

LIBS 200
Popular Culture as Liberal Study
East Texas A&M University - Spring 2025
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 - 12:15 (129 Education South)

Instructor: Dr. Brad Klypchak

Office: 221 Talbot Hall

Email: Brad.Klypchak@tamuc.edu

Office Hours: M 11:00-3:00, W 12:30-1:30, Tues 3:45 – 4:45 or by appointment
(Zoom meetings welcomed)

Course Description: Film, television, music, fashion, video games, sport, museums, cultural heritage, folklore... popular culture surrounds us, and this course invites the chance to explore why. Through readings and discussion, this course will apply an interdisciplinary approach to examining popular culture across its social, historical, political, and global contexts.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate critical thinking by reading a variety of narrative styles and applying the principles of interdisciplinary scholarship to analyze and synthesize ideas, theories, and normative prescriptions.
2. Students will communicate aspects of popular culture in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion in either written, oral and/or visual format.
3. Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities through personal self-reflection and expression.

Evaluation:

Reflective Short Papers:	25%
Global Artifact Project:	20%
Analysis Project:	20%
Reflective Essay:	20%
Participation and Engagement:	15%

Grading System:

A (exceptional) = 100 - 90% B (good) = 89 - 80% C (average) = 79 - 70%
D (minimally sufficient) = 69 - 60% F (failure) = <60%

Though I am a believer in the philosophies of ungradedness, some versions of grading still exist. That stated, I am also a believer in the intrinsic pursuit of knowledge and discovery. If you join in that pursuit, there should be no worries or concerns of final grades. In nearly all grading instances, I start from a mindset that one begins at middle “C” (75%), and one proves their relative ability to shift above, shift below, or remain at that mark with their work.

Required Text

Danesi, M. (2024). *Popular Culture (5th Edition)*. [Rowan and Littlefield](#).

ISBN (paperback): 978-1-5381-7130-1; (eBook): 978-1-5381-7131-8

Manufacturer Suggested Price: \$52.00

All other materials will be delivered via D2L course shell.

Brief Assignment Explanations:

Reflective Short Papers: At three points in the semester, students will reflect on the course as a whole as informed through course content.

Global Artifact Project: Students will select some artifact of non-Western popular culture not formally covered within the course and familiarize themselves with both the object's history as well as to its geocultural significance. This will be conveyed through the creation of a shareable form, be it document, recorded presentation, or other alternative means of communication.

Analysis Project: Students will apply course concepts and principles by deconstructing and contextually analyzing some version of popular cultural phenomenon as tied to a specific thematic point of emphasis/consideration.

Reflective Review: Students will reflect on the course as a whole via a personalized consideration of the whole of the portfolio generated across the term.

Participation and Engagement: Whether in the classroom or online, students are expected to dialogue in a way that provokes, clarifies, challenges, and enlightens the course community. In these communications, the concepts of a liberal studies approach to higher education will be practiced and varying interpretations, particularly in relation to the course readings, will be shared.

Additional considerations of a student's relative level of engagement and academic integrity will also be made across all aspects of the course including but not limited to completion and quality of tasks and assignments, communications, following instructions and guidelines, and accessing materials. As mentioned previously, all students will start as receiving 75% and will be assessed as to their respective demonstration of proficiency/deficiency/adequacy across the term.

Academic Dishonesty

All coursework is to be an original work by the student and created specifically for fulfilling the requirements for this course. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as one's own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

Any act of academic dishonesty may result in the automatic failure of the course and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

"Attendance" policy, instructor's rights and expectations:

All courses demand active participation and regular attendance. It is imperative that the student do all assigned work in a timely fashion. In particular, the benefits from discussion specifically depend on each student's respective preparation and distinctive contribution. Failure to do so hurts not only the individual student, but the collective community as a whole.

All assignments are devised for the explicit purpose of offering educational benefit, be that academic growth, hands-on experience, development and display of critical thought, or expression of our academic selves. Coursework is to be completed as assigned and is to be turned in via the D2L Brightspace dropbox no later than the formal due date. Any work turned in after due dates may incur a penalty respective of its relative degree of tardiness (to a point of no credit whatsoever).

Given conditions of the Covid 19 pandemic, considerable flexibility in applying this will be enacted. Failing to complete assignments not only inhibits the immediate learning process but, again, ultimately hurts the overall learning community as discussion of the process and its results can prove insightful as well.

Please Note:

Popular culture and entertainment media use life as its muse. As such, it is comprised of the themes, subjects, and contents that contribute to everyday life. These contents, at times, can and do include aspects of violence, threat, sexuality, conflict, oppression, discrimination, inequality, profanity, varying ideology, crime, and impropriety. While effort has been taken to keep decorum in mind, engaging music and gender through albums as narratives is intended for collegiate/adult maturities and some of the examples encountered in the course will comprise aspects of these contents.

Syllabus Change Policy

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.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

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.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

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>

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>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University 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](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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

East Texas A&M University

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

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M 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 East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

Course Outline:

Note: The course outline is only a guideline. It is subject to change based on discussion, current events, or other such influences. Additionally, there is considerable fluidity to when reading assignments will occur. These will be updated in class and through D2L announcements.

Week 1 (Jan 13-19)

- general course information
- general introduction to liberal studies, ungradedness, and interdisciplinarity
- readings:
 - Blum

Week 2 (Jan 20-26)

- What is popular culture?
 - Ch 1

Week 3 (Jan 27-Feb 2)

- Contexts and popular culture
- Ch 2

Week 4 (Feb 3-9)

- Contexts round 2
- Ch 3
- **First reflective paper due**

Week 5 (Feb 10-16)

- Popular cultural realms
- Ch 4-9 (we'll decide which and when through week 8 or 9)

Week 6 (Feb 17-23)

- Popular cultural realms round 2

Week 7 (Feb 24-Mar 2)

Popular cultural realms round 3

Week 8 (Mar 3-16) includes Spring Break

- Popular cultural realms round 4
- **Second reflective paper due**

Week 9 (Mar 17-23)

- Camp and kitsch

Week 10 (Mar 24-30)

- Popular culture and politicization

Week 11 (Mar 31 – Apr 6)

- Popular culture and social media
- Ch 10 & 11

Week 12 (Apr 7-13)

- Popular culture as resistance
- Ch 12
- **Third reflective paper due**

Week 13 (Apr 14-20)

- Global Artifact Project presentations
- **Global Artifact Project due**

Week 14 (Apr 21-27)

- Popular culture as culture

“Week” 15 (Apr 28- May 2)

- Reflections on popular culture

Finals “Week” (May 3-9)

- **Analysis Project Due**
- **Analysis Project Presentations Tuesday, May 6 10:30 – 12:30**
- **Reflective Review due**

final grades available via MyLeo on Tuesday, May 13