Course Description: Despite the fact that most people watch movies as a means of entertainment, there is no denying the influence popular culture has on the typical American citizen. Psychology and Popular Culture will explore the power of the entertainment media and understand its dynamic relationship with American culture through the eyes of psychological theory. Students will gain a broader understanding of the ways psychological principles are communicated to a mass audience as well as assist in provoking thought and analysis of psychological theory and research.

Disclaimer: Every attempt has been made to select films and film clips that minimize offensive content. If given the choice between two similar films, I have always chosen the one that would generally be found as least offensive. That said, the films, clips and images chosen may contain content that some people may find offensive and that content has not been edited out. Offensive features may include sensitive story lines, graphic language and/or images, violence, sexual themes, and drug/alcohol/illegal behavior portrayals or references. There are plenty of references available online for you to read up on the film prior to coming to class – the best of which is the Internet Movie Data Base (www.imdb.com) in the section they have for each film for Motion Picture Rating and Parents Guide. Please review the list of films I propose and decide whether or not you think your participation in this class will be impacted by the films selected. Your decision to not attend/view a particular film(s) will not excuse you for understanding how it fits in with the particular unit.

After completing this course students should be able to:

1. Identify examples of psychological principles in film and television
2. Critically analyze popular culture for psychological content
3. Compare and contrast multiple portrayals of psychological content
4. Apply course materials both to both film/TV scenarios as well as “real life”

Note: While some of these films, and all of the discussion will take place in class – there will be an expectation that certain films be viewed on your own time. You will know about them well in advance and they will be movies easily obtainable.
Required Materials:


Your Grade:

Below is a list and a description of how you will be graded this semester. It is expected that all work is to be handed in ON the day they are due, and handed in during the class period. Late work will be subject to a significant penalty of ½ of a letter grade (5 points) per day for each day it is late. Your grade in this course will be the average of the following:

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Your attendance in class to discuss the topics, the readings and the films. Watching it on your own may give you access to the story but not to the rest of the experience. Additionally, the quality of this class is largely based on the quality of the discussions – which you are expected to participate in.

Quizzes/Assignments (15%):

These will be random quizzes given at the beginning of class designed to make sure you are doing the reading and/or independent viewing. Not coming to class prepared negatively impacts the quality of the discussions we are able to have, and much of the learning in this class comes from those discussions. These are not meant to be difficult and if you do the assignment you will have no problem getting full credit for this portion of your grade. These quizzes cannot be made up.

Research Paper (25%):

This will be a paper of approximately 5-7 pages in length in which you will explore the connections between psychology and popular culture. This is a research paper and as such, your sources should be credible and scholarly. You will be graded not only on the content of the paper, but style and quality of your sources. This paper will be due on Thursday, June 27.
POTENTIAL TOPICS – This is not an inclusive list and reflects just some of my ideas:

- How I can improve my memory by watching Memento
- The impact of film on our perception of mental illness – A Beautiful Mind, One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest
- The root of moral development and understanding moral dilemmas as portrayed in Return to Paradise and The Sea Inside
- Stanley Kubrick teaches us about behavior modification
- The dynamics of social interaction – 12 Angry Men
- The truth about therapy and that guy named Sigmund – Analyze This
- Learning about social psychology through American History X/Full Metal Jacket
- Culture and the Perception of Beauty – Real Women Have Curves
- Culture and story telling – Amores Perros/21 Grams – Vanilla Sky/Abre Los Ojos
- Identity development in The Breakfast Club; Adolescence in Welcome to the Dollhouse; Coming of Age in Dead Poets Society
- Understanding Freud through Alfred Hitchcock; Lord of the Flies
- AI: The difference between being human and living a human life

Midterm and Final Exam (25% each):

The midterm and final exams will be based on content from the assigned readings, class discussions, and films/ clips shown in class. It is recommended that you take notes as you do your readings.

Grading

Scale: 90-

100% = A
80 – 89% = B
70 – 79% = C
60 – 69% = D
less than 60% = F

Expectations

Class will start on time every day, and you should expect it to run the full period. Please avoid disturbing other students (by arriving late, leaving early, talking with a neighbor, etc.). Make sure that your electronic devices are turned off.

I expect students to make every effort to attend each class. Should you find it necessary to miss class, please note that you will be held responsible for all material covered during the missed class. It will be your responsibility to speak with a classmate about the course content you missed.
**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero for the assignment or exam.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Friday, June 21st is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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. 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 Procedure
13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at:
http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade
_appeals.pdf*. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may
contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For
complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit
the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic
Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment
must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and
requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree
will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For
more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that
provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other
things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning
environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you
believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability
Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access
issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for
assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could
not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would
continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class
activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University
facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of
the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the
course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Work Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 3-4</td>
<td>Introduction to Film, Psychology and Culture</td>
<td>Shelton (2008), Young (2012) Chapter 1, Chapter 9 (Due June 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Mental Illness and the Media</td>
<td>Wahl (2003) Chapters 1-3; Tesser, Millar &amp; Wu (1988);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Mental Illness and the Media</td>
<td>Wahl (2003) Chapters 4-7; Rosenhan (1973); Shock Corridor (1963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Mental Illness and Film</td>
<td>Anderson (2003); Domino (1983); One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest (1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11-12</td>
<td>Mental Illness and Film</td>
<td>Penn, Chamberlin, &amp; Mueser (2003); Young, Boester, Whitt, &amp; Stevens (2008);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Summary Discussion of Mental Illness and Film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18</td>
<td><strong>Midterm</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Introduction to Popular Culture and Psychology</td>
<td>The Royal Tennenbaums (2001)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Introduction to Popular Culture and Psychology (con’t)/Popular Culture and Psychology: Gender</td>
<td>Harris and Sanborn (2014), Mares, Oliver, &amp; Cantor (2008); Simonton, Graham, &amp; Kaufman (2012); Last Day to Drop – Friday June 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>Popular Culture and Psychology: Gender</td>
<td>Till, et al. (2011); Plucker, et al. (2009); We Need to Talk About Kevin (2011)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>Popular Culture and Psychology: Culture</td>
<td>Young (2012) Chapter 2 and 6;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>Popular Culture and Psychology: Culture</td>
<td>Young (2012) Chapter 4 and 5;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>The Magnificent Seven (2016)</td>
<td>Young (2012) Chapter 7 and 8; Seven Samurai (1954) Research Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Popular Culture and TV</td>
<td>The Florida Project (2017)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>Popular Culture and Psychology: Morality</td>
<td>Lady Bird (2017)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Wrapping it Up/TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>