

MDIA 12: POPULAR CULTURE & UNITED STATES HISTORY

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 2, HUMN 12, HUMN 12H, or MDIA 12H.
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:	HUMN 12

Student Learning Outcomes

- Analyze popular culture as both reaction to and catalyst for events and trends in American history.
- Identify and evaluate the interpretation of American history through popular culture media.
- Recognize and appreciate both the differences and similarities of our combined cultural history.

Description

Interdisciplinary overview of popular culture as a window for understanding American history and society. Theories and methods of analyzing the artifacts of popular culture. Overarching themes: 1) the interpretation of American history via popular culture media; 2) interaction between American historical events and trends, and popular culture.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Analyze the relationship between popular culture and historical events and trends
- Discuss the impact of diverse cultures within American culture
- Identify and evaluate historical sources of popular culture
- Compare and contrast the differences between recorded history and popular history
- Evaluate the influence of contemporary thought on historical events
- Appraise the importance of context and perspective when studying history, particularly through the lens of popular culture

- Analyze the power of popular culture to shape and influence politics, social movements, and economics
- Recognize and appreciate both the differences and similarities of our combined cultural history
- Apply what we have learned of the past to the understanding of similar aspects of the present

Course Content

- History through the lens of pop culture
 - Film and television
 - Perspective of contemporary viewing audiences
 - Context of time of creation
 - Entertainment versus historical record
 - America and the Western
 - Cowboy as American symbol
 - Myth of the West
 - Changing role of gender and race
- Popular culture and historical interaction
 - Politics and music (we will explore three of the following)
 - Counter culture and punk
 - Patriotism and country
 - Integration and rock 'n' roll
 - Oppression and hip hop
 - Reaction to war
 - Social movements and television (we will explore three of the following)
 - Mary Tyler Moore and feminism
 - All in the Family and bigotry
 - MASH and war
 - Ellen/Will & Grace and sexual orientation
 - Star Trek, tolerance, and technology
 - Contributions of immigrants (we will explore three of the following)
 - Food
 - Comedy
 - Fashion
 - Music
 - Film
 - Sports
 - Language

Lab Content

- Students utilize theoretical knowledge to analyze popular culture artifacts (films, television, music, etc.) within an historical context.
- Students discuss contemporary examples of popular culture artifacts that parallel historical examples.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

- Lecture room equipped with projection equipment, video/DVD players, sound equipment, and a computer.
- When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going computer access with email and internet software capabilities.

Method(s) of Evaluation

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

In-class essay or online group discussion posting of 300 words minimum
assembling students' initial knowledge of the unit topic to be discussed
Quizzes based on unit readings

In-class essay or online group discussion posting of 400 words minimum
applying concepts of unit and unit learning outcomes to a contemporary
artifact

500 words minimum essay reflecting on concepts of unit and unit
learning outcomes

Method(s) of Instruction

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

Lecture presentations using mixed media sources

Classroom discussion via instructor-led prompts

Supplemental discussions on web-based course management system

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Campbell, Richard, Christopher R. Martin, and Bettina Fabos. Media and Culture. 2019.

Brandt, Jenn, and Callie Clare. An Introduction to Popular Culture in the US: People, Politics, and Power. 2018.

Open Education Resources, including online articles, blogs, podcasts, and videos.

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

1. In-class essay or online group discussion posting of 300 words minimum assembling students' initial knowledge of the unit topic to be discussed
2. Three chapters or articles required reading per unit
3. Quizzes based on readings
4. In-class essay or online group discussion posting of 400 words minimum applying concepts of unit and unit learning outcomes to a contemporary artifact
5. 500 words minimum essay reflecting on concepts of unit and unit learning outcomes

Discipline(s)

Music or Humanities