Course Description:
This class will demand an ability to critically think, read, write about, and discuss the realities and ramifications of popular culture. Popular culture is a complex field involving theory and applied study. We will become familiar with a field of theorists, media forms, and ideologies that allows one to view the world in a new and enlightened way. The course will demand your attention and will be a challenge. By the end of this class you will have a large toolbox of skills, theories, and methods from which to analyze the omnipresent entity that is popular culture in everyday life.

The course will demand your investment as critical investigators into many forms that we take for granted in our lives. Television, film, music, and numerous other areas will be analyzed. Hence, proper preparations and a dedication to the subject matter at hand are required. Attendance and discussion are a large part of your grade; talk often and come to class prepared! The readings on the syllabus are to be read for the day of class.

Required Texts:


* In addition to these texts, all other readings have been scanned and uploaded to a D2L site. I’ll review how to use the course software in class (http://d2l.uwc.edu/)

Reading note: I will expect you to read with a dictionary to look up words that are unfamiliar to you and your course portfolio is a place for you to jot down questions, comments, and ideas. I expect you to be an active reader who “talks back” to the text and reads critically and with a curious and questioning mind. This means I expect you to take the readings seriously and to engage with them as an apprentice scholar. Be sure to set aside plenty of time each week to read intensely, actively—and leave time to work through difficult ideas, vocabulary, and meanings.

The Classroom:
I have two major goals for this course. First, I want to build an environment where we are both challenged and compelled to develop our critical thinking skills—theoretically and through course assignments, independently and in conjunction with the classroom community. Second, I want to create a comfortable and encouraging climate for our discussions. Neither of these goals can be met without everyone’s cooperation. I promise to do my best as an instructor this term and I expect the same commitment, motivation, and enthusiasm from all of you. I also expect frequent and thoughtful participation. I realize that this aspect of the course may be both refreshing and terrifying. So, as a basic principle for our class meetings, I would like us all to treat our peers with kindness and respect. Each class member brings a unique perspective and background to the course that will aid us in grasping the materials covered and developing our skills as thinkers, speakers, writers, and members of the university community. It is therefore absolutely imperative that we respect this diversity and foster the texture it brings to our course.
Assignments / Requirements:

- Reading Responses

For one reading per week, you will turn in a reading response. Since you must read in order to foster an intellectually challenging and engaging atmosphere, reading responses and reactions to discussion sections will be due **prior to the beginning of class for each reading at 12pm and no later**. Since these will be uploaded to D2L, you may also turn them in earlier than the 12pm deadline if you wish. This will give you adequate time to prepare for the class discussion the following day, and to comment on your peers’ responses as well. These reading responses should be typed and include: the main argument/thesis of the article/chapter, a transcription of one passage from the readings that you think is worth discussing, and 5-6 sentences on why you chose the passage you did. These should be roughly 1 page long single spaced.

**Not every reading will have a clear thesis (i.e. “This article/chapter will argue...”), so it is your job to find the author’s main argument(s) and paraphrase them into your own words when applicable.** In addition, some days you may have more than one reading. I will specify which reading to write a response for, and which reading you should post to the discussion forum. **No late submissions are accepted. However, if you facilitate discussion for that day/chapter, you do not need to turn in a reading response.**

So, for the 1st reading response, for example, you would do the following:

1. Go to D2L
2. Click under the “drop box” heading
3. You will see **Reading Response 1: Lind, “Laying a Foundation for studying Race”**
4. Click on this link
5. Upload your reading responses.

In addition, **you will submit your reading responses to a discussion thread.** Once you submit your paper, the discussion thread will appear under “discussions.” You will not see it until you’ve uploaded your papers.

