



Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies

Summer 2015

READING POPULAR CULTURE – HUMN 3001

Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:50am-2:50pm

Room 516, Annex Building (MCC), 113 McCaul Street

Dave Colangelo, dcolangelo@faculty.ocadu.ca

Office Hours & Location: Fridays, 10am-11am or by appointment, Room 325

Credit Value: 0.5

Prerequisite: 0.5 credit of 200 level LAS course, or permission of the instructor. HUMN 2B16 Twentieth Century Ideas is strongly recommended.

Antirequisite: Students who have taken ACAD 2B14 or HUMN 2B14 may not take this course for further credit.

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the mass media as a dominant form of culture which socializes us while providing the materials for social reproduction and change. The emphasis of the course is on the stimulation of critical reflection and debate relevant to an understanding of various popular cultural genres in contemporary Canadian and global cultures. In studying various genres, including soap opera, science fiction, fashion and dance music, we compare different analytical approaches to reading culture and questioning the politics of representation, distribution, production, and consumption.

BIOGRAPHY OF COURSE LEADER:

Dave Colangelo is an adjunct professor at OCAD University. He holds an MA in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths College, University of London and a PhD in Communication and Culture from Ryerson University. His research and writing has investigated masculinity in popular culture, screen cultures in educational settings, and the impact of digital media on public art, curation, architecture, and scholarship. Colangelo's writing has appeared in *C Magazine* and *The Journal of Curatorial Studies*. His work as a media artist (with collaborator Patricio Davila) has been presented at the International Symposium for Electronic Art (Istanbul 2011, Sydney 2013), Nuit Blanche, the Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism in Shenzhen/Hong Kong (2013-14), and in the *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Available for purchase from the OCAD bookstore (51 McCaul Street):

Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman, *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* 3rd Ed. (Toronto: Nelson, 2013).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will employ theories and concepts to think critically about their own role as consumers and producers of popular culture.
- Students will learn to critically analyze popular culture using key concepts in cultural theory.
- Students will come to understand the primary debates in the study, criticism, and interpretation of popular culture.
- Students will add to their abilities to articulate criticism through participation in class discussions and in written assignments.

COURSE ORGANIZATION:

The major part of the course consists of weekly classes (two per week) which may consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, and group work or exercises. Students are expected to read the required readings, attend all classes, participate in all activities and contribute to discussion.

Most lectures will be based on textbook readings. At times, lectures will consist of themes related to textbook information but not explicitly elaborated on in it. This is necessary in order to examine different perspectives and knowledge that the textbook does not touch upon but is nonetheless important to a broader understanding of popular culture.

Plan to accommodate a minimum of 4-5 hours per week of homework for this course. Absences from class must be supported with official documentation; three unsupported absences may jeopardize your standing in the course.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE:

Assignment	% of grade	Due Date
In-Class Reading Response	10%	July 15, 2015
Essay Proposal	10%	July 22, 2015
Midterm Test	20%	July 29, 2015
Final Essay	25%	August 7, 2015
Final Test	25%	August 14, 2015
Participation*	10%	Cumulative

There is no final exam for this course.

In-Class Reading Response – 10%

This 30-min assignment will be based on the section 'Coffee as Popular Culture' in Chapter 1 of *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*. This is a modified open-book assignment. You are allowed to use your textbook only (you will not be permitted to use your lecture notes or other materials).

Essay Proposal – 10 %

Students must submit a one-page description detailing their proposed essay topic (see description of Final Essay below before you begin). Your proposal should explain your topic, your main argument/thesis, concepts you will be using from the course and how you will use them to develop your argument. Your proposal must be in full sentences not in point form. In addition, you must include an annotated bibliography for three (3) secondary sources that you intend to use for your final essay. Your annotated bibliography should be between 1-2 pages, and must follow your essay proposal.

Midterm Test – 20%

The Midterm Test will include matching, multiple answer, short answer, and true/false questions.

Final Essay – 25%

For your final essay, you must choose a popular culture artefact (a movie, TV show, song/band/singer/performer, website, advertising/brand campaign etc.), and analyze it or interpret it critically using theoretical approaches studied in class. Your essay must concentrate on the reproduction of dominant ideology in the popular culture artefact of your choice, and may investigate possibilities for resistance or subversion of the dominant ideology latent within popular culture. In addition, you must use (at least) three (3) secondary sources from academic journals (not books) to support the arguments you make in your essay. Your essay must be approx. 2000 words (not including your bibliography/works cited).

