SOC 8: POPULAR CULTURE

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Effective Term:</td>
<td>Summer 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Units:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours:</td>
<td>4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree &amp; Credit Status:</td>
<td>Degree-Applicable Credit Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foothill GE:</td>
<td>Area VI: United States Cultures &amp; Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferable:</td>
<td>CSU/UC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Type:</td>
<td>Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)</td>
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<td>Repeatability:</td>
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Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will identify the two main component parts or features of the sociological imagination.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of why the sociological imagination is sociologically significant.
- Students will identify the component parts of the scientific method.
- Students will identify the leading components or indicators of methodology.

Description

Theoretical and methodological overview of American popular culture. A critical examination of the socio-historical development and contemporary forms of popular culture in America. The relationship of popular culture to individual, group and mass identity formation. Analysis of popular culture and its racial and class dimensions.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

a. Summarize main terms and concepts of, and misconceptions about, the sociology of American popular culture and its racial, ethnic and class dimensions.
b. Identify and critically analyze historical and contemporary sites of American popular culture.
c. Describe the main factors contributing to the socio-historical development of popular culture.
d. Explain the relationship between popular culture, social institutions and the social (class, racial, ethnic and gender) structure of American society.
e. Explain the distinguishing characteristics of major theoretical approaches to popular culture and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
f. Illustrate the main methods of sociological investigation of popular culture and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
g. Apply theoretical and methodological models in critical analyses of popular culture.
h. Problematize popular culture and show it in relation to larger social processes and social inequality to do with race, ethnicity, gender and class.

i. Synthesize issues of race, class, gender, age, sexuality, crime and social change in relation to popular culture.
i. Analyze popular culture as both an instrument of social control and political resistance.

Course Content

a. Defining popular culture
   i. Culture and its racial and class dimensions
      1. Material culture
      2. Non-material culture
      3. Dominant culture
      4. Sub-cultures
      5. Counter cultures
   ii. Folk culture and its racial and class dimensions
   iii. Elite culture and its racial and class dimensions

b. Selected sites of popular culture
   i. Popular literature
   ii. Mass media
      1. Advertising
      2. Newspapers
      3. Magazines
      4. Zines
   iii. Cyberculture
   iv. Popular art
   v. Performance art
   vi. Electronic entertainment
      1. Film
      2. Television
      3. Radio
      4. Music
vii. Everyday life
   1. Shopping, fashion, style and taste
   2. Fashion, clothing
   3. Malls
   4. Style
   5. Taste
   6. Leisure

viii. Food and restaurants
   1. "Fast Food Nation"
   2. The McDonaldization thesis
   3. Toys
   4. Bar and social gathering behavior
   5. Recreational drug use
   6. Gambling

ix. Sports and travel
   1. Theme parks

x. Celebrities and fans

c. Main factors in socio-historical development of popular culture
   i. Social change that facilitated development of popular culture
      1. Political changes
   ii. The rise of the contested public sphere
   iii. Public (State) and private control of popular culture
      1. Processes of race and class exclusion/oppression

d. Economic changes
   i. Industrialization and urbanization
   ii. Assembly line work
   iii. Material excess
   iv. The continued development of capitalism

e. Spatial changes
   i. Increasing privatization of public space
   ii. Movement of popular forms of culture to new sites

f. Technological changes
   i. Inventions that facilitate development of new products
   ii. Production networks to reach consumers

g. Popular culture, the social structure and American social institutions
   i. The social structure
      1. Statuses
      2. Roles
      3. Dominant and competing values
   ii. Popular culture, the social structure and social institutions

h. Overview of theoretical paradigms and theories of popular culture
   i. Functionalist
      1. Socialization theory
      2. Popular culture integrates people into society
      3. It provides stability and group cohesion
      4. Creates and sustains widely held beliefs and values
      5. Strengths and weaknesses of
   ii. Symbolic interactionist
      1. Social exchange theory
      2. Social constructionism
      3. People trade symbols and through social interaction create meaning
      4. Meaning systems shift and change
      5. Strengths and weaknesses of
   iii. Conflict

   1. Cultural studies
   2. Marxist political economy
   3. Ideology and hegemony—Gramsci
   4. Popular culture reflects hierarchical power arrangements, coercion, competition, censorship and social control
   5. Strengths and weaknesses of

iv. Feminism
   1. How is the status of women reflected in popular culture?
   2. Strengths and weaknesses of

v. Post-modernism
   1. People use discourses to create society
   2. Society is a subjective experience embodied in popular culture images
   3. Multiple experiences and interpretations
   4. Strengths and weaknesses of

vi. Overview of main methods of inquiry in popular culture
   i. Survey
   ii. Case study
   iii. Focus group
   iv. Ethnography
   v. Content analysis
   vi. Textual and graphic chat space analysis
   vii. Ethnomethodology

vii. Strengths and weaknesses of each

j. Production of popular culture
   i. Who makes it?
      1. Ownership
      2. Class values of producers
   ii. How is it made?
      1. Labor arrangements/sweatshop labor
      2. Invisibility of labor processes used in production of popular culture products
      3. Production, economic or technological constraints shape product
   iii. For whom is it made?
      1. Commercial culture and reinforcement of consumption
   iv. Who is the audience or market?
      1. Audience and market characteristics
   v. Critical perspective
      1. Who benefits from these arrangements?
      2. Who suffers in these arrangements?
      3. Who is centralized in the process?
      4. Who is marginalized in the process?

k. Social inequality and popular culture
   i. Ideology
      1. Representation social reality is produced through popular culture images (mediated images)
      2. Common sense is produced and maintained by popular culture images
      3. Popular culture images naturalized and de-politicized as "the way it is"
   ii. Race and ethnicity
      1. Race, representation and the effects of representation for racially and culturally marginalized communities, particularly
2. Ethnic forms of popular culture
   iii. Social class and socio-economic status
   iv. Gender
      1. Masculinity
      2. Femininity
      3. Gender tourism
      4. Sexuality
   v. Age

l. Social issues and popular culture
   i. Affluenza
   ii. Brands and branding
   iii. Culture lag
   iv. Crime and deviance
   v. Mass production, commodification and consumption
   vi. Ethnocentrism
   vii. Globalization, cultural imperialism and colonization
   viii. Forms of resistance
      1. Alternative media
      2. Culture jamming and anti-advertisements
      3. Media literacy

m. Popular culture and social change
   i. Popular cultural transformation
   ii. Diffusion of popular culture
   iii. Popular culture and innovation
      1. Science and technology
   iv. Popular culture and cultural resistance
      1. Political protest or revolution
      2. Nationalism
      3. Identity politics
   v. Popular culture and the future

Lab Content
Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment
When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation
Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Class discussions
Active learning exercises
Oral presentations
Critical essay(s)
Examinations or quizzes

Method(s) of Instruction
Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture
Discussion