



COMS 323 – Popular Culture and Promotions COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Julie Grandjean, Ph.D.

Office Location: JOUR 126

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 p.m. – 1:50 p.m., Tuesday 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., and by appointment.

University Email Address: Julie.Grandjean@tamuc.edu

Class time: Tuesday/Thursday 2 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Class location: Talbot, 302

COURSE INFORMATION

University Course Catalogue Description

This course examines the social influences of U.S. popular culture from the 1940s to today, paying particular attention to the processes of how ideas, beliefs, and trends become popular. Both rhetorical language and symbolic representation will be examined. Students will learn steps to popular culture success from studying popular culture influences in their lives.

Required Textbooks and Materials

1. Readings and materials will be posted on D2L.
2. Additionally, students should be able to use MyLeo D2L Brightspace, Microsoft Word, and PDF.
 - a. All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements
 - i. LMS Requirements:
 1. <https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>
 - ii. LMS Browser Support:

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1. https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm
- iii. Zoom Video Conferencing Tool
 1. https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu
3. You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the connection between popular culture and society.
2. Critically analyze the impact of popular culture on American society.
3. Discuss current popular culture trends.
4. Apply theories to our understanding of popular culture.
5. Synthesize different areas of popular culture.
6. Present a final project based on personal research.
7. Practice academic integrity.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student of this class, you should check TAMUC email account at least three times a week. You should also keep up with your grades on MyLeo DL2 Bright Space, submit assignments through MyLeo D2L.

I acknowledge that you are busy with other courses, work, and personal responsibilities. Still, I want you to succeed in this course, and being prepared is one key to success. I expect you to be proactive in your learning for this class. If you are having difficulties, **contact me as soon as possible**; I am always willing to help students succeed, but for that I need to be notified in a timely manner.

Finally, you are expected to **learn in public**. As Indigenous scholar Adrienne Keene (Cherokee) observes, “[consenting] to learn in public has meant a lot of growth, and a lot of mistakes. But I found my voice, and in the process learned how to apologize the right way, how to admit I was wrong, and how to move forward without feeling like a total failure. Which are life skills that go” beyond a class. As we learn about theories of mass communication this semester, you and I may make mistakes. With these mistakes, we can also learn to grow; and these are skills that will benefit you in the future.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

For this class, you will be graded on various assignments. Be aware that the instructor reserves the right to have unannounced pop-quizzes to check whether you read the required readings. You will be graded on various assignments:

Introduction email: 10 points

Syllabus quiz: 10 points

Photovoice: 20 points

Discussions: 210 points (15 points each)

Reflection essays (only submit 3 out of 6): 450 (150 points each)

Roadmap: 50 points

Presentation: 100 points

Attendance: 50 points

Participation: 100 points

Total points: **1,000 points**

Note: Late work is **not** accepted, except in the case of documented sickness, or major life events.

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 900 – 1,000 points

B = 800 – 899 points

C = 700 – 799 points

D = 600 – 699 points

F = 599 points or below

Note: Grades are not automatically rounded up. If you finish the course near the top of a grade range, I will consider your performance over the semester and decide if there is a compelling reason (i.e. exemplary participation in the classroom, always respecting deadlines, etc.) to round your grade up. If you find an error in your grade, contact me right away to let me know. Please know that it is inappropriate to contact me or your other instructors to ask to have your grade rounded up or to insist upon receiving a particular final grade.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor via email (Julie.Grandjean@tamuc.edu).

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

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Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. By coming to class, you will get a better understanding of the theories we are exploring, by having hands-on experience and discussions about them. However, I understand that we are all busy with work and that sometimes life happens. For this reason, you have a total of 3 unexcused absences for this semester. Excused absences can be added to these 3 unexcused absences.

Note: Three late arrivals (less than 15 minutes after the beginning of class) to class without an appropriate excuse count as an unexcused absence. A 15+ minute-delay to class counts as an unexcused absence.