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

All written assignments must begin with an introduction that explains the main argument or thesis that is going to be developed in the rest of your essay. Arguments must then proceed logically and build upon your main argument/thesis. Your essay will be marked based on your understanding of the assignment, your ability to synthesize ideas from course readings/lectures, the clarity and structure of your arguments, the originality of your ideas/arguments, and your ability to present your own voice in written form. Higher grades will be awarded to work that goes above and beyond the requirements for the assignment.

All writing assignments must be double-spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font, with page numbers. Margins must be set at 1.25". Please ensure that your name is on the first page of each written assignment. Bibliographies or works cited should appear on a new page at the end of your work. Use an MLA style guide for all written assignments. Please use internal citations; endnotes are preferred over footnotes, and should only be used to add detail that is not directly part of your main argument, but which you feel adds depth to your topic. All written assignments must have a title (be creative). Title pages are not necessary. All pages must be stapled; assignments bound by a paper clip or folder will not be accepted.

You may also consult *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, by Sylvan Barnet, for writing guidelines.

Final Test – 25%

The Final Test is cumulative and covers material from the entire course. The format will include matching, multiple answer, short answer, and true/false questions.

Participation – 10%

You are expected to attend classes regularly, and be prepared to make informed contributions to class discussions, having completed assigned readings prior to the classes for which they are assigned. Participation is based on timely and appropriate submission of assignments and appreciable endeavours to improve academic and learning skills. This mark does not include attendance, however, poor attendance will result in a lower participation mark.

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS & INCOMPLETE GRADES:

Late assignments will be deducted one mark per day (off of your final grade). Students should submit late assignments (hard copy) to my Liberal Studies mailbox but may send a digital copy by email beforehand for date verification only. Hard copies must be submitted the day following the submission of a digital copy. A hard copy of your assignment is required for grading. Late assignments will not be accepted one week after the scheduled due date (unless there is a legitimate reason, which will require official documentation).

Extensions: If you feel that you might need an extension on an assignment, please speak with me at least one week prior to the assignment deadline. Granting of extensions is solely at the discretion of your instructor, and only if, after speaking with me, I feel that your reason for needing an extension is justified. Otherwise, extensions will be granted only under extenuating circumstances, in which case official documentation will be required in order to justify the submission of a late assignment. Extensions will not be granted after the deadline has already passed.

CLASS CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS:

- 1) You must ensure you are properly registered for the course. If you have any concerns about your registration status, you may confirm on-line, confirm with the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences Office, or contact the Office of the Registrar. Please first check your registration and read the codes carefully (the codes are clearly explained in the Course Calendar which is available on-line at www.ocadu.ca).
- 2) You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner respectful of your instructor and your fellow students. This includes, at a minimum:
 - Arriving on time
 - Turning off your cell phone upon arrival
 - If late, entering the classroom with the least disruption
 - Not interrupting or speaking when someone else has the floor
 - Using your laptop appropriately (i.e. not for email)

ABSENCES AND MAKE UP TESTS

Only under very special circumstances may students hand in late assignments or be absent from classes or tests/exams. If a student is sick, it is incumbent upon the student to notify the Instructor (and the Office of the Registrar, in the case of missed final exams) with proper documentation as soon as possible. Students with special needs must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities, ext. 339 at least two weeks prior to the test or assignment.

ABSENCE FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES:

A student who foresees a conflict between a religious obligation and any scheduled class assignments, including the final examination, must notify his/her instructor in writing and in the case of final examinations must make a written request to the Office of the Registrar within three weeks of publishing of the syllabus and/or the final exam schedule.

