269-01 Popular Culture

Micheal Weissbuch
weissbuc@xavier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/sociology_syllabi_spring_2013

Recommended Citation
https://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/sociology_syllabi_spring_2013/10

This Restricted-Access Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology Syllabi 2013 at Exhibit. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Syllabi Spring 2013 by an authorized administrator of Exhibit. For more information, please contact exhibit@xavier.edu.
Instructor: Dr. M. E. Weissbuch  
Phone: 745-3478  
Office: 803 Schott  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
E-Mail: weissbuc@xavier.edu  

**Format:**

Class meetings will be discussion-centered, with the expectation that all students will actively participate in class activities and discussions. Films, music, media and limited lectures will be used to stimulate small and large group discussions. Every effort will be made to present diverse perspectives on the topics covered, and you should feel free to voice your opinions, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the instructor, reading or other class members. I do not presume any prior familiarity with sociological perspectives or methods. However, I do have certain expectations of students who choose to enroll in this course. First, I expect students to actively participate in the learning that occurs, by coming to class prepared, and by being involved in class discussions. Second, the course will cover a variety of approaches and methods, all of which build on different and sometimes conflicting assumptions. However, all of the approaches begin with the same, very basic assumption that popular culture matters, that is, popular culture has important social and political consequences. There is nothing wrong with thinking that popular culture is fun and entertaining. But, if you are thoroughly convinced that’s all popular culture is, you are likely to experience difficulties in adopting the critical stance required by the course. In sum, I expect students: 1) to be serious and engaged participants in a community of learners, and 2) to be open to new ways of understanding forms of popular culture with which you may already be highly familiar.

**Description:**

In this course you will learn to apply a sociological perspective to the study of popular culture in its many forms, including television programs, films, fads and music. We will focus on the origins, common forms and consequences of popular culture for individuals, groups and society. Especially important from a sociological perspective are 1) issues surrounding how popular culture is “read” or interpreted, and 2) a consideration of how the production, distribution and uses of popular culture are linked to the processes of power and inequality in society.

**Objectives:**

1. To become familiar with the major theories and methods used by sociologists to systematically critique and analyze popular culture.
2. To gain an understanding of the various influences on, forms of, and consequences of popular culture in modern societies.
3. To gain increased awareness of and knowledge about current issues surrounding popular culture and the effects of popular culture on individual behavior.
4. To enhance self-development by increasing awareness of the interconnectedness of individuals, societies and cultures.
Required Text:

Requirements:
1. Reading. The required textbook is available in the Bookstore. You should start reading the text as soon as possible. The textbook will be covered on the midterm and final exams.
2. Two exams – both take home. These will be essay exams centered on the issues discussed in class, plus films or other media presentations from class and the textbook.
3. A portfolio, in which you reflect upon course materials and analyze specific examples of popular culture. The portfolio is described on separate sheets.
4. 2 Film Analyses

Grading:
Final grades will be calculated using the following formula:
- 50%      2 Exams (25% each)
- 30%      Portfolio
- 20%      2 Film Analyses – as required (averaged together)

Attendance/ Class Policy:
Attendance is mandatory for all classes and meetings.
1. Turn off cell phones
2. No texting
3. No Ipods/ headphones
4. Papers, exams **may not** be sent electronically – hard copies only

Grades:
Grades on exams, portfolios and participation, as well as final course grades will be based on the Following scale:
- A- to A  =  90 - 100%
- B- to B+  =  80 – 89%
- C- to C+  =  70 – 79%
- D- to D+  =  60 – 69%
- F       =  0 – 59%

**Note:** Late portfolios will not be accepted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>Chapter 1-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>MLK Day – No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Portfolio topic due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Midterm handed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Midterm Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>No Class – Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Portfolios Due – We have class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FINAL EXAM handed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM DUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>