**THEN**

1. Go to “Discussions”
2. There is 1 Forum, “CTA-218 Reading Responses”
3. Under the forum, you will see a topic
4. Click on the topic: **(i.e. Lind, “Laying a Foundation for studying Race”)**
5. **Cut and Paste your reading response into the discussion.** **DO NOT upload it as a Word document.**

The discussion portion of the reading response serves to offer examples of other students’ work and gives you a place to discuss questions or comments you had about the readings, or about other classmates’ work. **Active discussion is also part of your participation grade and is expected with every reading response. No late submissions are accepted.**

**For each response and writing assignment, you will be asked to submit your writing to the Online Writing Lab prior to when the assignment is due.** Because you have limited time to turn these in, you must submit them in advance to when the writing assignment is due. Depending on how busy the OWL is, you may get these within an hour, or up to 2 days, so plan accordingly. **The Online Writing Lab (OWL): The OWL is a**
service that affords UW-Colleges students the opportunity to e-mail drafts of their writing to the OWL staff and receive feedback from a peer writing tutor. The OWL is part of the Study-Center Tutoring Program at UW-Waukesha, which is certified by the College Reading & Learning Association. Check it out at: 
http://waukesha.uwc.edu/academics/owl/

-Participation and Attendance

Attendance is required in CTA-218. I do not discriminate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences except in the case of university-sanctioned events or religious holidays. It is your responsibility to contact me well in advance regarding any circumstances that may affect your ability to complete an assignment on the day it is due. Because your presence in class is vital, you may have only three absences from class without incurring a penalty against your final course grade. Please save these three days for sicknesses and other emergencies.

Your fourth absence will result in a reduction of your final course grade by 1/3 (e.g. from a B to a B-). Your fifth absence will result in a reduction of your final grade by a full letter grade (e.g. from a B to a C). Your sixth absence will result in an F for the course. Plan now to miss no classes and you will have a buffer reserved for emergencies. See me in advance about extenuating circumstances.

You are expected to listen attentively while your fellow classmates and I are speaking, and to actively participate in class discussions. You are not expected to know all the answers. Questions, tangents, and incomplete thoughts are welcome. Please note, however, that disrupting the class, surfing the internet, texting, interrupting others while they are talking, or being disrespectful to your classmates or myself will count against your participation grade.

Course Policies and Expectations

Formatting

I expect all written assignments to be typed with one-inch margins all around and in 12-point Times New Roman font. You will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each formatting requirement you fail to fulfill.

Late Assignments

I do not accept late assignments and do not give “make-ups.” Whether or not you are present in class, all assignments must be turned in prior to the beginning of class on the day they are due (via the drop box on D2L). You will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each day an assignment is late. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding any circumstances that may affect your ability to complete an assignment on the day it is due.

Incompletes

A grade of incomplete can be assigned only after the student and instructor mutually agree that this is the best course of action under the circumstances.

Academic Honesty:

The Board of Regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff, and students of the University of Wisconsin System believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the University of Wisconsin System. The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions. Using someone else’s work as your own without careful citation is unethical. Similarly, letting someone else use your work is also unethical. If you find yourself in a position where you are unsure as to whether or not you will be able to complete an assignment, please contact me so that we can make appropriate arrangements.
Writing and Writing Help
If you have writing concerns and are unable to meet with me, I encourage you to contact The Learning Center:
Located next to the Hamilton Roddis Memorial Library, TLC provides students with easy, convenient access to reference materials, as well as the experienced, professional staff to help resolve academic problems. Call 384-1706 to schedule an appointment or drop in!

The Online Writing Lab (OWL): The OWL is a service that affords UW-Colleges students the opportunity to e-mail drafts of their writing to the OWL staff and receive feedback from a peer writing tutor. The OWL is part of the Study-Center Tutoring Program at UW-Waukesha, which is certified by the College Reading & Learning Association. Check it out at: http://waukesha.uwc.edu/academics/owl

Office Hours
My office hours are for you. Please come by whenever and as much as you need to with any questions or concerns you Dec. have about readings, assignments, or the course in general. If for some reason you can’t make my office hours, I am happy to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Special Needs
If you have any special needs that might affect your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so we can create a plan to accommodate them.