PLAGIARISM AND REFERENCING YOUR RESEARCH SOURCES:

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's ideas, opinions, writings, etc. and representing them as one's own. You plagiarize whenever you borrow another scholar's ideas or quote directly from a work without giving credit through proper citation or acknowledgement. Plagiarism is a serious offense at OCADU (please see OCADU's Policy in the OCADU Academic Calendar). Any assignment in which the ideas of another author are intentionally represented without acknowledgement and/or presented as the student's own work will receive a grade of zero. Please see the following web link for more information. [<Web link to the academic policy on plagiarism>](#)

ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Each student has final responsibility for her or his conduct. Students are expected to be aware of and abide by the regulations as they have been established in OCAD U's academic and non-academic policies, which can be found on the OCAD U website at the following web link [<Web link to Student Policies>](#) under "Student Policies". These policies outline the responsibility of students to "conduct themselves appropriately and reflect the highest standards of integrity in non-academic as well as academic behaviour". All allegations of misconduct will be reported and investigated as per the current policies.

WEEKLY READINGS & CLASS SCHEDULE:

July 3rd, 2015: Introducing Popular Culture, Part I

July 8th, 2015: Introducing Popular Culture, Part II

Readings:

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 1: Introducing Popular Culture (31 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Galligan, Anne. "Truth is Stranger Than Magic: The Marketing of Harry Potter" *Australian Screen Education* 35 (2004). 36-41

Key Concepts:

culture, culture wars, ideology, capitalism, cultural studies, texts, practices, agency, elitism

July 10th, 2015: Popular Culture and History

Readings:

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 2: The History of Popular Culture (31 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

David L. Andrews (1999) Contextualizing suburban soccer: Consumer culture, lifestyle differentiation and suburban America, *Culture, Sport, Society*, 2:3, 31-53, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14610989908721846>

Key Concepts:

Industrialization, class mobility, Fordism, liberalism, mass culture, hegemony

July 15th, 2015: Representation**Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 3: Representation and the Construction of Social Reality (36 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Francine Prose, "Voting Democracy off the Island: Reality TV and the Republican Ethos" *Harper's Magazine* Mar. 2004: 58-64.

Screening:

Representation & The Media (Dir. Sut Jhally, 1997)

Key Concepts:

semiotics, mythology, binary opposition, realism, discourse, deconstruction, exnomination, language, sign, preferred reading, stereotypes

July 17th, 2015: The Culture Industry***In-Class Reading Response Assignment****Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 4: The Production of Popular Culture (38 Pages) *Capitalist Realism*, Chapters 6-9 (43 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", Available at <http://marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm> (or on My Courses)

Jeff Sharlet, "Big World: How Clear Channel Programs America." *Harper's Magazine* Dec. 2003

Key Concepts:

authenticity, instrumental rationality, standardization, pseudo-individualization, intellectual property, culture industry, Marxism, materialism, synergy

July 22nd, 2015: Consumer Culture

Readings: *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*, Chapter 5: The Consuming Life (29 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, theses 1-53, Available at <http://marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm> (or on My Courses)

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret", Available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S4> (or on My Courses)

Screening:

No Logo (Dir. Sut Jhally, 2003)

Key Concepts:

consumerism, commodities/commodification, conspicuous consumption, distinction, branding, market segmentation

July 24th, 2015: Subjectivity and Identity***Essay Proposals Due at the Beginning of Class****Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 6: Identity and the Body (36 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Muller, Amber. "Virtual Communities And Translation Into Physical Reality In The 'It Gets Better' Project." *Journal Of Media Practice* 12.3 (2011): 269-277. *Art Source*. Web. 26 June 2015.

Screening:

Selected Clips & excerpts from "Killing Us Softly 4" & "The Celluloid Closet"

Key Concepts:

ISAs, agency, identity, individualism, patriarchy, essentialist, social constructivist, interpellation, performativity, habitus, postmodernism, posthumanism

July 29th, 2015: Nationalism and Community**Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 7: Identity, Community, Collectivity (34 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

George Elliott Clarke, "White Like Canada." *Transition* 73 (1997): 98-109

Screening:

"Tough Guise"

Key Concepts: colonialism, ethnicity, minority, multiculturalism, orientalism, race, racism, nation, imperialism, postcolonial, diaspora, hybridity

July 31st, 2015: Subcultures and Countercultures

Readings:

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 8: Subcultures and Countercultures (33 Pages)
Zine: "The Art of Gentrification" – Follows Chapter 8 in *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (28 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Douglas Haddow, "Hipster: The Dead End of Western Civilization" *Adbusters* 79 (29 July, 2008) <<https://www.adbusters.org/magazine/79/hipster.html>>

Screening:

Hype! (Dir. Doug Pray, 1996)

Key Concepts:

subcultures, countercultures, culture jamming, appropriation

August 5th, 2015: Space, Place, and Globalization**Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 9: Space, Place, and Globalization (45 Pages)

Recommended Reading:

Sylvia Bowerbank, "Telling Stories About Places," *Alternatives* 1997 (Winter): 28.

