COURSE OBJECTIVE:
This graduate seminar will explore major theoretical notions as they intersect with popular
culture and the media. Popular culture transmitted through media is a prominent part of how meaning
and experience evolve in society today. Developing a better understanding of the existing research that
relates to this complex phenomenon is the primary objective of the course.

Materials selected for reading, examination, and discussion will include a broad range of topics
as they intersect with popular culture and media such as interpretation, behavior, media effects,
constructing identities, globalization, framing, ideology, hegemony, postmodernism, commodification,
cultural resistance, historical contexts, and many others. All materials will be synthesized, debated, and
critically evaluated through class discussions, critiques, book reviews, presentations, and a final paper.

REQUIRED TEXT: Books at University of Iowa Union Bookstore
Cultural Theory and Popular Culture by John Storey Routledge 2018

SUGGESTED TEXTS: Books at University of Iowa Union Bookstore
An Introduction to Popular Culture in the U.S.: People, Politics and Power by Jenn Brandt and Callie

Social Theory and Popular Culture by Lee Barron Bloomsbury 2013

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 is interrelates with various
media products and industries.

3- Expect to better understand how media communication and popular culture have evolved
into recognized fields of study.

4- Expect to better understand how to evaluate the significance and usefulness of research as it
relates to theoretical and methodological practices.

CLASS NOTES:

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. In the case of really bad
weather like an ice storm, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an
email notice as far ahead as possible. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit
the Department of Public Safety website.

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 must use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. k.11.)

ATTENDANCE - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don’t ask my permission to miss a class. If you must miss a class you will need to provide a written explanation and adequate documentation for me to consider suspending the penalty. Missing 30 minutes of one class can be considered an absence. You can miss two classes without penalty.

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, videos, and assignments flow throughout the semester. A number of new videos have been ordered. So a currently listed video in the syllabus may be replaced by a new one depending on arrival date.

DEADLINES- Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments should 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 email), at some other time (before or after due date), the professor not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.

WARNING - If any of the videos shown in class are offensive you are not required to stay and view them. However, each video has been selected because of its appropriateness to the particular section studied. And all are available on television or on the Internet.

COLLABORATION – If a group project is assigned, each group member is expected to contribute equally. If, the professor receives a complaint, each student will be required to complete a self-evaluation describing the equality or the lack of it during the group’s project. Students who misrepresent themselves as equal partners in this collaborative project but who are actually letting others do the bulk of the work will be reported to the College for academic dishonesty.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably, plus you have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible for everyone. At the most basic level, this 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.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER OR 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 also rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting to the class or a video is playing. Please be respectful at all times.

UNIVERSITY NOTES

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).
Electronic Communication
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. (https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies.)

Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.

Illness
Students with the flu, colds, or other viruses are encouraged by the health care community to stay home and not to seek care since viruses spread quickly in public places. UI Student Health no longer provides documentation to students for short-term illness. A student with a long-term illness (or generally those who miss more than two days of classes beyond what is allowed by the instructor’s attendance policy) must provide a record of appointments or documentation from a health care provider, such as a note stating the student has been under the doctor's care.

Resources for Students
Students will find the Writing Center and the Speaking Center very useful for this course. The Tutor Iowa site is also very valuable for students seeking extra help. The School of Journalism Resource Center (E350 Adler) also offers a broad range of help including computer access, writing assistance and relevant materials.
Writing Center: https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/
Speaking Center: https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/
Tutor Iowa: https://tutor.uiowa.edu/
Religious Diversity
University holidays are not religious holy days, although a religious holy day may coincide with a University holiday. The University is prepared to make reasonable accommodations in its work assignments, test schedules, and classroom attendance expectations in a manner which is consistent with the University Policy on Human Rights (see II-3) and does not unfairly burden employees and students.

GRADING:
Final paper 100pts. 100pts. 300-276 = A
Presentations 20pts. 20pts. 275-251 = B
Proposal 20pts 20pts. 250-226 = C
Topic/Theory 20pts 20pts. 225-200 = D
Lit Review 20pts. 20pts. Below200 = F
Methodology 20pts. 20pts.
Participation 30pts 40pts.
Attendance (2pts each class) 60pts
Total 300pts.

ASSIGNMENTS:
Readings and Preparation - Students are expected to complete assigned readings before each class. Be prepared to offer comments, ask questions, raise significant issues, debate ideas, and evaluate theoretical notions. These readings will give you a well-rounded look at the theoretical paradigm that is evolving concerning popular culture in a postmodern society. Three readings are required each week.

Final Paper Proposal - Choose a topic of interest that connects media with popular culture and write a two-page proposal on the paper you plan to write. Decide what journal you want to submit this paper to and spend an hour or more skimming through current articles. Discuss briefly the journal chosen, relevance of your topic, theoretical framework, potential lit review area(s), methodology, explanation of data to be collected, and any other information you deem important to understand your research project.

Topic/Theory Overview – After you choose a pop culture topic and related theory for your final paper, you will submit a two-page overview. Describe in detail the significance of the topic, along with background analysis of the theory, and then explain the connection between the two. For example: Third person effect theory used to examine the impact of rap music on youth.

Literature Review - Students will be responsible for writing a three-page literature review as part of their final paper. This review can include one area or two depending on the nature of the paper. For example: a paper on media and health communication may include a lit review concerning specific research on health communication, plus research conducted on a specific medium like social media and health issues.

