

HUMN 11H: HONORS INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture, 1 laboratory per week (60 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249; not open to students with credit in F A 1, HUMN 11, MDIA 11 or MDIA 11H.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable
Cross-Listed:	MDIA 11H

Student Learning Outcomes

- A successful student will evaluate artifacts of popular culture and its relationship to a commodity culture.
- A successful student will analyze assumptions of race, class, generation, and gender embedded in popular culture.
- A successful student will critique aspects of popular culture as a reflection of its social/historical context.

Description

Overview, history and critical analysis of popular culture as a window for understanding American society. Theories and methods of analyzing artifacts of popular culture. Overarching themes: history/social theories of popular culture; popular culture as a product of American multiculturalism; the relationship between a commodity culture and intellect/artistry; philosophical/ethical issues surrounding popular culture. The honors section offers deeper theoretical content, assignments that require more sophisticated cognition/critical thinking, more rigorous assessment, and an additional summative project.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. evaluate the influence of popular culture on contemporary society.
2. interpret artifacts of popular culture from an historical and social perspective.
3. synthesize critiques of popular culture.
4. identify and analyze the sources of popular culture.

5. engage in critical thinking concerning assumptions of race, class, and gender embedded in popular culture.

Course Content

1. Introduction and Background
 - a. Historical overview of late 20th/21st century American culture
 - b. Defining popular culture: high culture versus popular culture
 - c. Popular culture and artistry
2. Advertising
 - a. Advertising and American capitalism, ethical issues
 - b. Advertising: critical analysis (e.g., conscious/subconscious imagery)
 - c. Images of women in advertising, feminist critique
 - d. Modern advertising and social media
3. Television
 - a. Television as a reflection of American cultural values/ideals
 - b. Current television phenomena (e.g., reality shows, binge watching, etc.)
 - c. Television and social criticism: The Simpsons, Modern Family, etc.
4. Music
 - a. Multiculturalism and American popular music
 - b. Popular music versus classical music; historical perspectives and shifting boundaries
 - c. Rock, rap, and the Doctrine of Ethos; can music influence human behavior?
 - d. Music and visual culture (e.g., music videos)
5. Technology
 - a. Technology and evolving communication/language
 - b. Democratization and cyberspace
 - c. Technology and shifting social contracts
6. Sports
 - a. Football and semiotics (football as an American metaphor)
 - b. Critical analysis; sports as Dubord's Spectacle
 - c. Sport as platform for protest and social progress
7. Film
 - a. Reflections on the American dream—Hollywood as a purveyor of American culture
 - b. Race and gender stereotypes in contemporary films
 - c. Film analysis—artistry in American films
 - d. Film and its relationship with national history/mythology

Lab Content

1. Students apply theoretical knowledge to popular culture artifacts (films, television, music, advertising, etc.) in a problem-based environment.
2. Discussion forums on theories of popular culture.
3. Weekly reflections on topics within popular culture.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Classroom computer with internet access.
2. Video/DVD projection equipment.
3. CD player.

4. When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Cooperative learning assignments

Analytical essays

Objective exams

Honors Institute students are required to attend on-campus lectures and participate in a group research project that culminates with a class presentation designed to foster deeper understanding of a specific aspect of American popular culture

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture presentations and classroom discussions on the history and analysis of American popular culture

Readings offering diverse perspectives on aspects of popular culture

Individual and group analyses of artifacts of popular culture

Participation in a collaborative project

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Danesi, Marcel. Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives. 2019.

Open source readings (various authors), blogs, podcasts, and videos, provided as links on the course website.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Weekly reading assignments ranging from 10-20 pages per week.
2. Written analyses of artifacts of popular culture.
3. Weekly learning reflections in which students identify the large ideas presented that week.
4. Online discussion forums based on course readings and analyses of artifacts of popular culture.
5. Group research project.

Discipline(s)

Music or Humanities