

Popular Culture: Sociology 135

GE Area C2
Section 1, MWF 10-10:50a
Del Norte 1004
Professor Todd A. Migliaccio
Office: Amador Hall 451D
Hours: MW 12-1:30p, or by appointment
Phone: 278-7573
tmigliac@csus.edu
Website: <http://www.csus.edu/sacct>

Course Objective:

Analyzes social processes that produce popular culture by contrasting interrelationships between institutional power structures and collective behavior. Examines theories of popular culture, mass movements, and individualism; social change, cultural hegemony, sub-cultures, and organizational studies.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the artifacts that exist in dominant Western culture that are considered popular culture and why they may (or may not) be considered popular
2. Demonstrate knowledge of how to understand and study popular culture as a representation of a society.
3. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of popular culture and understanding in the development of societies.
4. Compare and analyze different forms of popular culture and their reflection of the society.
5. Students will develop a critical media literacy that allows them to understand the deeper context of social artifacts produced in dominant Western society and their meaning in society.
6. Students will be able to apply their critical media literacy as they engage and create their own social artifacts that are part of the media.

Required Texts:

Course Reader

The course reader introduces academic, and some popular articles that offers key points for each of the sections of the class. Each article is chosen to give examples and/or offer a discussion about key concepts that are relevant to the area or topic being discussed. Many of the readings are relevant to other sections of the class, and can be referenced and/or used to understand the class discussions.

Brightest Day: Graphic Novel: DC Comics

1401232760

The use of a comic book was to give students an example of a popular culture artifact based on class items/discussions. Each of the issues was identified as the top selling issues for the time frame in which they came out.

The book offers a short book that is part of the popular culture, connecting to socialization of children, politics, social issues, race, inequality, etc that will be used to introduce ideas from the class and to practice at developing an argumentative thesis for a paper.

Policies:

The due dates for each of the papers are stated in the syllabus. DO NOT rely on sacct due dates. While they are often correct, just check the syllabus to make sure. No late papers will be accepted. The paper guidelines are on the web, as well as in a handout given at the beginning of class. As well, a brief statement in class about what is expected will be given. The due dates for each assignment are listed in the course calendar at the end of the syllabus. While I will attempt to offer reminders to impending due dates, it is ultimately your responsibility to insure that all papers are ready to be turned in by the expected due date.

You need to regularly check sacct email (the email account on sacct) for contact and information sent to you by your group members and the professor (or TA). It is assumed you are reading those regularly so any information missed is your responsibility. This does not mean all information is disseminated through email.

Throughout the course, each student will be allotted four extensions for the papers/assignments. This means you are turning a paper/assignment in late, but as long as you are using extensions, it will not lose points. One extension allows you to turn it in the following class day. A second extension means it will be two class days late. You do not need permission from the professor. You may use these extensions whenever you want, subject to the rules given below:

- 1) You get four extensions. Don't ask me for more- you will not get them. Hence, you should use extensions wisely when you really need them, such as sickness or an athletic event.*
- 2) You may use a maximum of two extensions on any one paper; by using two on one paper, you can turn the paper in two class periods late.*
- 3) You can use one on any assignment given in the class, meaning the assignment can be turned in the next class period. Any assignment turned in later, or if you have used all of your extensions, will not be accepted.*
- 4) Any attempts to turn in a project assessment paper later than two extensions, or if turn it in 1-2 classes later but you have used all of your extensions, it will not be accepted (meaning you receive a 0 score on it).*
- 5) Any paper that is submitted later than the next class after it is due (regardless of your extension situation), or is turned in late after you have used all of your extensions will be penalized two full grades. If you turn it in since at least two other papers have been submitted since its due date, more points may be taken off of it.*
- 7) No extension can be used for posting assignments. If you fail to post before the end of the allotted time, then you lose those points.*
- 8) No extension can be used for any part of the Popular Culture Project. There are three times you can turn it in, receiving extra credit points if turned in on one of the earlier due dates. This includes the group member grades. It must be turned in at the same time you submit the project.*
- 9) If you use two extensions for the final paper, it will be due the Monday of Finals week.*

10) Extensions include when there are technology problems. In other words, if there are technical problems that does not mean you get an extra day. It is still due on the required day.

A title page is expected on all papers, which will contain the following information: Title of the paper, your name, the name of the class (Sociology 135 for those of you not paying attention) and your Thesis.