Email: CHECK EMAIL EVERYDAY!!!
I will often send important information to you (due dates, changes in schedule or readings, or request for you to print something off) via email. I expect that you will check email everyday and that you will be prepared for class.

Inclement weather:
In the event of inclement weather, a weather cancellation page will be activated on the UW Marshfield/Wood County Web site. It will be updated as needed from 6 a.m.-10 p.m. daily. During “weather episodes” students are advised - via email, computer lab screens and TVs - to check the current student Web site for cancellation updates.

Cell Phones: All cell phones are to be turned off during class.

Grading:
In Class Facilitation: (2 @ 100pts each) 200pts
Reading Responses: (8 @20pts each) 160pts
Midterm Exam: 150pts
Final Exam: 200pts
Classroom Citizenship/Participation 150pts

Total: 860pts

Grade Distribution:
A = 90 - 100%
B = 80 - 89%
C = 70 - 79%
D = 60 - 69%
F = 59 % or below
In Class Facilitation:

Leading seminar discussion: You will be responsible for organizing and leading discussion on readings during the semester. Your task is (1) to devise a set of framing questions to distribute to the class, and (2) to lead a focused discussion of the reading. This includes generating links between your reading and other readings (when relevant) or making connections with previous readings.

You will be evaluated on the basis of your demonstrated understanding of the material; your ability to generate critical questions; the relevance of your questions to seminar topics; your ability to draw out connections between readings and/or with previous readings; and your ability to engage discussion among a variety of participants. What do you see as the primary arguments being made? How are they supported? What questions do the readings raise for you? How do they articulate with previous readings? What do you find useful or interesting? Do not treat this as a lecture-style presentation but as an opportunity to generate dialogue.

Each facilitation should include at the bare minimum:

1. History and background of the author and assigned reading (10pts) (this should include useful information about the author, and reasons why you think he/she wrote the article/chapter).

2. A brief summary of the primary argument of the reading. Please locate what you feel is the main thesis of the author’s argument and be able to paraphrase in your own words. (40pts)

3. Specific passages that support this argument or that you find particularly interesting or intriguing, a list of key terms or important ideas, and some examples which help illuminate the goals of the author. (40pts)

4. Discussion questions that not only pertain to the reading at hand but also to other readings we’ve discussed in class. Keep in mind these facilitations should last the entire hour, so be prepared with enough questions to keep the conversation going. (10pts)

Reading Response Grading Rubric:

20/20=A: Thoughtful response. Clearly identified thesis and paraphrased in own words. No spelling or grammatical errors. Followed directions in terms of formatting. Sentences flowed well. Overall, it is clear students understand material and are able to relate it not only to their own lives, but to other readings and ideas.

18-19/20: A-/A: Thoughtful response. Clearly identified thesis and paraphrased in own words. Very few spelling or grammatical errors. Followed directions in terms of formatting. Sentences flowed well. Overall, it is clear students understand material and are able to relate it not only to their own lives, but to other readings and ideas.

16-17/20=B-/B: Was able to identify thesis, but wasn’t able to clearly paraphrase thesis in own words. A few spelling and grammatical errors and some sentence structure issues. Student seems to understand the material on a surface level but doesn’t go much further.

14-15=C-/C: Struggles to articulate thesis. Does not paraphrase in own words, or manages to misunderstand thesis and therefore paraphrase doesn’t articulate what author is arguing. Has a hard time connecting it to other readings or relating it to their own life. Many spelling and grammatical errors as well as issues with sentence structure. Attempts to understand main points, but fails to grasp the key arguments. Does not follow directions in terms of proper formatting.
13/20=D: Does not accurately articulate thesis. Either it is missing or wrong. Does not paraphrase in own words. So many grammatical and spelling errors it is difficult to read. Sentences do not flow. Does not follow directions in terms of formatting. Does not relate to other readings since there is no understanding of main points and arguments.

10/20=F: Does not understand assignment and turns in something that does not follow directions of what is being asked.