Methodology Section – Students will write a three-page overview covering the methodology they plan to use in their final paper. Include a background analysis of the method chosen and explain why that method is an effective way to study your topic. For example: the use of textual analysis to study the clothing, body language, and wording in advertising in relation to sexual and racial stereotypes.
Final Paper – For the final paper you will pull all of the sections together and complete your analysis. The final paper should be approximately 15 pages not including the references page. It must be typed and double-spaced in a font no smaller than Times 12 using the citation style of your selected journal. The quality of your final paper should be aimed toward publication in a scholarly journal.

Presentations - Students will be responsible for a twenty minute presentation/discussion based on their paper/topic. Discussion should include: an overview of major themes, key terms and ideas, a critique of key literature, significance of topic, findings, and other relevant information.

Participation - Students are expected to participate in every class discussion. Points will be distributed based on your participation. Minimum contribution/rarely speak 10pts. Average contribution/sometimes speak 20pts. Above Average contribution/speaks most of the time 30pts. Exceptional contribution/always speak 40pts. All members of the class must be respectful when speaking and responding to each other. No exceptions!!!!!

COURSE OUTLINE:

Aug 23rd  Syllabus Overview/Step by Step Guide to Evaluation
Read: Storey/Chapt 1 – What is popular culture?
       King – Deep Culture 2012/ The Journal of Popular Culture
Evaluation/Discussion

Aug 30th Mass Media and Popular Culture
Read: Szeman & O'Brien/Chapt 1 – Introducing Popular Culture
       Chapt 8- Subcultures and Countercultures
       Parker – Toward a Definition of Popular Culture
Evaluation/Discussion

Culture and Tradition
Sept 6th Read: Storey/Chapt 2 - The Culture & Civilization Tradition
       Brant & Clare/Chapt 10 – Rituals and Ceremonies
       Erigha – Race, Gender, Hollywood: Representation in Cultural
       Production and Digital Media’s Potential for Change in
       Sociology Compass
Evaluation/Discussion

Sept 13th The Culture Industries
Read: Storey/Chapt 3 – Culturalism
       Brant & Clare/Chapt 4 – The Culture Industries
       Cohen, Seat & Others – Sports Fan and SyFy Fanatics: The Social
       Stigma of Popular Media Fandom/ Psychology of Popular
       Media Culture
Evaluation/Discussion Paper Proposals Due
Sept 20th
Marxisms
Read: Storey/Chapt 4 - Marxisms
Barron/Chapt 1 - Marx and Music
Rojek – Is Marx Still Relevant to the Study of Leisure/ Leisure Studies
Evaluation/Discussion

Sept 27th
Theories of Identity
Read: Storey/Chapt 5 – Psychoanalysis
Brant & Clare/Chapt 7 – Social Constructions of Identity
Zemmels – Youth and New Media: Studying Identity and Meaning in an Evolving Media Environment/ Communication Research Trends
Evaluation/Discussion

Oct 2th (TUES)
Structuralism and post-structuralism
Read: Storey/Chapt 6 – Structuralism and post-structuralism
Barron/ Chapt 7 – Semiotics and Tattooing
Murnane – Now is a Dystopia: Ayn Rand and the Right Wing Appropriation of The Hunger Games/ The Journal of Popular Culture
Evaluation/Discussion

Oct 11th
Class, Age and Reality TV
Read: Storey/Chapt 7 – Class and class struggle
Barron/Chapt 5 – Adorno and Reality Television
Westhof, Harink & others (2010) – Filling a Missing Link: The Influence of Portrayals of Older Characters in Television Commercials/ Aging and Society
Evaluation/Discussion

Oct 18th
Gendered Theory
Read: Storey/Chapt 8 – Gender and Sexuality
Milestone & Meyer/ Chapt 6 – Consuming Pop Culture: The Role of Gender
Evaluation/Discussion

Oct 25th
Black Cultural Theory
Read: Storey/Chapt 9 – Race, Racism and Representation
Dirks & Mueller/Chapt 8 – Racism and Popular Culture in Handbook of Ethnic and Racial Relations
Evaluation/Discussion

Literature Review Due
Nov 1st  
Globalization  
Read:  Storey/Chapt 10 – Postmodernism  
Szeman & Obrien/Chapt 9 – Space, Place and Globalization  
Murphy – Lessons from the Zombie Apocalypse in Global Popular Culture: An Environmental Discourse/ Environmental Communication  
Evaluation/Discussion

Nov 8th  
Consumerism/Consumption  
Read:  Storey/Chapt 11 – The Materiality of Popular Culture  
Brant & Clare/Chapt 8 – Material Culture  
Hall (2012) - How Popular Culture Texts Inform and Shape Student’s Discussions of Social Studies Texts/ Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy  
Evaluation/Discussion

Nov 15th  
Intertextuality and the Popular  
Read:  Storey/Chapt 12 – The Politics of the Popular  
Fiske/Chapt 17 – Intertextuality  
Evaluation/Discussion  
Methodology Section Due

Nov 22nd  
Thanksgiving Break

Nov 29th  
Presentations

Dec 6th  
Presentations

Dec 9th(TUES)  
FINAL PAPERS DUE!

Bibliography