Syllabus Change and Class Calendar

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

The class calendar is available at the bottom of this syllabus and at the bottom of the home page of our class (COMS 1311 – Studies in Human Communication – 02E) on D2L. This is the “official” calendar. Scheduled reading and assignment due dates may shift over the course of the semester; therefore, you should check the calendar often for updates.

E-mail Correspondence

Whenever possible, please meet with me during office hours (T/R from in office JOUR 126) to discuss your questions and class work. I will answer questions via e-mail, usually within 48 hours. I will only respond to e-mails Monday through Friday before 5:00 pm. E-mails received Friday evening through Sunday and student holidays will be answered on the next working business day. Please note that sometimes emails get lost in the email abyss. So, if you do not hear back within the first 48 weekday hours please email me again.

I expected that your emails will include the following:

1. Subject: Label your Name, Class, and Section number. Example: Smith, 414-01W.
2. Appropriate salutation. Example: Hello Dr. Grandjean.
3. Formal style with minimum grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.

Working with difficult content

As you have no doubt put together after reading through this syllabus, this class works with content and material that can be difficult. Some of the media and/or texts chosen and issues discussed in class are intentionally controversial. Know that though you may find such content sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise disagreeable, our intent in this course is not to endorse such attitudes, but to rigorously engage with these issues so that we may demonstrate knowledgeable and reasoned debate. This can make the work we are doing in this class difficult, frustrating, and, at times, upsetting. I encourage you to push yourself beyond your comfort zone and embrace the uncomfortable, the awkward, and the difficult—this is the space where learning and growth happen. That being said, we all have different limits. Should you find yourself nearing one of your limits, then feel free to step outside of the class. If the issue persists, make sure to send me an email or come see me during office hours.

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UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

In this class, academic integrity also includes AI. As such, the use of any artificial intelligence (AI) or other automated writing tools is strictly prohibited in this class. Any evidence of the use of AI will be met with a failing grade for the assignment. If it happens more than once, other disciplinary actions will be taken – including dropping you out of the course.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Date	Topics and Assignments Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All readings are due on Mondays at 11:59 pm CST unless marked otherwise. • All assignments are due on Fridays at 11:59 pm CST unless marked otherwise.
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 August 26-30</p>	<p>Topic: Welcome and syllabus review</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to understand the course structure, major assignments, and how they will be assessed; • Break the ice, visually. <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction email (due 08/28) • Syllabus quiz (due 08/28) • Photovoice (due 08/28) • Discussion #1 (due 08/30)
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2 September 3-6</p>	<p>Topic: What is popular culture?</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of popular culture; • Discuss the interconnectedness of popular culture and society; • Explore how our culture will be remembered in the future. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Introduction <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #2 (due 09/06)
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3 September 9-13</p>	<p>Topic: How and why do we study popular culture?</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review semiotics; • Understand cultivation theory; • Discuss memes. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Cultural myth and the American dream • Last Week Tonight, Law and Order • Maher 05/10 – How to consume news + political news (In-class) • Civil War (In-class) <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #3 (due 09/13) • Extra credit reading (due 09/13)

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<p>Week 4 September 16-20</p>	<p>Topic: Mental health and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how mental health is being portrayed in popular culture; • Learn about para-social relationships; • Understand the role of celebrities in popular culture in the context of mental health. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Heroes and celebrities • Ye, Yikes • Kids See Ghosts, Reborn • Taylor Tomlinson • Bill Maher 06/07 – John Fetterman, & PTSD (In-class) <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #4 (due 09/20) • Reflection essay #1 (submit 3 out of 6) (due 09/20) • Extra credit reading (due 09/20)
<p>Week 5 September 23-27</p>	<p>Topic: War and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the way war influences popular culture; • Discuss the way war is being portrayed in popular culture. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Genre • <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> • Guest lecture <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #5 (due 09/27)
<p>Week 6 September 30-October 4</p>	<p>Topic: Antisemitism and popular culture (History)</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the history of the Jewish tribes; • Understand the historical persecution of the Jewish people; • Discuss what Zionism is; • Discuss what “the Jew” looks like today. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Future of Jewish</i>, Anti-zionism is an existential threat to progressive, liberal values • <i>Future if Jewish</i>, An open letter to anti-Israel Jews • <i>Night and Fog</i>, https://vimeo.com/189672641 <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #6 (due 10/04) <p>Note: No class on Thursday 10/02</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Topic: Antisemitism and popular culture (Modern)</p>