0/20=F: Does not turn in reading response.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Course Introduction and an Intro to studying the Media
1/28 Course Introduction and Policies

1/30 Popular culture overview cont. Popular culture as hegemony and popular culture as resistance.
Reading: Maasik/Soloman “Introduction: Popular Signs” SOL; 3-9 ICS. AND Lind, “Laying a Foundation for studying Race, Gender, and the Media” pg 2-10.
Due: Reading Response 1

Week 2: Early Cinema, Narrative and Classical Hollywood Style
2/4 Early Cinema Conventions, Technologies, and Culture
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, Chapter 12 pp. 454-461 cont.
Reading: Denby “High School Confidential: Notes on Teen Movies” (SOL) 396

Reading: Kolker, Film form and Culture, Chapter 1 “Image and Reality” 10-28 (D2L)
Due: Reading Response 2 on Kolker

Week 3: Formal Elements
2/11 Narrative and Film Form, Continuity
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, Chapter 6 pp. 223-255;
Film Form II, Mise-en-scène, Montage
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, Chapter 4 pp. 118-138; Chapter 6 pp. 256-265

2/13 The Shot: Cinematography
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, pp. Chapter 5 pp. 167-218
Film and Ideology
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, pp. Chapter 2 pp. 56-75

Week 4: Auteur Theory and the Sociality of Media Production
2/18 Auteurism
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, pp. Chapter 12 pp. 475-485
Screening: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Gondry, 2004, 108m)

2/20 Finish: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Gondry, 2004, 108m)

Week 5: Genre and Culture
2/25 Genre
Reading: Bordwell and Thompson, Chapter 9 pp. 328-346
Reading: Seger, “Creating the Myth” (SOL) 356
Reading: Clover, “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film.” (D2L)
Discuss Midterm
Due: Reading Response 3 on Clover
Facilitation Group 1

2/27 Screening: Scream (Craven, 1996, 111m)

Week 6: Early Television History
3/4 Early Television History
Reading: Spigel, “Women’s Work” (D2L)
Due: Reading Response 4 on Spigel
Facilitation Group 2

3/6 Midterm Exam

Week 7: Television, Music, and Cultural Forms
3/11 Reading: Prose, “Voting Democracy off the Island” (SOL) 265
Reading: Harold, “A Moral Never-Never Land” (SOL) 274
Facilitation Group 3
3/13 Reading: Curtis and Gerald, “South Park and the Open Society” (SOL) 296
Reading: Douglas, “Signs of Intelligent Life on TV” (SOL) 307
Reading: Mayer, “The New Sexual Stone Age” (SOL) 312
Facilitation Group 4

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: TV Representation: Race
3/25 Television and Culture
Reading: Gray, “The Politics of Representation on Network TV” (D2L)
Read: Bernstein “Goin’ Gangsta…” Pg. 86, 106-109, 123-137 ICS.
Read: Omi “In Living Color: Race and American Culture” (SOL) 655
Due: Reading Response 5 on Gray
Facilitation Group 5
3/27 Screening: Color Adjustment (Riggs, 1992, 86m)

Week 10: TV Representation: Race cont.
4/1 Reading: Boyd, “So you Wanna Be a Gangsta?” (SOL) 375
Screening: Good Hair (Stilson, 2009, 96m)
Facilitation Group 6
4/3 Good Hair Pt. 2/Discussion

Week 11: TV Representation: Gender
4/8 Gender and TV Representation
Reading: D’Acci, “Televison, Representation, and Gender” (D2L)
Due: Reading Response 6 on D’Acci
Facilitation Group 7
4/10 Screening: Sex and the City, “Change of a Dress” (29m); Girls, “Vagina Panic” (30m)

