



Topics in Popular Culture

				
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Course Description

Topics in Popular Culture introduces a range of theoretical approaches to study popular culture, exploring the intersection between everyday life, mass media, and broader political and historical contexts of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Students learn how popular culture influences the ways we imagine, think and feel about ourselves and our social worlds, and how issues of race, class, gender, and disability are represented and shaped by popular culture. The course also examines how popular culture appears in many forms in our daily life such as the Internet, the media, film, comic books, video games, clothing fashions, and food, emphasizing popular culture as a site of ongoing political and social struggle.

Suggested Texts and other resources

Assigned readings and media content on BB (All readings will be made available in Blackboard (<https://pibb.scu.edu.cn>) under the “Content” tab).

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Understand the basic theoretical approaches in popular culture studies
2. Develop higher thinking skills and apply educated vocabulary and concepts when analyzing popular culture
3. Communicate ideas and arguments about popular cultural issues with fluency and clarity

4. Understand how popular culture interacts, maintains, and emphasizes social inequalities and power structures in society.
5. Evaluate popular culture from differing viewpoints and perspectives and identify the strengths and flaws of each stance.

Weekly Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class at the instructor's discretion.

Week 1	Introduction to the course. Group Projects Assigned.
Week 2	What is popular culture? How does culture spread?
Week 3	Language and Culture
Week 4	Identity Construction: The Self vs. The "other"
Week 5	Social Class
Week 6	Race and ethnicity
Week 6	Gender and Sexuality
Week 7	Globalization
Week 8	Class Projects Review
Week 9	Ideology and Hegemony
Week 10	Capitalism
Week 11	Advertisement and consumption
Week 12	Commodification
Week 13	Popular culture and Media
Week 14	Class Projects Presentation
Week 15	Class Projects Presentation
Week 16	Final Workshop
Week 17	Final Project Submission

Assignments and Evaluation

There are no exams or quizzes on this course. This course is project-based and will require significant commitment. The course includes a combination of reading, writing, viewing, in-class discussion, and a final research project. The following **four** components are vital to the successful completion of this course. Details of the assignments will be uploaded to the Blackboard.

1. Homework (20%)

Students will have homework throughout the semester (including readings, images, videos, maps and/or visualizations to address each subject). Themes, questions, resources, and ideas related to our weekly discussions will be shared online on Bb. Questions and projects for homework will be assigned weekly. Students should submit their homework no later than the Friday night before class. Students will be responsible for leading and actively participating in class discussions based on their homework.

2. Group Presentation (20%)

In small groups, students will be expected to prepare a creative and interactive group presentation on one of the week's topics. The presentation will be assigned on a weekly basis. There will be a brief Q&A after each presentation and students are expected to contribute and give feedback on other students' presentations. The time frame for each presentation is 15 to 30 minutes, including the Q&A session.

3. Final Writing Project (40%)

Students will conduct their final research project on a chosen theme in a specific theme on new media. The rubric and further instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

4. Attendance and Participation (20%)

The final grade will be greatly affected by students' attendance and participation, which includes discussions, Blackboard forums, and any other assignments inside and outside of class. For each part of a class period missed, a student will receive a deduction of half the point value of a full absence for that day. Class participation will be assessed holistically based on students' engagement in class activities.

Grade Composition:

Class letter grade is given within the following score ranges:

90.00 – 100.00 A 85.00 – 89.99 A- 80.00 – 84.99 B+ 76.00 – 79.99 B 73.00 – 75.99 B- 70.00 – 72.99 C+ 66.00 – 69.99 C 63.00 – 65.99 C- 60.00 – 62.99 D 0.00– 9.99 F
GPA grades will be further determined based on the given letter grades to show on your transcripts.

Attendance Policy:

Students' attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will bear a penalty of half a letter grade (e.g., from a B to a B- or from a B- to a C+). For each part of a class period missed a student will receive a deduction of half the point value of a full absence. More

than three absences will result in a failing grade for the semester. If you are feeling unwell or need to miss a class, inform the instructor ahead of time by email.

Class Participation

Active participation is crucial for language learning. Participating in class makes you an engaged learner. In this class, participation includes:

- arriving to class on time
- staying on task (including appropriate use of technology)
- actively listening to your classmates and teacher when they speak in class
- asking questions
- bringing all class materials
- attending class regularly
- completing all homework on time
- actively and constructively participating in class activities
- being prepared to answer questions
- using only English in class

Special Learning Needs:

If you have a disability or health consideration that requires accommodation, please let me know how I can accommodate you. The sooner you let us know your needs, the better I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in all your courses.

The Use of Electronic Technology Policy:

Technology is meant to improve the learning environment for all students. Please be respectful of your instructor and classmates and use the technology appropriately. Students can use electronic technology (laptops, tablets, and iPads) in appropriate ways during classes. Out of respect, cell phones should generally be turned off or on silent and stored out of sight. They should not be used during classroom activities unless the instructor has given permission.

Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may NOT record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly recorded in advance can be used solely for the student's private study.

Make-up Policy for Missed Assignments

Students are responsible for the assignments in their classes. Assignments include in-class activities, quizzes, tests, homework, and any other work related to classes.

- If you are absent from class, you should try to contact one of the students in your class to find out what work or assignment was missing.
- If you cannot find out what class work you have missed, you must talk to your instructors about the missed work and if/when you can make up the work. You are responsible for talking to your teacher; your teacher is not responsible for reminding you about missed work.
- If you are absent from class on the due date of an assignment, you must hand in the assignment on a date decided by your teacher.

- If you know you will be absent, talk to your teacher before you leave or email your teacher to find out about the work that you will miss while you are away.
- If you have not been absent from class and you want to hand in an assignment late, you must first discuss the reason with your teacher before or on the due date. Do not assume that your teacher will accept late assignments. Also, you may lose points for late work based on teacher discretion.
- If you are given a second chance to make up an assignment and you miss the chance, you may receive a “0” for that assignment.

Use of Machine Translation and Other Online Writing and Language Tools

While students are encouraged to use online dictionaries and other language resources, they should not rely on machine translators or other AI tools for large sections of text. If an instructor believes that a project was written or generated using machine translation or AI, the instructor reserves the right to reject the assignment.

SCUPI Honor Code

Students must follow the SCUPI Honor Code. This means that students should not get help from anyone or outside sources to do their work without the teacher’s permission; nor copy the work of another and present it as their own work. Participating in these activities can result in an F and referral to university officials for academic integrity violations.

Student Responsibility

This syllabus is a contract between you and the instructor. It is the first place you should look for answers to your questions about course requirements, expectations, and policies. By enrolling in this course, you agree to adhere to the requirements, expectations, and policies outlined in this syllabus, including sections on the SCUPI Honor Code. Students who fail to submit their work on time or miss more than 3 classes could receive a failing grade and may not graduate.