Commerce is a complex, contested, and essential ingredient in culture. Culture is an equally sticky and crucial element in commerce. Increasingly, and ever more subtly, our identities, everyday lives, and relationships are constituted through and fuel some form of consumption—from the more traditional advertisements that assault our senses to the algorithms that trace, corral, and predict our online activities. Despite this intimate relationship, we often define culture and commerce as oppositional. This important, powerful, and tension-filled partnership, in other words, requires some unpacking and contextualization.

This seminar on the Culture Industries will theorize, historicize, and critique the nexus of commerce and culture through a combination of foundational texts (Karl Marx, Raymond Williams, Walter Bejnamin, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Pierre Bourdieu, etc.) and more recent humanistic and social scientific explorations of the topic. We will explore the central concepts and debates animating studies of the culture industries and consider how they have been taken up in different disciplines and transformed over time.

Assignments will include regular seminar participation, periodic reading responses, a book review, and a final research project/presentation.

**Required Texts:**


All other readings will be available on our course CANVAS website

The Classroom
I have two major goals for this seminar. First, I want to build an environment where we are both challenged and compelled to develop our research, thinking, and writing. 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, and I expect the same commitment, motivation, and enthusiasm from all of you. I also expect frequent and thoughtful participation. As a basic rule 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 writers, thinkers, and members of the University of Iowa community. It is absolutely imperative that we respect this diversity and foster the texture it brings to our course.

Assignments/Grading (Detailed instructions for each essay will be distributed in class)

**Discussion Leaderships and Responses** (300 points, 30%)

Each student will help to facilitate our discussions twice over the course of the semester (we will sign up for dates during the first week of class). This can take many forms—questions, activities, clips, handouts, etc. Creativity is great, but I want to make sure the material is covered with sophistication and rigor. The main goal is to offer some structure that will help us to explore the assigned reading (topic, theory, method, etc.), plug it into the course, and push further the questions we are asking.

For each discussion leadership, students will write and distribute a 2-3 page response to the reading(s) that explains the key questions they are asking, the methods they are adopting, their relationship to (how they complement, contradict, expand upon) other readings, and the overall contributions they make to studies of the cultural industries. Students will distribute these responses to the class by 10:00 pm on the night before we discuss the assigned reading(s). Students can also revise them after our class meetings and before turning them in (due to me the following day by 5:00pm). On days when there are two students presenting/writing, I encourage facilitators to coordinate—or at least consult each other—so we can minimize overlap. Some collaboration in the discussion portion (but none on the written portion) is fine, but not required.

**Book Review and Presentation** (200 points, 20%)

Students will select a recently published book on the cultural industries and write a book review targeted to a specific journal (word count for this will be dependent upon the targeted journal’s requirements). While there is great flexibility here, I will need to approve the books and the journals. On March 8 students will provide short presentations on the book and their reviews.
As part of the assignment (50 points), students will submit revised reviews to the targeted journal for publication.

**Final Project and Presentation (300 points, 30%)**
Students will research and write an original 7,000-word article that engages course themes and contributes to scholarship on the cultural industries. We will do short (15-minute) presentations during the final two weeks of class.

A 500-word proposal will be due on March 29. Along with the final articles, students will submit a 250-word abstract and four keywords. Students are free to use whichever documentation style most closely aligns with their home discipline (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.).

**Participation (200 points, 20%)**
Vigorous and generous participation is required. This course will not work if we are all simply taking up space and periodically nodding our heads. On the other hand, this course will not work if we don’t listen as well as talk. Please be an active contributor, a respectful listener, and a kind collaborator during our meetings. Students will not be able to earn higher than B in this course if they do not regularly participate.

**Grading Scale**
A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (>60%).

**Grading Expectations**
The “A” assignment follows all instructions perfectly and demonstrates a degree of engagement, insight, organization, sophistication, persuasiveness, and originality that significantly exceeds the task’s baseline requirements. It has been carefully revised and edited. Consequently, it is free—or at least very close to free—of any writing errors or typos.

