COURSE DESCRIPTION

U.S. modern popular culture is both a mirror and a shaper of the broader society. Like all culture, it is a medium through which people express their beliefs, values, prejudices, hopes, fears, and pride at who they are as a distinct generation within the broader sweep of time. Popular culture here means, for the most part, commercial culture. As a result, historians are careful to distinguish between cultural producers, cultural artifacts, and cultural consumers, each of which operate in distinct and fascinating ways when money is involved. In this class we will look at all three, with a reading emphasis on (1) consumerism, (2) cinema, (3) generational identities, (4) and gender.

DEVELOPING A PATTERN OF REGULAR READING/NOTE-TAKING

You must read the assigned work. You will be turning in regular reading notes and participating in class discussions (40% of the term grade). It really is essential that are willing to set aside time to practice both valuable (marketable) skills. I will talk in class about ways to better comprehend academic writing and to save you time. The point is that by this stage in your college career (4000-level course), you either know how to discipline yourself to get the work done or will learn it now;)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course:

- Will understand the historical narrative of U.S. modern popular culture, and have a deeper understanding of consumerism, cinema, generational identities, and on-line culture.
- Will understand and use the conventional historical terms to describe these phenomena and events.
- Will understand and develop an original primary-source research project using conventional scholarly references and styles.
- Will understand how to communicate their ideas collaboratively and in a public setting and accept the responsibility of reading scholarship critically

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*
- Shea Serrano, *Movies (and Other Things)*
- Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop*
- Susan Douglas, *Rise of Enlightened Sexism*
- Articles posted to Blackboard

All of the books are available for purchase at the University bookstore or through the Internet.
**GRADING STRUCTURE**

A = 89.51-100.00  
B = 79.51-89.49  
C = 69.51-79.49  
D = 59.51-69.49  
F = 0-59.49  

***YOU CAN NOT RESCHEDULE THE FINAL EXAM WITHOUT THE DEAN'S PRIOR AUTHORIZATION***

**DESCRIPTION OF GRADED EVENTS**

**Notes and In-Class Work (30% of the term grade)**
The notes are submitted electronically (via Blackboard) and, as listed on the syllabus, are due seven times over the course of the semester. The notes should cover the assigned reading for that week. I will be using a grading rubric based on the following questions and weights:


2. (50% of each notes assignment) Do the notes provide a basic coverage for the content contained in the reading? Here you should aim for no more than 2-3 pages of single-spaced notes. Do not write these in an essay format. Using typical word-processing software, I would suggest using bulleted lists divided by chapters, book sections, or individual articles. You must provide corresponding page numbers for these notes (not every line, but enough so that you can use the notes to reference page numbers in class discussion and for your papers).

3. (25% of each notes assignment) Provide 2-3 “big points” raised by the assigned reading. What does the reading tell us about the topic? What questions do they raise? Any general observations that you feel are relevant to class discussion on this topic?

I will call upon students in class to share their conclusions, as the basis for classroom discussion, so be sure to have access to your work on the assigned day. I’ll allow students to drop their lowest result from the notes assignment, the total average comprising 20% of the term grade.

Obviously, you will need to be in class to receive credit for in-class work. Essentially, this will take the form of small groups leading the discussion on that day’s assigned reading or topic. These groups will be created voluntarily by students in the first few days of class (based on where you select to sit in the room) and can be changed later if problems emerge within the group (please bring these to me directly BEFORE the date of the in-class assignment). These will be graded for their focus on the assigned readings (do not tell us what you “feel” but rather what the authors argue and where in the writing we can find these arguments). In-class participation will be graded pass/fail and comprise 10% of the term grade.

**Written Paper (40% of the term grade)**
There are two papers are, essentially, take home exams based on the first and second half of the term with each worth 20% of the term grade. They will ask you to synthesize the reading around common themes or questions. Typically, I will ask two broad questions based on the assigned reading and ask you to reply to one of these. The assignments will be distributed in class with more specific instructions about citations, format, and length.

Each of these papers is due in class as a **HARD COPY**. Each should include correct bibliographic citations for your sources and page references for your evidence.

**Term Paper (30% of the term grade)**
The term paper is not really a paper at all, but rather the structure of one; think of it as a research project outline. It takes the same format of work you will do in HIST-4385 (the History Capstone course). It is the format used in nearly all original scholarly research. Specific instructions for each component of the term paper will be distributed in class, but basically there are four elements (due dates and term weights in parentheses):

1. **(worth 5% of term grade)** A complete discussion of the topic, including a precise analysis of the “who, what, when, and where” questions that define your topic as well as a proposed thesis. The key here will be in identifying your subjects
and the historical context of their times. The topic may change over the course of the research; the thesis usually does. These changes must be reflected in your later assignments.

2. (worth 5% of term grade) A discussion of at least three (and no more than five) scholarly secondary sources on the subject. In addition to a rough overview of the work, the description should clearly spell out how the work informs your study. These sources MUST be correctly cited in bibliographic formats using Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.

3. (worth 5% of term grade) A discussion of at least three (and no more than five) primary sources on the subject. These should be aligned to your subject (so if your subject is “fantasy football” the sources should not be about Jerry Jones or Antonio Brown but about fans). These sources MUST be correctly cited in bibliographic formats using Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.

4. (worth 15% of term grade) A comprehensive outline of your proposed paper that links your research to a thesis and means of logically addressing your topic in a research paper.

Each of these assignments is due in class and as a HARD COPY. Each should make the necessary corrections noted from earlier drafts. Failure to address these corrections WILL result in a zero for that section of the paper. Each should use correct bibliographic citations for your sources.