Week 12: TV Representation: Gender and Sexualities
4/15 Gender, Sexuality and TV Representation
Reading: Kathleen Battles and Wendy Hilton-Morrow, “Gay Characters in Conventional Spaces: Will and Grace and the Situation Comedy Genre;” (D2L)
Reading: Connolly, “Homosexuality on Television” (SOL) 315
Reading: Devor, “Gender Role Behaviors and Attitudes” (SOL) 567
Facilitation Group 8
Week 13: Advertising
4/15 Reading: Frank, “Commodify your Dissent” (SOL) 163
Reading: Marchand, “The Parable of the Democracy of Goods” (SOL) 182
Due: Reading Response 7 on Frank
Facilitation Group 9
4/17 Reading: Twitchell, “What we are to Advertisers” (SOL) 192
Reading: Blakeslee, “If you have a ‘Buy Button in your Brain” (SOL) (197)
Facilitation Group 10

Week 13: Advertising cont.
4/22 Reading: Solomon, “Masters of Desire” (SOL) 524
Reading: Craig, “Men’s Men and Women’s Women” (SOL) 202
Facilitation Group 11
4/24 Reading: Pozner, “Dove’s ‘Real Beauty’ Backlash (SOL) 214
Reading: Steinern, “Sex, Lies, and Advertising” (SOL) 227)
Due: Reading Response 8 on Steinern
Facilitation Group 12

Week 14: Internet: You-Topian Dreams: MySpace, YourSpace, and the Semiotics of the Web 2.0
4/29 Screening: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold (Spurlock, 2011, 90m)
5/1 Finish The Greatest Movie Ever Sold

Week 15: Internet: You-Topian Dreams: MySpace, YourSpace, and the Semiotics of the Web 2.0
5/6 Reading: Johnson, “It’s all about us” (SOL) 446
Reading: “Enough about you” (SOL) 449
Facilitation Group 13
5/8 No Class: Work on Final Exam

Week 16: Wrap Up
5/13 Last Day of Classes Course Evaluations and Final Exam Review
References for Articles on D2L:


SAMPLE READING RESPONSE

Reading Response 15

WOM-203

Professor Wilz


Thesis: “The 2008 U.S. presidential election was historic on many levels. The country elected its first African American president who narrowly defeated a female candidate in the Democrat primary race. The Republicans nominated their first woman as a vice presidential candidate. Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin demonstrated that women politicians have come a long way; however, an analysis of media coverage reveals that lingering sexism toward women candidates is still alive and well. Using common stereotypes of women in corporations developed by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, language theories, and media framing, this essay uncovers the common gendered stereotypes that surfaced in the 2008 campaign. The analysis indicates that there was a considerable amount of negative coverage of both candidates and that such coverage has potential to cast doubt on a woman’s suitability to be commander-in chief or in the wings” (Carlin & Winfrey 326). In this article, Carlin and Winfrey describe how sexism still persists in the political sphere despite the perceived achievements of Clinton and Palin. Their analysis of Clinton and Palin’s media coverage reveals that there is still a long way to go before women are regarded as viable candidates for powerful political positions.

Transcription: “From Victoria Woodhull’s ‘petticoat politician’ label to Geraldine Ferraro’s size 6 and the Hillary Clinton Nutcracker, American women politicians have been victims of sexism. We know what the stereotypes are, we can find numerous examples, and we know that language shapes thought. If the United States is to see a woman in either of the top two offices in the country, it is going to take more than the ‘right’ woman. It is going to take the ‘right’ view of the offices as being gender neutral” (Carlin & Winfrey 340).

Why I chose this Passage: I really like how the authors ended the article this way because I think it shines a light on the real issue at hand. The degree to which the public, with help from the media, attacks female politicians with gendered stereotypes is baffling. The scrutiny women face is so severe that they appear to be in Catch-22 type of situation. Hillary Clinton is one of the many examples of this. At first she was seen as too masculine, only to face more opposition after she tried to feminize her image. The future of female politicians really has little to do with the individual and everything to do with social attitudes. Palin and Clinton remind us that women cannot pass under the spotlight uncathed, even though gender has no influence on the capability of a political candidate. I’m glad Carlin and Winfrey emphasize the importance of the “right” view compared to the “right” woman. As I see it, the public can only benefit from the talented women in politics once it stops viewing the female gender as a debilitating factor.