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<p>October 7-11</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how antisemitism is “shape-shifting;” • Understand the events of 10/07; • Learn about the current events following 10/07 <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Phillips, <i>The madness since October 7</i> • <i>Munich</i> • Kanye & Macklemore • Eden Golan, <i>Hurricane</i> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #7 (due 10/11) • Reflection essay #2 (submit 3 out of 6) (due 10/11) • Extra credit reading (due 10/11)
<p>Week 8 October 14-18</p>	<p>Topic: War and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the “living room war;” • Understand the Vietnam Syndrome and the lasting impact of the Vietnam War on the American psyche. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://archive.org/search?query=vietnam+war&and%5B%5D=subject%3A%22Vietnam+War%2C+1961-1975%22&and%5B%5D=subject%3A%22Vietnam+War%22&and%5B%5D=mediatype%3A%22movies%22&and%5B%5D=mediatype%3A%22image%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221957%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221960%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221961%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221962%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221963%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221964%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221965%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221966%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221967%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221968%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221969%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221970%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221971%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221972%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221973%22&and%5B%5D=year%3A%221974%22 • Julie Grandjean, <i>Napalmed Christ</i> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #8 (due 10/18) <p>Note: No class on Thursday 10/17</p>
<p>Week 9 October 21-25</p>	<p>Topic: War and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover the way the Iraq war was not covered; • Understand the issues related to torture in the Iraq war. <p>Materials:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero Dark 30 • Julie Grandjean, The hidden icon of Abu Ghraib <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #9 (due 10/25) • Reflection essay #3 (submit 3 out of 6) (due 10/25)
<p>Week 10 October 28- November 1</p>	<p>Topic: Religion and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover the way religion is embedded in our popular culture; • Understand the religious aspect of iconic images; • Discuss the merit (or lack thereof) of mocking religion. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill Maher, <i>Religulous</i> (maybe, or maybe not???) • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Rituals and ceremonies • Kanye • Paris Olympic ceremony • Charlie Hebdo <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #10 (due 11/01) • Reflection essay #4 (submit 3 out of 6) (due 11/01) • Extra credit reading (due 11/10)
<p>Week 11 November 4-8</p>	<p>Topic: Racism and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the roots of racism in the United States; • Understand the prevalence of systemic racism; • Discuss racism in America today. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American History X • Last Week Tonight • Bill Maher 05/17 – Michael Erik Dyson (In-class) • Bill Maher 07/12 – Living in America today (-30) (In-class) • Kanye, Jesus Lord <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #11 (due 11/08)
<p>Week 12 November 11- 15</p>	<p>Topic: Racism and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the prevalence of missing native girls and women; • Discuss how Native Americans are portrayed in popular culture. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind River • Sommers, White woman missing syndrome <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #12 (due 11/15)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection essay #5 (submit 3 out of 6) (Due 11/15)
<p>Week 13 November 18-22</p>	<p>Topic: Feminism and popular culture</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how women are portrayed in popular culture; • Understand the impact this portrayal has on women’s rights. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to popular culture</i>, Social constructions of identity • Barbie movie • Guest lecture <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board #13 (due 11/22) • Reflection essay #6 (submit 3 out of 5) (due 11/22)
<p>Week 14 November 25-29</p>	<p>Thanksgiving week</p>
<p>Week 15 December 2-6</p>	<p>Topic: Presentations + Wrapping up</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your notes <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (due in class) • Roadmap (due in class) • Discussion board #14 (due 12/06)

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