The “B” assignment follows all instructions and is expertly organized, persuasive, and insightful. It has been revised and contains very few writing errors and typos. It, however, does not exceed baseline requirements to the same degree as the “A” paper and may lack the “A” paper’s exceptional originality and sophistication.

The “C” assignment follows instructions, meets the task’s basic expectations, but evidences little engagement with the assignment beyond this point. In other words, it gets the job done. It likely contains some writing errors and typos, though not to an overwhelming or distracting degree.

The “D” assignment does not carefully follow instructions and demonstrates a lack of engagement, creativity, and care evidenced by writing errors, factual errors, poor organization, inconsistencies, etc.

The “F” assignment does not follow instructions and/or is incomplete.

**Interpreting Feedback on Assignments**
My goal in grading is to provide feedback that will help you to improve on subsequent assignments. The comments I provide are designed to help you to move in that direction. If you are having trouble
understanding your feedback or are not sure how it might help you to improve please contact me so I can provide further explanation.

Course Policies and Expectations

Office Hours
My office hours are for you. Please come by whenever and as much as you like with any questions or concerns you have about readings, assignments, the course as a whole, or your academic and professional career. If for some reason you are unable to make it during my office hours, I am happy to set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Attendance
Attendance is required. You have one “free” absence all term. For each absence after one, I will subtract one-third of a letter grade from your final grade. This means that if you miss two class meetings, the highest grade you can earn in this course is an A-.

Formatting
I expect all written assignments to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. All writing assignments will be turned in via Dropbox on CANVAS. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully.

Late Assignments
Whether or not you are present in class, all assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You will be penalized 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 by its due date/time.

Academic Integrity
All graded work in this course must be your own. Cite all quotations, paraphrases, etc. If you have any questions as to whether or not your work might constitute plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask me. Any violation of the University of Iowa Code of Academic Honesty will result in a failing grade for this course and could result in further disciplinary action. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Honesty: http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code

Writing Center
If you are having any difficulties with or would simply like another opinion on your writing I encourage you to make use of the UI Writing Center: http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/

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.

Course Schedule

1/18 Course Introduction
• Reading: Keywords (CANVAS); Circuit of Culture (CANVAS)

1/25 Marxism and the Roots of the Cultural Industries
• Reading: Marx, Selections from *Capital, Volume 1* (CANVAS); Williams, “Base and Superstructure” (CANVAS)

2/1

**The Culture Industries**


2/8

**The Cultural Industries**

• Reading: Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (Introduction, Part 1, and Part 2)

2/15

**The Cultural Industries II**

• Reading: Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (Part 3 and Conclusion)

2/22

**Cultural and Symbolic Capital**

• Reading: Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Editor’s Introduction, Part 1, Part 3 [chapters 8 and 10])

3/1

**Cultural and Symbolic Capital II**

• Reading: Wilson, *Let’s Talk About Love*; Anderson, Producing an Aristocracy of Culture in American Television (CANVAS); Vogan, “LeRoy Neiman and the Art of Network Sports Television” (CANVAS)

3/8

**Book Reviews**

• **Assignment:** Book Review and Presentations

3/22

**Consumption and Control**

• Reading: Turow, *The Aisles Have Eyes*

3/29

**Race/Ethnicity and Consumer Culture**

• Reading: Davila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*

• **Assignment:** Research Project Proposal

4/5

**Race and Global Media Industries**

• Reading: Havens, *Black Television Travels: African American Media Around the Globe*

4/12

**Media Franchising**

• Reading: Johnson, *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Culture Industries*

4/19

**Band Culture**

• Reading: Banet-Weiser, *Authentic: The Politics of Ambivalence in Brand Culture*

4/26

**Presentations**

5/3

**Presentations**
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policies and Procedures

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.

Electronic Communication: 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.)

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty. Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.