



WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE? What makes it “popular” and what makes it “culture”? According to Wikipedia, popular culture is “the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture...heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society.” This class will take up the challenge of reading, thinking, exploring, experiencing, even creating popular culture in the contemporary United States through the lenses of film, television, and other media. As students at an American university taking a class on American popular culture, we will engage and analyze narratives and representations of high school, college, and life as an “average” American student. What do these representations tell us about growing up in the US? About race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation? Texts may include *Animal House*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, *Lean on Me*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Fame*, *Saved by the Bell*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Clueless*, *My So Called Life*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Freaks and Geeks*, *Better Luck Tomorrow*, *Harry Potter*, and *Glee*.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity and a willingness to explore and interrogate interdisciplinary lines of inquiry. Our class will be organized around a survey of texts engaging scholarship, media, and popular culture. This class will take up everyday culture as critical practice, explore what it means to close read, and how popular culture can be deployed as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience. This class will spend the semester reading, thinking, watching, discussing, and writing about various narratives and how and what these texts argue, reveal, narrate, hide, perpetuate, and complicate the world we live in.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

- **Close Reading:** we will employ a range of close reading skills and strategies to engage with pop culture texts.
- **Synthesizing:** we will bring a variety of texts, scholarship, and ideas into conversation in creating arguments and analyses about popular culture.
- **Breadth:** we will read, watch, and experience widely, engaging with texts from different time periods, genres, and mediums.
- **Range of Approaches:** we will use different questions to open texts in different ways, particularly to consider questions of race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, and culture.
- **Integration:** we will integrate the above skills and deploy them simultaneously in our work.

“If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities.”
—Maya Angelou

“I think it’s always important for academics to study popular culture, even if the thing they are studying is idiotic. If it’s successful or made a dent in culture, then it is worthy of study to find out why.”
—Joss Whedon



Required Course Texts & Materials

- AMST 101 Course Reader (available in Sitterly 108)
- Web access and an active Drew email account

AMST 101
Section T
MW
3:00-4:15 PM
BC 117
Drew University
Dr. Edmond Y.
Chang



“I’ve overheard your theory ‘nostalgia’s for geeks’ / I guess sir, if you say so, some of us just like to read / One second I’m a Koons, then suddenly the Koons is me / Pop culture was in art, now art’s in pop culture in me.”
—Lady Gaga



Course Requirements

- Response Papers (30%)
- Pop Culture Log (10%)
- Presentation (10%)
- Critical Review (10%)
- Class Participation (40%)

"Fandom, after all, is born of a balance between fascination and frustration: if media content didn't fascinate us, there would be no desire to engage with it; but if it didn't frustrate us on some level, there would be no drive to rewrite or remake it."
—Henry Jenkins

Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from AMST 101 with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

Critical Response Papers (30%)

The majority of the writing you will do for this class is in the form of short, critical, analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as reactions to, close readings of, analyses of, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, and your ability to concisely formulate arguments. You will be required to generate a response paper approximately every other week for a total of 6. See the response paper prompt for more details.

Pop Culture Log (10%)

Over the course of the semester, you will keep and maintain a weekly "pop culture log" or "popLog," recording, detailing, and thinking about your encounters with and explorations of American popular culture. Your "popLog" will function as a kind of workbook, an analytical and metacognitive journal, and reading notes, connecting your observations and experiences to the texts, media, and ideas of the class. Approximately each week, logs will be posted to the course message board and will be graded on timeliness and completion.

Pop Culture Presentation (10%)

You will be a required to sign up for an oral presentation individually or in pairs. For your presentation, you will read or watch the texts assigned for a particular week, research a topic relevant to the texts, generate a critical question, and get class discussion started for the day. You will be required to create a single-spaced, 1-page handout copied for the whole class. Topics (usually biographical, historical, or theoretical context) may be assigned to you or your group. Presentations are 5-6 minutes and may include media.