MISC. CLASS POLICIES REGARDING GRADES/ATTENDENCE

Late work. Each graded assignment will be lowered by one-half letter grade for each day that the assignment is past due. Even very late work will earn some credit (i.e., a 50 is much better than a 0 for a major component of the term grade).

Academic dishonesty. The penalties for academic dishonesty are 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 academic dishonesty is detected (plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty). Evidence of academic dishonesty is recorded in your permanent academic transcripts and will be obvious to anyone reviewing these transcripts in the future. This is your first and only warning not to cheat in this class.

Attendance Policy. Your attendance in class is required and will be recorded periodically over the semester. For each day above three unexcused absences, your final term grade will be lowered by 3 percentage points. Students with more than six unexcused absences will be expected to drop the course.

Hurricane policy: In the event of a hurricane, I follow the published policies of TAMU-CC. If the campus remains officially open during the time that our class normally meets then class will proceed as scheduled (including all graded events). If the university closes campus then, of course, we push to the next class period. If an exam date is cancelled, the exam is held at the next class meeting. Even in the event of a long-term closure of campus, the University may require all courses to continue through electronic means (Blackboard) or expect students to drop the course.

The last day to drop the course is April 10, 2020.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 20/22</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27/29</td>
<td>U.S. Modern Popular Culture (lecture)</td>
<td>Topic and Syllabus</td>
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<td>How to read &amp; note scholarly materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Reading: Blanke, “Behold Their Mighty Hands” [BB]</td>
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<td>February 3/5</td>
<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>Notes due (Cross, Preface-Ch.4)</td>
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<td>Reading: Cross, All-Consuming Century, Preface, Ch. 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10/12</td>
<td>Reading: Cross, All-Consuming Century, Ch. 5-6</td>
<td>Notes due (Cross, All-Consuming Century, Ch.7)</td>
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<td>February 17/19</td>
<td>Cultural Theory</td>
<td>In-Class Group Assignment</td>
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<td>Reading: Blanke, “Locating DeMille” [BB]</td>
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<td>- Samuel Freeman, “The Headquarters of Neo-Marxism” NYRB [BB]</td>
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<td>February 24/26</td>
<td>Commercial Film</td>
<td>Reading: Serrano, Movies (and Other Things), Ch.5-9</td>
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<td>Reading: Serrano, Movies (and Other Things), Preface, Ch.1-4</td>
<td>Notes due (Serrano, Preface-Ch. 9)</td>
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<td>February 26/28</td>
<td>Reading: Serrano, Movies (and Other Things), Ch. 10-12, 14</td>
<td>Reading: Serrano, Movies (and Other Things), Ch.15-17</td>
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<td>March 2/4</td>
<td>Film Censorship</td>
<td>HARDCOPY Topic + Secondary Sources Paper Due</td>
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<td>Watch in-class: Baby Face (1933)</td>
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<td>Reading: PCA files [BB]</td>
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<td>March 9/11</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>March 16/18</td>
<td>Generational Identification &amp; Music</td>
<td>Reading: Jeff Chang, Can’t Stop Won’t Stop</td>
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<td>- Reading: Jeff Chang, Can’t Stop Won’t Stop</td>
<td>In-class Group Assignment</td>
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<td>March 23/25</td>
<td>Generational Identification</td>
<td>Notes due</td>
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<td>- Reading: Jeff Chang, Can’t Stop Won’t Stop</td>
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<td>MarApr 30/1</td>
<td>Fandom</td>
<td>Generational Identification &amp; Music</td>
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<td>Reading: See Blackboard for assigned reading for this week</td>
<td>Reading: Jeff Chang, Can’t Stop Won’t Stop</td>
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<td>Reading: See Blackboard for assigned reading for this week</td>
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<td>Convergence Culture</td>
<td>HARDCOPY Topic + Secondary + Primary Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6/8</td>
<td>Reading: See Blackboard for additional assigned readings for this week</td>
<td>Notes Due</td>
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### April 13/15
**New Social Media**
- **Reading:**
  - Susan Douglas, *Rise of Enlightened Sexism*, Preface, Ch. 1
  - See Blackboard for additional assigned readings for this week

**In-class Group Assignment**

**Notes due**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 20/22</th>
<th><strong>OPEN TOPIC</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong></td>
<td>Susan Douglas, <em>Rise of Enlightened Sexism</em>, Ch. 6-7</td>
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**In-class Group Assignment**

**HARDCOPY Paper #2 Due**

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### May 4/6
**OPEN TOPIC**
- **Reading:** TBD/posted on Blackboard

**In-class Group Assignment**

**FINAL EXAM: HARDCOPY Topic + Secondary + Primary + Outline**

Due Wednesday, May 13, 1:45-4:15PM

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**GENERAL CLASS/UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

It is my experience that most students attend class regularly, behave as adults, submit assignments and take exams on time, perform well over the term, and do not cheat. Unfortunately, the following rules are necessary for the remaining few.

The environment of the classroom demands that we conduct ourselves like adults and with respect for each other. As a result, the following guidelines will be followed:

- always conduct yourself with respect and civility toward others. Abusive language or behavior will not be tolerated.
- please turn off or set to vibrate all cell phones and pagers. If you must take a call, do so outside of class.
- please be aware that talking, leaving early, arriving late, and other disruptive behavior affects your peers ability to learn the material. Excessive/repetitive disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
- dozing-off sometimes happens (even in my electrifying lectures), but DO NOT come to my class to sleep.
- please refer to the TAMU-CC Student Code of Conduct for a more complete treatment of your rights and responsibilities while in class.

Be absolutely clear: I will hold you responsible should your behavior negatively affect others in class. If this happens repeatedly, you will be removed from the class (even if it is the last week of the term).

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**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.

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**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.

**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. The last day to drop a class for the spring semester is April 10, 2020.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf).