COURSE OBJECTIVE:

In the 21st Century mediated popular culture is an important part of how meaning and experience are normalized. A better understanding of this complex phenomenon is the primary objective of the course. This graduate seminar will explore major theoretical concepts related to popular culture specifically the intersection with behaviors, media effects, constructing identities, globalization, ideological hegemony, cultural resistance, historical contexts, public spheres, etc.

The materials selected for reading and discussion will involve a variety of significant topics. Also, each student will be encouraged to examine an area of interest to build on their own research. All materials will be synthesized, debated, and critically evaluated through class discussions, evaluations, presentations and a final research paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Books at University of Iowa Union Bookstore

Other required readings will be placed on the class ICON site based on the specific assigned topics

EXPECTATIONS:

1- Expect to better understand important theoretical notions as they relate to popular culture and the media.
2- Expect to better understand what popular culture is and how it interrelates with various media products and industries.
3- Expect to learn how popular culture has evolved into a significant fields of study.
4- Expect to learn how to evaluate the relevance and usefulness of research as it relates to theoretical and methodological practices.
5 – Expect to recognize the major theorists and thinkers in the field of popular culture.

NOTES:

ADMINISTRATIVE HOME - The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml
DISABILITY - I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may need some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

EMAIL - Make sure your email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

ATTENDANCE - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don’t ask my permission to miss a class. Please let me know as soon as you can when you are going to miss a class, especially if you are scheduled to handle a part of it. Because this class meets only once a week missing one class is significant.

DEADLINES - Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments must be pre-approved. NO assignment will be extended more than one week past the deadline – NO exceptions. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments directly to the professor when they are due. If you turn in an assignment in some other way (under office door or in box), at some other time (before or after due date), the professor is not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.

UNIVERSITY EXAM POLICY - Final Examinations. An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the published deadline at the Registrar’s Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4:30 M-F, (384-4300). Missed exam policy. University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available at the Registrar web site: http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf

RESOURCES – The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences offers a number of resources for student success. For example: The Writing Center, The Speaking Center and Tutor Iowa. The School of Journalism Resource Center (E350 Adler) also offers a broad range of help including computer access, writing assistance and relevant journalism materials.

SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS - Student complaints concerning the professor - first attempt to resolve the matter with the the professor, if you are still not able to settle it go to department executive officer, Dr. Julie Andsager. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit wwwsexualharassment.uiowa.edu for definitions, assistance, and the full University policy.

SEVERE WEATHER OR OTHER CRISIS – If there is a weather or other crisis members of the class should seek appropriate shelter and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible. (Operations Manual, Part IV, 16. items e, h, and i.)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities means that you will respect the other members of the class, including the professor, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return. Students have the right to a classroom environment that encourages learning. The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior arguing with or distracting others; such behavior also is a violation of the Code of Student Life. (Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students).
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - Plagiarism and misconduct happens when students present work that is not their own. It is academic fraud. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions - the professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. If found guilty you will receive an F on the assignment, you may also receive an F in the entire course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on consequences at the departmental level while CLAS may enforce additional consequences at the collegiate level.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtm

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, and assignments flow throughout the semester.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER OR CELL PHONE - Once class starts you may not use the computer to check your email, go on Facebook or any other computer activity outside of class work. You will lose 5 points each time the professor discovers an inappropriate use of the computer. It is rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting to/participating in the class. Please be respectful at all times.

GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points (Supp)</th>
<th>Points (Main)</th>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>200 – 180 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Supp) Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>170 – 160 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Supp) Evaluations (3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>159 - 140 = C</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Supp) Book Review (2)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>139 - 120 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader (2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Below 120 = F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total 200 pts.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading and Preparation - Students are expected to do extensive reading before each class. Be prepared to offer comments, ask questions, raise significant issues, debate ideas, and evaluate theoretical notions. The readings will give you a well-rounded look at the theoretical paradigm that is evolving as popular culture and theory come together in a postmodern society. You will read 1 (1) required book, two (2) supplemental books plus conduct a presentation, read fifteen + required articles/chapters, and submit evaluations for three (3) supplemental articles.

Evaluations - Students will be responsible for three (3) popular culture research article/chapter evaluations on a topic of their choice. A maximum two (2) page evaluation. Your evaluation will assess the theoretical framework, methodology, findings, strengths/weaknesses, and conclusions of each study.