Critical Review (10%)

You will be required to write a short, 500-750 word, single-spaced critical review of a text not covered by the course that you believe fits the critical, theoretical, and intellectual stakes of this class. You will locate a text, close read the text, and generate an academic critique and assessment of the text's value for study. In other words, what text might you include in a class like ours? You **must** have your text **approved** by the instructor. The critical review will be turned in and published on the course blog and is due by the last day of instruction.

Participation and Preparedness (40%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Moreover, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your respectful presence in class and



"I don't pretend we have all the answers. But the questions are certainly worth thinking about."
—Arthur C. Clarke

"The point about pop culture is that so much of it is borrowed. There's very little that's brand new. Instead, creativity today is a kind of shopping process—picking on and sampling things form the world around you, things you grew up with."
—Ru Paul

interactions with me and others, 2) your **willingness** to discuss, comment, and ask questions, 3) your **preparation** for class, which includes bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading for class, 4) your **engagement** in presentations and group work, 5) your participation in the Living Learning Community, and 6) your care and use of the class *moodle*—henceforth called the “class blog”—bookmark the address, check and comment regularly, think of the blog as an extension of class:

<https://moodle.drew.edu/2/course/view.php?id=3059>.

Finally, failure to turn in homework, incomplete assignments, or late papers will negatively impact your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the day, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. If you come in after we start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and will be mark as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your overall participation grade for the class. **Moreover, absences for more than twelve class sessions (50% of class time) will result in a failing grade regardless of reason. There are no excused or unexcused absences.** If you know you are going to or must miss class, please let me know (via email) as soon as possible and make any necessary arrangements. When you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes or see me during office hours in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. You are always responsible for all material covered during your absence.

Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format; if you do not have access to Word, then save your documents in RTF or Rich Text Format.

All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. **All papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions.** All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and should not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format. The Research Proposal and the Critical Review have different manuscript guidelines detailed by their assignment prompts.

Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment at least a couple of times during the drafting process and certainly BEFORE you exit the document for the last time and leave the computer. This way, even if you lose your flash drive or your paper gets mysteriously erased, you still have a copy in your e-mail files.

Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the semester, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and



Response Paper Formatting

1) 1" margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.

2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name.
For example:

Student Name
AMST 101 T
September 2, 2014
Chang

3) Response (week) number and title (e.g. Week #4: Race in *Neuromancer*).

4) Response papers are single-spaced and can be in block paragraph format.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary.



Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every day that they are late. So, if your essay is late by one day and you received a B- for your work, then your final grade would be a C+. Moreover, I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I DO NOT accept assignments via email.** Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (A/A+)**: Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.
- **Strong (B+/A-)**: Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (B-/B)**: Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (C/C+)**: Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (D/D+)**: Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.



Finding Help

Contact Ed

Office:
Sitterly 303
Office Hours:
TuTh 2-4 PM
or by appointment
E-mail:
echang@drew.edu
AIM or Google Talk:
EDagogy

My office and office hours are listed in the left sidebar. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see me early in the semester even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located on the third floor of Sitterly House (southeast of Brothers College), Room 303. See <http://www.drew.edu/map/buildings/sitterly-house/>.



I am also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the main English office in Sitterly 108. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via AOL Instant Messenger or Google Talk (nickname: EDagogy); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be patient because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing help at the Drew University Writing Center, a good resource for this class and other classes. The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Brothers College (opposite Java City) and offers a variety

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."
—Albert Einstein



"My parents are both college professors, and it made me want to question authority, standards and traditions."
—Maya Lin

"Everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses."
—Juvenal

of services including help with papers, brainstorming ideas, help with reading, and research. See <<http://www.drew.edu/writingstudies/writing-center>> to make an appointment and for more information. Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website:

<<http://www.edmondchang/courses/101t/links.html>>.

