U.S. Popular culture acts like a mirror to the broader American society. It reflects the values, economics, politics, biases, hopes, and fears of the American public. In more general terms, all cultural behaviors have their origins in social functions. But modern popular culture varies greatly, running the gamut from multi-million dollar mass media created by international conglomerates to the more casual, day-to-day activities by consumers, fans, and the general citizenry. In this class we will examine four varieties of commercial popular culture: consumerism, motion pictures, sports, and social group culture.

The goals of this course are to explore examples of U.S. popular culture that may contain language, images, and express ideas that some could deem objectionable. Rather than censor our analysis or discussion we will address these controversies head-on. Sexuality and sexual values are a part of all cultures, so be forewarned. Moreover, while this course may be your first exposure to popular culture as an academic discipline rest assured that the quality of your questions, discussion, research, and writing is of far greater importance than your current depth of knowledge.

Throughout the term we will be examining examples of U.S. popular culture that may contain language, images, and express ideas that some could deem objectionable. Rather than censor our analysis or discussion we will address these controversies head-on. Sexuality and sexual values are a part of all cultures, so be forewarned. Moreover, while this course may be your first exposure to popular culture as an academic discipline rest assured that the quality of your questions, discussion, research, and writing is of far greater importance than your current depth of knowledge.

The course demands active and attentive reading. The reading and informed class discussion comprises the core of the course objectives and a critical component of the term grade. If you do not plan to do the reading, you will not pass the course. If this is your intention, my advice is to save the time, expense, and heartache by dropping this course now.

- Gary Cross, An All-Consuming Century: Why Consumerism Won in Modern America
- David Blanke, Hell on Wheels: The Promise and Peril of America’s Car Culture, 1900-1940
- Henry Jenkins, Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide
- Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies
- Janet Staiger, Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception
- Jonathan Gray, et al. Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World
- Robert Toplin, Reel History

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To demonstrate an understanding of four key historical narratives pertaining to modern U.S. popular culture, including consumerism, motion pictures, commercial sports and social culture through course readings and in-class discussions.
- To demonstrate an understanding and the correct usage of conventional historical terminology to describe these phenomena and events through course readings, assigned papers, and in-class discussions.
- To communicate their knowledge of historical cultural change by using either primary or secondary source materials in the construction of a term paper.
- To synthesis their knowledge of theory, primary and secondary sources, create a defensible historical thesis supported
by either primary or secondary sources, and format a paper using appropriate academic methods of citation and writing in the assigned papers.

**GRADED ACTIVITY**

Specific instructions for the following are provided below, will be discussed in class, and can be further clarified by speaking with the instructor during regular office hours.

- Two in-class exams, equally weighted and combined worth a total of 50% of the term grade.
- Two book reviews, equally weighted and combined worth a total of 20% of the term grade.
- An annotated bibliography due at the end of term worth 20% of the term grade.
- A class participation grade based on regular attendance, participation in class discussion, and evidence of reading conducted throughout the term and worth 10% of the term grade. Each unexcused absence will result in a 10% reduction in your class participation grade. An excused absence requires *formal notification* by TAMUCC-Student Services, not simply an email to the instructor.

Grading Scale for all assignments and the final term grade:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89.5
- C= 70-79.5
- D = 60-69.5
- F = 0-59.5

Plagiarized materials will earn a zero for that assignment. This assignment may not be resubmitted. The History Area graduate program coordinator will be informed of all instances of plagiarism by History MA-seeking students.

**DESCRIPTION OF GRADED EVENTS**

Two in-class exams, equally weighted and combined worth a total of 50% of the term grade.

Students will have access to their notes and the books for these in-class exams. As with the MA exam, these will be exercises in synthesizing the assigned reading around broad historical constructions. A specific study guide will be distributed and discussed in class.

Two book reviews, equally weighted and combined worth a total of 20% of the term grade.

Students are required to submit one review for one of the assigned books for both halves of the course. The reviews MUST clearly summarize and analyze the author’s thesis, the efficacy of their argument, their use of source materials, and the book’s strengths and weaknesses. The review must be free of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, double-spaced, typed, and no longer than three printed pages (using 12-point fonts and 1-inch margins throughout). You may choose any book within each section and may replace one of these review grades with another book review from that sections.

An annotated bibliography due at the end of term worth 20% of the term grade.

This paper, due at the end of the course, requires students to review approximately 15-20 scholarly secondary sources on a cultural topic of the student’s choosing. Students are required to submit a proposed reading list to the instructor and receive official approval of the books selected. While a specific style sheet will be distributed and discussed in class, students can expect to provide a brief summary of each text and a discussion of its thesis and use for cultural scholars. Students are encouraged to use the assigned reading as a basis for constructing their reading lists.

A class participation grade based on regular attendance, participation in class discussion, and evidence of reading conducted throughout the term and worth 20% of the term grade.

This should be self-explanatory. Students may be required periodically to turn in their reading notes, so please plan accordingly (i.e., no notes written on your driver’s license, please). If plagiarism between students (copying the notes from someone who has read the material) is evident, BOTH STUDENTS will earn a grade of zero that they will not be able to replace. There will be only three grades assigned to these notes: A, C, and F (and a zero if evident of plagiarism). In addition, reading quizzes may be given in class.
CLASS POLICIES

Formats and Citations
All papers must be typed, double-spaced, and free of significant spelling and grammatical mistakes. Papers must have page numbers, one inch margins, and use a 12-point font. Failure to follow these standards will lower your grade for the assignment. All citations must use Turabian or the Chicago Manual of Style. Footnotes and bibliographic citation formats will be graded.

Late work
All assignments are due the day specified in the syllabus and are considered late thereafter. Late work will be penalized one letter grade for each calendar day the assignment is overdue. If an assignment is not turned in by the end of the term, it will count as a zero for that component of the term grade. Even very late work can receive credit (earning an F is better than a zero). Students may not make up any in-class activities.

Plagiarism
The penalty for academic dishonesty is clearly specified in the current Undergraduate Bulletin. I will follow these guidelines. In addition, students will be awarded zero points for any assignment in which cheating is detected. Plagiarism is considered by me and the University to be cheating. This is your first and only warning not to cheat in this class. If plagiarism between students (copying the notes from someone who has read the material) is evident, BOTH STUDENTS will earn a grade of zero for that assignment that they will not be able to replace.

Hurricane policy
In the event of a hurricane, I follow the policy of TAMU-CC. If the campus remains officially open during the time when our class normally meets then class will proceed as scheduled (including all graded events). If the university closes campus then, of course, you will not be held responsible for that day’s assignment.

Attendance
Since active participation is required to pass this course, reminding you about showing up seems redundant. Still, I reserve the right to lower your final term grade by a full letter grade should you miss three scheduled classes. If you miss more I expect you to drop the course or accept a failing grade for the term.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Notice to Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.
1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

See me if the material, course description, or assignments are confusing in any way. See me if you have any special physical needs or require any unique arrangements in order to attend and successfully complete the course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC/ASSIGNMENTS DUE (BOLD)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/28/13</td>
<td>Course Introduction – Cultural Theory</td>
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<td>• Receive Cultural Theory Handout and Assignment</td>
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<td>2/4/13</td>
<td>Cultural Theory</td>
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<td>Gary Cross, An All-Consuming Century: Why Consumerism Won in Modern America</td>
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<td>David Blanke, Hell on Wheels: The Promise and Peril of America’s Car Culture, 1900-1940</td>
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<td>Henry Jenkins, Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/18/13</td>
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<td>Janet Staiger, Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception</td>
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<td>Robert Toplin, Reel History</td>
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