Book Presentation - Students will be responsible for a thirty (30) minute presentation/discussion based on two supplemental readings - each book chosen by the student in their area of interest from the class bibliography or another text approved by professor. A three-page synopsis for each book will be distributed to classmates during the presentation. The synopsis should include: an overview of major themes, key terms and ideas, a critique of strengths and weaknesses, significance of text, and any other relevant information.

Discussion Leader - Each student will take the lead in the discussion of two (2) assigned class articles from the ICON site. You will be responsible for coordinating class participation as each article is synthesized, debated, and critically evaluated.
**Paper Proposal** - Choose a topic of interest that connects theory with popular culture and write a maximum five-page proposal on the paper you plan to write. Discuss briefly the theoretical framework, method of research, relevance of study, availability of data, a brief bibliography, and any other information you deem important to understanding your proposed paper.

**Final Research Paper** - The final paper should be approximately 20-25 pages. The quality of your final paper will be aimed toward publication in a scholarly journal. It should include the normal segments: history/context, lit review, methodology, analysis, discussion and conclusion.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

January 27th – Using Theory in Popular Culture Research
   Introduction/Syllabus Overview
   Overview - A Step by Step Guide to Evaluation
   Discussion – *How to Do Things with Cultural Theory* (2005) by Matt Hills

February 3rd – Media, Theory and Popular Culture
   ICON Readings:
   - Discussion- Meaning, Ideology, and Identity

February 10th - Chapter 1 What is Popular Culture? (Storey 2012)
   ICON Readings:
   - Notes on Deconstructing the Popular by Stuart Hall in *Popular Culture: A Reader* (2009)
   - Toward a Definition of Popular Culture by Holt Parker in *History and Theory* (2011)
   - Evaluations/Discussion

February 17th – Chapter 2 The Culture and Civilization’ Tradition (Storey 2012)
   ICON Readings:
   - Subculture by Dick Hebdige in *Popular Culture: A Reader* (2009)
   - Evaluations/Discussion

February 24th – Chapter 3 Culturalism (Storey 2012)
   ICON Readings:
   - Intertextuality by John Fiske in *Popular Culture Production and Consumption* (2001)
   - Evaluations/Discussion
March 3rd – Chapter 4  Marxisms  (Storey 2012)
ICON Readings:
- Pop Culture in the Classroom: American Idol, Karl Marx and Alexis De Tocqueville by Miguel Centellas in Political Science and Politics (2012)
- Theory with a Capital T: Cultural Studies’ Assault on Popular Art by James Seaton in Academic Questions (2010)
Evaluations/Discussion

March 10th  - Chapter 5  Psychoanalysis  (Storey 2012)
ICON Readings:
- Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization by Joli Jensen in Popular Culture Production and Consumption (2001)
**Bob McChesney Presentation
Evaluations/Discussion

March 17th - Spring Break

March 24th-  Chapter 6 Structuralism and Post-Structuralism  (Storey 2012)
ICON Readings:
Evaluations/Discussion  
**PAPER PROPOSALS DUE!

March 31st - Chapter 7  Gender and Sexuality  (Storey 2012)
ICON Readings:
- Consuming Popular Culture: The Role of Gender in Gender and Popular Culture by Katie Milestone and Anneke Meyer (2012)
- Do You Identify as a Gamer? Gender, Race, Sexuality and Gamer Identity by Adrienne Shaw in New Media and Society (2011)
Evaluations/Discussion

April 7th-  Chapter 8  Race, Racism and Representation
ICON Readings:
Evaluations/Discussion

April 14th-  Chapter 9  Postmodernism
ICON Readings:
- Trust No One: Modernization, Paranoia and Conspiracy Culture by Stef Aupers in European Journal of Communication (2012)
April 21st - Chapter 10 The Politics of the Popular
ICON Readings:
- Contentious Language: South Park and the Transformation of Meaning by Marcus Schulzke in *Journal of Popular Film and Television* (2012)

April 28th - Book Presentations

May 5th - Book Presentations

May 12th - Wrap Up FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE!

Bibliography


Supplemental Bibliography


Davies, Ben and Jana Funke. (2011) *Sex, Gender and Time in Fiction and Culture*. Palgrave/MacMillan: NY.