Lois Leveen, "Factory Girl: Dora the Explorer and the Dirty Secrets of the Global Industrial Economy" *Bitch Magazine* online edition.

<<http://bitchmagazine.org/article/factory-girl>>

Screening:

Radiant City (Dirs. Jim Brown and Gary Burns, 2006)

Key Concepts:

gentrification, urbanization, creative class, privatization, surveillance, nature, transnational, multinational, media convergence, digitalization, cultural imperialism, monoculture, monopoly, deterritorialization, neoliberalism

August 7th, 2015: Social Media and New Media as Popular Culture***Final Essays Due****Readings:**

Popular Culture: A User's Guide, Chapter 10: Popular Culture in the 21st Century (33 Pages)

Course Evaluations: students will be asked to complete a course evaluation.

August 12th, 2015:***FINAL TEST**

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS AND SOURCES

Advertising Age: <http://adage.com/>

(The) Age of Persuasion: <http://www.cbc.ca/ageofpersuasion/>

Cormack, P. (2008). 'True Stories' of Canada: Tim Hortons and the Branding of National Identity. *Cultural Sociology*, 2, 369-384.

Dines, G. and J.M. Humez. (2003). *Gender, race, and class in media: A text reader* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fiske, J. (1987). *Television Culture*. London: Methuen.

Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding popular culture*. New York: Routledge.

Fiske, J. (1996). *Media Matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Random House.

Gramsci, A. (1989). *Letters from prison*. New York: Noonday Press. Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. New York: Back Bay Books.

Grossberg, L., E. Wartella, and D.C. Whitney. (1998). *Media Making: Mass media in a popular culture*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hall, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage.

Journal of Consumer Culture

Journal of Popular Culture

Mason, D. (2002). "Get the puck outta here!" Media transnationalism and Canadian Identity. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 26, (2), 140-167.

Media, Culture and Society

Rodriguez, J. (2006). Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35, (6), 645-668. Shade, L.R. (2010). *MediaScapes: New patterns in Canadian communication* (3rd edition). Toronto: Nelson.

Storey, J. (2009). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Wilson, B. & M. Atkinson. (2005). Rave and Straightedge, the virtual and the real: Exploring on-line and off-line experiences in Canadian Youth Subcultures. *Youth & Society*, 36, (3), 276-311.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

Writing and Learning Centre:

Resources specific to this course, for students requiring assistance with the material and with writing or reading comprehension, and for those for whom English is a second language, are provided through the **Writing and Learning Centre, room 1501, 113 McCaul, 5th floor (ext. 229); e-mail: wlc@ocadu.ca** One-on-one tutoring is available and confidential. The Writing and Learning Centre (WLC) provides free services for all students including writing, critical thinking, critical reading, and study skills, through one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring, writing and academic skills workshops, resource materials, and ESL assistance. Please see the following web link for more information. [<Web link to the Writing and Learning Centre>](#)

Services for Students with Disabilities

Formal and informal student-centred supports, such as counselling, academic accommodations, and specialized services are available year-round to students registered with the Centre for Students with Disabilities. Students who think they may have learning or physical disabilities should contact **Services for Students with Disabilities (ext. 339), 100 McCaul St. 3rd level**, as soon as possible. Students must be registered with the CSD to receive accommodations and related support. It is important to register early in the semester to ensure the accommodations can be scheduled by the start of the semester. Please see the following web link for more information. [<Web link to the Centre for Students with Disabilities>](#)

Dorothy Hoover Library

[<Web link for the Dorothy Hoover Library>](#)

OCADU Library, 113 McCaul, 2nd Floor , Room 1215

General Reference Desk: ex. 334

Art and Design Reference, Robert Fabbro: ex. 343

Art and Liberal Arts & Sciences Reference, Daniel Payne: ex. 217

Other University Services:

[<Web link for the Health and Wellness Centre>](#)

[<Web link for the Academic Integrity>](#)

[<Web link for the Academic Advising>](#)