICIES

Academic Honesty Policy

If any portion of your work in this course violates common standards of academic honesty, your dean will be notified, and you'll receive a penalty ranging from a zero on an assignment up to failing the course as a whole.

Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Submitting an assignment (or a portion of an assignment) written by someone else
- Submitting an assignment to more than one class without both instructors' permission
- Using materials not approved by the instructor during an assignment.
- Including general ideas, exact words, or overall structure of someone else's work without citation

Ignorance is not accepted by BGSU as an excuse for academic dishonesty, so read the policy and ask questions.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken every class, and more than one week's worth of unexcused absences (your "free passes") will lower your participation grade; students with excessive unexcused absences may have their overall grade reduced, up to a failing grade for the course. "Free passes" are to be used for: oversleeping, work conflicts, interviews, etc.

The only absences that are excused are those due to:

- Severe weather.
- Religious holidays (with advance notice).
- Participation in BGSU events (with advance notice and documentation).
- Illness (with documentation) or family emergencies (with documentation)

First Day Attendance Policy:

In accordance with the University's First Day Attendance Policy, instructors in the Department of Popular Culture will record the names of students who do not attend the first session of this class and request that they be "dropped" so that seats are made available for other students. An exception will be made if a non-attending student has an excusable circumstance and has contacted the instructor prior to the first-class meeting.

Makeup Examination / Late Assignment Policy:

- For unexcused absences when assignments are due/exams given:

Late assignments/makeup exams will be marked down one letter grade per day late.

- For excused, short absences (1-3 classes missed) when assignments are due/exams given:
Late assignments/makeup exams must be completed within 2 weeks of returning to class
- For excused, extended absences (4+ classes missed) when assignments are due/exams given:
Late assignments/makeup exams must be completed within 3 weeks of returning to class.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to complete makeup examinations by these deadlines.

Disability Policy: 1

Portions of this course can be modified to make learning easier for students with disabilities. A student who requires accommodations must do the following at the *beginning* of the semester:

- Contact the Office of Accessibility Services
- Provide the documentation so we can discuss the accommodation(s).

Recording/Electronic Devices Policy:

Students may use recording devices or other electronic devices (cell phones, laptop computers, etc.) in class so long as they are being used for academic purposes only. Please turn alarms and ringers completely off at the start of class.

Classroom Food/Drink Policy:

Students may eat and drink during class if they do so quietly.

OTHER REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS

[The inclusion of the statements below is required by state and federal law. These will be the same in all your courses].

Student Conduct

A community exists on the basis of shared values and principles. At BGSU, students, recognized student organizations, and student groups are expected to uphold and abide by certain standards of conduct. You should familiarize yourself with the Codes, which create a set of expectations for student conduct, ensure a fair process for determining responsibility when student behavior may have deviated from those expectations, and provide appropriate sanctions when a student and/or student organization has violated the Code(s).

- Students who violate faculty expectations as outlined in the syllabus may be subject to conduct action.
- If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 419-372-2843 or odos@bgsu.edu.
- View the [Student Handbook](#).
- Learn more about and view the [Code of Academic Conduct](#).
- Learn more about and view the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Title IX

Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form are antithetical to the university's mission and core values, violate university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. Faculty members are considered "Mandatory Reporters" and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and relationship violence to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please visit the [Title IX webpage](#) to access information about university support and resources.

Accessibility Services

[Accessibility Services](#) provides equal access and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities attending BGSU. Students wishing to discuss their eligibility for such accommodations are encouraged to contact the office at phone: 419-372-8495, fax: 419-372-8496, or email: access@bgsu.edu.

Religious Accommodations

In addition to participation/attendance/absence policies already listed, you may have up to three (3) excused absences each academic semester, without penalty, to take time off for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. You are required to notify me in writing of specific dates requested for excused absences and/or alternative accommodation no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the first day of instruction for this course. After necessary notification, you should consult with me to determine an appropriate alternative opportunity that will be provided to help you complete your academic responsibilities for the course. These requests will remain confidential. The Office of Registration & Records maintains a list of [accommodated religious holidays](#). Please note that this list is not exhaustive of all holidays. For more information about the [Student Religious Accommodations policy](#), you may contact the Dean of Students at odos@bgsu.edu or 419-372-2843.

Freedom of Expression

Bowling Green State University, as a public institution, is committed to freedom of expression and the rights protected by the First Amendment. First Amendment rights have implications inside the classroom as well. Review the [Office of the Dean of Students page regarding Freedom of Expression](#) at Bowling Green State University for more information including the policy. To report concerns please visit the [See It. Hear It. Report It.](#) page.

Student Veteran-friendly Campus

BGSU educators recognize student veterans' rights when entering and exiting the university system. If you are a student veteran, please communicate with your instructor so reasonable accommodations can be made for absence when drilling or being called to active duty. Refer to the [Veterans](#) page.

University Closure

In most cases, the University will not close for winter conditions unless the Sheriff's Department from the county in which your campus is located declares a Level 3 emergency. Once the decision is made to delay, cancel or close, individuals will be notified through AlertBG, email, the BGSU homepage, BGSU social media channels and the news media (see the [Emergency Cancellation Delay and Closing Policy and Procedures](#) document for a list of radio and television stations).

Non-Discrimination in Employment and Education

Bowling Green State University is committed to maintaining an employment and educational environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of protected class. Retaliation against any person for asserting their legal rights to be free from discrimination or harassment, for reporting discrimination or harassment, or for participating in activities is strictly prohibited. You may review BGSU's Non-Discrimination in Employment and Education policy for more information. To report concerns, please visit the [See It. Hear It. Report It.](#) page.