

# MDIA 11: INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
<b>Effective Term:</b>	Spring 2021
<b>Units:</b>	4
<b>Hours:</b>	4 lecture, 1 laboratory per week (60 total per quarter)
<b>Advisory:</b>	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 or MDIA 11H.
<b>Degree &amp; Credit Status:</b>	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
<b>Foothill GE:</b>	Area I: Humanities
<b>Transferable:</b>	CSU/UC
<b>Grade Type:</b>	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
<b>Repeatability:</b>	Not Repeatable

## 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.
- Critique aspects of popular culture as a reflection of their 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.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- evaluate the influence of popular culture on contemporary society.
- interpret artifacts of popular culture from an historical and social perspective.
- synthesize critiques of popular culture.
- identify and analyze the sources of popular culture.
- engage in critical thinking concerning assumptions of race, class, and gender imbedded in popular culture.

## Course Content

- Introduction and Background
  - Historical overview of late 20th/21st century American culture
  - Defining popular culture: high culture versus popular culture
  - Popular culture and artistry

- Advertising
  - Advertising and American capitalism, ethical issues
  - Advertising: critical analysis (e.g., conscious/subconscious imagery)
  - Images of women in advertising, feminist critique
- Television
  - Television as a reflection of American cultural values/ideals
  - Current television phenomena (e.g., reality shows)
  - Television and social criticism: The Simpsons, Modern Family, etc.
- Music
  - Multiculturalism and American popular music
  - Popular music versus classical music; historical perspectives and shifting boundaries
  - Rock, rap, and the Doctrine of Ethos; can music influence human behavior?
  - Music and visual culture (e.g., music videos)
- Technology
  - Technology and evolving communication/language
  - Democratization and cyberspace
  - Technology and shifting social contracts
- Sports
  - Football and semiotics (football as an American metaphor)
  - Critical analysis; sports as Dubord's Spectacle
- Film
  - Reflections on the American dream--Hollywood as a purveyor of American culture
  - Race and gender stereotypes in contemporary films
  - Film analysis--artistry in American films
- Student Presentations
  - Topics of special interest to students

## Lab Content

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

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

- Classroom computer with internet access.
- Video/DVD projection equipment.
- CD player.
- 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

Evaluation methods may include but are not limited to:

- Oral presentations
- Cooperative learning assignments
- Analytical essays
- Objective exams

## Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture presentations and classroom discussions on the history and analysis of American popular culture.
- Readings offering diverse perspectives on aspects of popular culture.
- Class presentations.
- Individual and group analyses of artifacts of popular culture.

## **Representative Text(s) and Other Materials**

Danesi, Marcel. [Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives](#). 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019.

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

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

- A. Weekly reading assignments ranging from 10-20 pages per week.
- B. Written analyses of artifacts of popular culture.
- C. Weekly learning reflections in which students identify the large ideas presented that week.
- D. Online discussion forums based on course readings and analyses of artifacts of popular culture.

## **Discipline(s)**

Music or Humanities