Learning (With) Technology

Unless you have an official accommodation, the use of technology in our classroom is a privilege, not a right. Mobile devices like phones, media players, and cameras should be off and put away. Computers and tablets should be used for note-taking, in-class work, and readings only. Print is generally preferred for course texts and readings, but full-size e-versions are acceptable provided the student is able to readily highlight, annotate, and index. Finally, be conscientious and respectful in the use of the course website and social media and post no material from class to the internet or non-class sites without explicit permission from the instructor and the class. Keep in mind these three rules: 1) Use the Right Tool for the situation and the task—keep it simple and elegant, 2) Practice Best Practices—it must improve or enhance your learning, 3) Be a Good Neighbor—it cannot distract or detract from others' learning. Inappropriate use and abuse of technology in class will result in the taking away of technology privileges for the offending student and/or class as a whole.

Academic Integrity

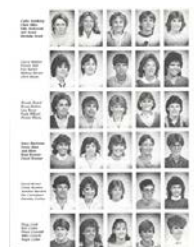
All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions at any time. For our class, plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Any case of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the guidelines and procedures outlined in Drew University's "Standards of Academic Integrity: Guidelines and Procedures." A copy of this document can be accessed on the CLA Dean's U-KNOW space by clicking on "Academic Integrity Standards." **Play it smart, don't plagiarize!**

Accommodations

Should you require academic accommodations, you must file a request with Ms. Diane Moscaritolo in the Office of Disability Services (Brothers College, Room 119B, Phone: 408-3962, Email: dmoscaritolo@drew.edu). It is your responsibility to self-identify with the Office of Disability Services and to provide faculty with the appropriate documentation from that office at least one week prior to any request for specific course accommodations. There are no retroactive accommodations. The deadline to request Letters of Accommodations for all students currently registered with the Office of Disability Services is 9/9/2014.



"A geek is a guy who has everything going for him but he's just too young. He's got the software but he doesn't have the hardware yet."

—John Hughes

"Now go, and make interesting mistakes, make amazing mistakes, make glorious and fantastic mistakes. Break rules. Leave the world more interesting for your being here. Make good art."

—Neil Gaiman

**syl-la-bus: n 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements
2: subject to change**

Chang / AMST 101 T / Autumn 2014 / Drew University

Tue 9/2
First Day of Classes

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Week 4 or 5
Response is
recommended.

NOVEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

11/26-11/28
Thanksgiving
Recess

Wed 12/11
Review Due

Week 1: September 1-5
Introduction to the Course & Syllabus
Story, "What is Popular Culture?"
Lipsitz, "The Case for Studying Popular Culture"
Hall, "Deconstructing Popular Culture as Political"

Week 2: September 8-12
Animal House (1978)

Week 3: September 15-19
Fast Times at Ridgemont High (1982)

Week 4: September 22-26
The Breakfast Club (1985)

Week 5: September 29-October 3
Dead Poets Society (1989)

Week 6: October 6-10
Lean on Me (1989)

Week 7: October 13-17
Fame, "Metamorphosis" (1982)

Week 8: October 20-24
A Different World, "Reconcilable Differences" (1987)
Saved by the Bell, "Jessie's Song" (1990)
Beverly Hills 90210, "Class of Beverly Hills" (1990)

Week 9: October 27-31
Clueless (1995)

Week 10: November 3-7
My So Called Life, "Pilot" (1994)
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, "Welcome to the Hell Mouth" (1997)

Week 11: November 10-14
Dawson's Creek, "Pilot" (1998)
Freaks and Geeks, "Pilot" (1999)

Week 12: November 17-21
Better Luck Tomorrow (2002)

Week 13: November 24-28
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)

Week 14: December 1-5
Glee, "Pilot" (2009)

Week 11: December 8-12
Last Day of Instruction 12/8
Reading Days 12/9-12/10
Final Exams Begin 12/11

Week 1 or 2 Critical
Response (CR) is
recommended.

OCTOBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

10/13-10/14
Fall Break

Week 8 or 9
Response is
recommended.

DECEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					