

Instructor: Eric C. Davis

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NOTE: When emailing, please put SOC 210--[your name] in the subject line so that I can easily identify you and quickly respond.

Office: A100 Tower Office Hours: by appointment only.

Class meeting times: MW 12:30pm-2:40pm, Room C164

Course website accessible via CANVAS

## **Course Catalog Description**

*What makes popular culture "popular" and who decides for us? Wrestle with the notion of whether popular culture defines society, or if society defines popular culture; by studying television, music, film, and more. Themes include audience reception, network societies, and popular culture on a global scale.*

## **Course Content**

Sociologists study a broad range of topics--some of which includes provocative content and adult themes. While every attempt will be made to keep things PG-13, please know that there will be times where R-rated content (language, images, etc.) is necessary to examine course topics within an academic context. Students will not be penalized for excusing themselves from content they find objectionable or difficult to watch, see, discuss or listen to. That being said, students who excuse themselves are responsible for any course material they miss as a result of choosing not to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about course content or classroom climate, feel free to speak with me about it at any time.

## **Classroom Theme/Pedagogical Approach**

Video selections and music will be prominently featured in this class and will be used to illustrate course topics and themes. All multimedia selections are chosen for their ability to make you think and therefore, inspire engaging classroom conversations. No one will be put on the spot, but please be prepared to participate in class discussions. Critical thinking is the goal. This course is paperless and uses many different online, internet based tools to support classroom management and enhance student learning.

## **General Rules and Expectations**

- Come to class. Every day. Be on time. Be present (e.g. awake).
- Complete the readings no later than the start of the week assigned.
- Be prepared to contribute to the in-class conversations.
- Take notes on the readings, videos, and songs.
- Proper use of laptops required. No Facebook, Twitter or Surfing
- Consistently demonstrate respect and proper classroom behavior.
- Disrespectful behavior will result in you being asked to leave.
- Critical thinking is expected. Informed opinion is the standard we seek.
- Questions are welcome and encouraged. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, the fully engaged, actively participating student will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate a general understanding of Popular Culture from a sociological perspective;
- 2 Critically analyze various popular culture texts;
- 3 Explain and discuss how the intersections of race, class, and gender are represented and maintained in popular culture texts;
- 4 Describe the dominant representations and identity constructions of marginalized people in historical and contemporary analyses of US popular culture;
- 5 Discuss textual analysis critically; and
- 6 Illustrate their understanding of popular culture through an historically global lens.

## Course Requirements:

### Seminars (150pts)

--One page typewritten summary of *each* assigned chapter from our textbook must be uploaded to CANVAS by **12noon on the Monday of the week assigned**. Students also need to bring a electronic or printed copy to class in order to contribute to large group and small group discussions. Each summary should include the following:

1. A synopsis of the 3 to 4 key points raised by the author in the chapter.
2. A listing of 2 to 3 key questions raised by the author in the chapter, and,
3. The 1 to 2 additional questions you have related to the chapter.

...10pts per chapter summary ==> 110pts

...Overall in-class seminar participation ==> 40pts

### Pop Culture Analysis (two part assignment)

--choose a favorite ad or music video and write a brief description (summary) followed by your *informed* thoughts and opinions. Here are some prompts to guide your analysis:

1. *What are the messages? Are the messages the same as the product(s)?*
2. *What techniques are used to convey the messages?*
3. *Who is the target audience? How do you know who the target is?*
4. *Is the story being told accurate? fair? complete? If not, what information or perspectives are absent and why were they left out.*

#### PART I: 2-3 pages (50pts)

Students are required to submit their initial analysis no later than **12noon, Weds, 10/9**

After viewing the documentary, "*Merchants of Cool*", students will rewrite and resubmit their papers using the additional knowledge and insight gained from the film to guide their rethinking and reconsideration of the four questions above--PLUS implications and analysis from a sociological perspective (Read: add relevant SOC terms and concepts to your rewrite)

#### PART II: 4-5pages (50pts)

Analysis rewrites must be submitted no later than **12noon, Monday, 10/28**.

[note: please use creative formatting to highlight changes and additions from your original paper]

### Lyrical Annotation (100pts)

\*\*\*\*\*Access via @RAP101 ([www.rapgenius.com/artists/@RAP101](http://www.rapgenius.com/artists/@RAP101))\*\*\*\*\*

Students will use the website RapGenius.com to annotate a popular song (hip-hop, rock, alternative, etc). Core grading is based on students' ability to connect lyrical content to sociological perspective. In other words, mere translation of cryptic and/or poetic lyrics are not enough. Students need to properly match up SOC terms/concepts/theories with relevant lyrics AND THEN clearly demonstrate an understanding of said sociological terms/concepts/theories. (80pts). Additional 20 points earned based on thoroughness and creativity. [NOTE: students will need to create a rapgenius.com username. Please DO NOT include any personal information or Bellevue College affiliations in the creation of your username]

### Homework (150pts)

Online "pop" quizzes and short writing assignment based on class lectures, readings, and documentary screenings. DUE dates will vary weekly but students will have advanced notice of at least 7 days.

**Grading:**

There are 500 points available in this class. Here is the grading scale:

475+pts = (4.0) A	360+pts = (2.3) C+	>280pts= (0.0) Fail
450+pts = (3.7) A-	345+pts = (2.0) C	
425+pts = (3.3) B+	325+pts = (1.7) C-	
400+pts = (3.0) B	300+pts = (1.3) D+	
375+pts = (2.7) B-	280+pts = (1.0) D .	

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**Readings:**

Required Textbook: ***Connecting Social Problems and Popular Culture*** by Karen Sternheimer.

**\*Other readings** will be linked online via Canvas or available in the Periodical Section of the Library.

Students are expected to have completed assigned readings by the start of the week listed below.

**Course Schedule:**

Wk	Topic(s)	READINGS
1	What is "Popular Culture"? Review of basic sociological theory and concepts	Syllabus <b>*Online Articles...</b>
2	Is Popular Culture to blame for social problems? A New Generation of Greed?	Chapter 1 Chapter 10
3	VIDEO: <i>"The Merchants of Cool"</i> Is Popular Culture Really Ruining Childhood? Is social networking the problem?	10/9 screening Chapter 2 Chapter 3
4	Pop Culture promiscuity? Media Health Hazards?	Chapter 6 Chapter 8
	VIDEO: <i>"Generation M: Misogyny in Media and Culture"</i>	
5	Dumb it Down: Zombies or Educational Disparities?	Chapter 4
6	Changing Families: As seen on TV? As heard in music?	Chapter 7
	VIDEO: <i>"Beyond Beats and Rhymes"</i>	
7	Media Violence vs Real Violence	Chapter 5
8	Is popular culture creating or mirroring a deviant society?	Chapter 9
9/10	Beyond Popular Culture: Why Inequality is the Problem Personal Sociology: Where Do We Go From Here?	Chapter 11

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing\***

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services. \*If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.

### **Incomplete**

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").

### **F Grade**

Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."

### **Final Examination Schedule**

See Final Exam Schedule

### **Withdrawal From Class**

If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.

### **Hardship Withdrawal**

Instructors may assign the grade of "HW" (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

### **Students Who Require Disability Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are encouraged to meet with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) office located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DRC office will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter. Students who require accommodation in class should review the DRC accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter. Students with mobility challenges who may need assistance in case of an emergency situation or evacuation should register with Disability Resource Centre, and review those needs with the instructor as well.

### **Distribution of Grades**

Grades will not be posted in the Social Science Division or in faculty offices, and secretaries will not give out grades. Students should access their grades through the BC Web site.