NO MAKE UP EXAMS. (This is why the dropped exam policy exists.)

Use of SacCT: The class is located on the SacCT campus server. Accessing this site requires a login and password, which are the following: Login: your samlink id; Password: same as your samlink account password. You will be able to access the outlines for the course, any overheads used in class, any material that was handed out, a glossary of terms (if there is one not listed that you can not locate elsewhere, please let me know so I can include it), all of the assignments, as well as the submission links for all assignments and syllabus. You will also be able to locate your assignment grades on-line if you desire (the full grade will not be determined until just before finals week).

While there are times when the SacCT site will be down, this is not an excuse for a missed assignment or late paper. The material will be up with sufficient time to copy it before it comes due. Ultimately it is your responsibility to either obtain it, or let me know of any problems you are having with it. Most problems are related to the computer department, so contact the help desk. If they are unable/unwilling to help you let me know, and I will attempt to correct any problems, but on occasion they are not my fault (I know, that is hard to imagine, but it is true).

CSUS complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability that may necessitate accommodations being made in the classroom, please contact SSD, (916) 278-6955. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Turn off all pagers and cell phones before entering class. I accept the right to answer any that ring (and make up any wild stories about you to the person who has called).

Finally, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The policy can be accessed here: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/Uma00150.htm>. If you are caught engaging in such activities, you will receive an F, and will be reported to the campus Judicial Affairs Officer.

Writing Requirement

The required writing, including the papers, short assignments and project assessments fulfill the 1500 word required writing of any GE course.

Writing Center:

For free, one-on-one help with reading or writing in any class, visit the University Reading and Writing Center (URWC) in Calaveras 128. The URWC can help you at any stage in your reading and writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing and organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor. Students can sign up for up to an hour a week with a tutor by visiting the URWC in CLV 128—visit the URWC during week two of the semester to sign up for regular weekly tutoring. Students may drop in at any time, but the best time to drop is during our “drop-in only” hours M-R 2:00-4:00. We also offer tutoring for one unit of academic credit through ENGL121. For URWC hours and more information, visit the website at www.csus.edu/writingcenter.

Exams:

There will be four exams administered throughout the quarter, but only three will count. Each will consist of True/False, and/or multiple-choice questions. Each will be worth 15% of your total grade (for a total of 45% of your total grade). Each test will, for the most part, focus only on the information that has been

presented in either lecture, videos, or in the readings since the last exam. If there are any ideas that are raised on the final that occurred earlier in the semester, I will give you an idea of what you need to study. You will need to bring scantrons (882) for the exams. (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4)

Assignments:

Artifact Analysis Papers: Throughout the semester, we will be engaging popular culture artifacts. There are nine two page papers that require an analysis of popular culture. You will be required to turn in 3 of them throughout the semester. You will choose which of the assignments you will write about, but each specific paper has an assigned due date. Within each paper, you will analyze the specific popular culture item (some require you to analyze something in your life or a friend's life, while others are a specific item), using the articles from the class to help explain the key points of analysis you are identifying. You will develop an argument using this artifact. It is best to focus on one idea in each paper (such as race, gender, attractiveness, power, etc) and discuss how it relates to the society (this is how you bring in the articles). Use at least 2-3 references (ASA citation) in each paper (at least 2 from class reader). These will be worth 20% of your total grade. This will address the majority of the 1,500 word requirement as a GE course. (Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4...depending on the paper topic chosen). (NOTE: you are still required to read/watch/engage all of the popular culture artifacts that are being used for the analysis papers, as they will be in the exams. Using artifacts in a paper does not count as a reference.)

A title page is expected on all papers, which will contain the following information: Title of the paper, your name, the name of the class (Sociology 135 for those of you not paying attention) and your Thesis.

Popular Culture Group Project: You are required to produce a popular culture product. This product will be made available to other students in the class during the semester. You can create any type of product during the class, but you will need to introduce it to me to make sure it is acceptable. This includes written (narratives, comics), visual (video), designs (toy), internet (webpage), music (song: performed or written) formats, but is not limited to these. While it has to be popular it also needs to educate people about a social issue. You will be required to turn in a statement about what you are intending to create early in the semester. You are required to work in groups of 4. You will be assigned to these groups. You will identify this information when you submit each part of it. You will submit all materials as a group, and will receive the same grade, except for the grading of your fellow group members (each student will email me separately a grade for each student in your group on a score of 0-4pts. I need first and last names of each group member. Not doing this on time costs you 2 points). Any partner grades submitted after that due date will not be allowed (and will impact the grade of the submitting student). The project will be due at three times throughout the semester. Give it a clear title and use that in the submission so others can clearly identify it. Extra credit will be given for submitting it earlier. This will be worth 15% of your grade. (Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Identifying your group:

On the Course page, on the left side menu toward the bottom, there will be a link, "Group Project Group List." Once you choose the link for your group, a list will appear below. You can email the group here (see "Send email"). This goes to your home email address. You must also email each group member through the sacct email (see sacct email link). If you click on "Group Homepage" which will display all of the group members. You must email them as soon as possible through sacct (once groups have been determined around 2-3 week of classes) and connect with them. I may ask to see your emails to your group members to show you are in regular contact with one another.

If groups are struggling to work together, I may require you to submit information to me over email or meet with me as a group. If you are not connecting with your group, you may be removed from your group, requiring you to work with another group or possibly on your own. You can also lose points from these required contact with me, even if you remain with your group. So it is in your best interest to work with your group throughout.

Popular Culture Project Assessment Papers: You are required to analyze three of the popular culture projects by other students. These are three, 1 page papers (you will be answering 5

questions about them online, through assessments, which amount to 1 page total, so make sure you answer the questions thoroughly) that will assess the quality of the product, the likelihood of your interest in the product, the availability of the product, and ultimately the message that is conveyed (you will be answering questions online through an assessment link that will result in 1 page for each assessment). Use your sociological imagination to help with your analysis. While there are three assigned due dates, they can be turned in earlier. USE the syllabus due dates, not the online due dates, as those reflect if you use extensions. You are required to analyze a project from each project due date, and not from all one due date. Each will be submitted online through sacct in the assessments section of the class. This will be worth 10% of your overall grade. This will address the remaining 1,500 word requirement as a GE course requirement. (Learning objectives 1, 2, 3)

Class Assignments: Throughout the semester, a series of short assignments will be given that incorporate the concepts of the class into your own lives. They will be both given out during class and on the web, so you will need to periodically check the web for new assignments. An assignment due date will be established in class, or will be established online. No make-ups for these are possible, unless you choose to use one of your extensions, and that is only available to be used on assignments.

Some of these may be 1 minute writing assignments in class to engage the ideas. The question/topic will be given in class and due that same day. No make-ups for these are possible, unless you choose to use one of your extensions. If you use an extension, the assignment will be a one page, typed paper due the next class period. (Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4)

Discussion Postings: Throughout the semester, discussion posting questions will be presented throughout the semester. Students will have at least one week (a due date will be established for each posting) to have students engage ideas from class and readings outside of class with other students. These postings will help students to understand ideas/concepts from the class, as well as help to facilitate discussion in the class. Students are required to respond to the question, and then respond to at least two other students' comments until the due date (at midnight). (Learning Objectives: 1, 3, 4)

Discussion postings and assignments will be worth 10% of your total grade.

Submitting your Assignments online:

When you log onto SacCT and connect into the course page. On the Course Menu on the left side of the course page, click on the "Assignment Submission Links" There will be a list of folders for different groupings of class assignments. Choose the folder that represents the class assignment (for example, if you are turning in paper 2, go to the paper assignment folder, then locate paper analysis 2 submission in the list). You can attach the paper here (need to be a word document: .doc, .docx, .rtf, or at least a PDF), as well as other materials needing links (depending on the assignment). If you do not submit using one of these, it will be returned and considered late. If I am unable to open the word document, I will let you know and you will have that day to resubmit it correctly (ultimately, it is up to you to get that taken care of).

REGULARLY CHECK EMAILS. If I am unable to open an attachment, I will ask for you to resubmit it in a new format. You are responsible for doing so, or the submission might be considered late. Many of the class assignments you can type in the given box, as opposed to attaching documents, so do this when possible. You MUST attach a document for the analysis papers.

NOTE: Any attachments must NOT include any symbols (e.g. \$#&*, etc) in the title for the document.

NOTE: You can resubmit a paper/assignment if you make a mistake, but the new date will be considered the date submitted. Once the paper/assignment has been graded, you cannot change it.

Submitting the Group Project: Only one group member needs to submit it. It is submitted for the entire group. KEY ISSUE: You will submit your project in two places. One will be submitted to me through the online submission process. You will also submit it at the same time on the discussion board so that others

can review it. Just create a new thread, cut and paste the information about your project that you submitted. Attach any other materials. Submitting it here will give your group discussion points if submitted on time.

Completing the *popular culture project assessments*, click on the “Group Project Artifact Assessment Submission Links” that is located on the Course Menu on the left side of the course page. There are three possible assessments. Click on the one that is available. Remember, you need to review a project from each of the three times they are turned in (three due dates). REMEMBER to follow the due dates for the assessments on the syllabus, not the dates online, as those “End” dates are based on if you use extensions to turn them in. Answer the questions as completely and thoroughly as you can. REMEMBER to save your responses before submitting the assessment.

TO LOCATE THE PUBLISHED GROUP PROJECTS TO REVIEW:

On the course tools menu on the left hand side of the sacct course page. Click on Discussion Board. Locate the Discussion Topic that references the Group Projects with due date (there will be three: Labeled as Group Project submission date 1, 2, 3). Choose one to evaluate. Review it completely (all attachments). Respond to the questions in the assessments.

To review comments on papers submitted back to you:

Open up the documented that was submitted back to you online (it is listed under your last name). Go to “review” tab. Click on “track changes.” If it does not show up, then sure the option for the viewing is identified as “Final showing markup” and not just “Final” (it is just above “Show markup”) Or you should be able to just click on “Show markup,” and make sure “Comments is clicked to show.

To see comments on assignments submitted online through sacct (all assignments could have comments, but group comments are located here):

Open up the assignments link (where you turned it in online). Open up the assignment you want to check, then click the “Graded” tab. (There are potential comments for all assignments, but all comments for the group assignment will be located here). The assessments are a similar path to locate the assignments.

Grading Scale*

A	=	92-100
A-	=	90-91
B+	=	88-89
B	=	82-87
C+	=	78-79
B-	=	80-81
C	=	72-77
C-	=	70-71
D+	=	68-69
D	=	62-67
D-	=	60-61
F	=	59 or below

*** This scale may be lowered but will not be raised**

Grade Breakdown

3 Exams * 15%	=	45%
Papers	=	20%
Group Project	=	15%
Assessments	=	10%
Class Assig	=	<u>10%</u>
Total	=	100%

Calendar:

TOPIC:

READING DUE ON FIRST DAY:

September 3: Introduction and Overview

September 5-12: Culture Concepts

Hall; Gramsci; Fiske
Little Black Sambo

September 15-24: Power, Commodity, and Inequality

Gitlin; King; Monk-Turner, et. al
LaMotte

September 17: Paper 1: What is Popular Culture Analysis Due

September 26: **Exam 1**

September 29- October 6: News and Power

Cogan, Lee, Goldacre

October 1: Paper 2: Power through Advertising Analysis

October 6: Popular Culture Project Determination: Group assignment

October 8-13: Internet

Christofides, et al; Tropp; Burgess & Green

October 13: Paper 3: News production: Colbert Report

October 15-20: Written: Books and Comics

King; Hogan; Taylor; Dykes

October 20: Paper 4: "Boca State of Mind" Youtube Analysis Due

Brightest Day

October 22: **Exam 2**

October 24- November 3: Television

Schildcrout; Tahmahkera;

October 27: Paper 5: Comic Book Analysis Due

Blakeborough, Valby

October 29: Popular Culture Project Due (4 extra credit points)

October 31: Popular Culture Project Assessment 1 Due

November 5-14: Movies

Wedding; Johnson & Holmes; Clarke;

November 10: Paper 6: South Park Analysis Due

Li-Vollmer & LaPointe

November 12: Popular Culture Project Due (2 extra credit points)

November 14: Popular Culture Project Assessment 2 Due

November 17: **Exam 3**

November 19-24: Sports

Churchill; Hughes; Burns

November 21: Paper 7: Buddy/Romantic Comedy Analysis Due

November 27 & 28: Thanksgiving Break: Enjoy

November 26-December 5: Fans and Fanatics

Halverson & Halverson; Jenkins

December 1: Popular Culture Project Due

Reysen & Branscombe

December 1: Paper 8: Sports Analysis

December 3: Popular Culture Project Assessment 3 Due

December 8-12: Celebrity Culture

Derakhshani; Curnutt; Denzin;

December 10: Paper 9: Fanatic Analysis Due

Loftus

December 19, Friday, 8a-10a: **Exam 4**