English 1117 WA: Introduction to Popular Culture

Lakehead Thunder Bay Winter 2016
Course Location: RB 3046
Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-2:30

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- Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 2-3 pm or by appointment (send me an email).

Course Description
An introduction to the critical study of popular culture, considering definitions of “the popular” and how popular movements, genres, and subcultures emerge and develop. Popular culture theories and their applications will be covered; a variety of cultural texts will be analyzed.

Course Objectives and Learner Outcomes
- Develop analytical skills to understand and interpret everyday cultural texts and practices.
- Think independently and critically about popular culture and the issues raised by cultural texts and practices.
- Identify and use key critical/theoretical concepts for the study of popular culture, such as production, consumption, representation, and identity.
- Read texts from a variety of media forms critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
- Explain how a text is produced by, and produces, its historical and/or cultural contexts.
- Identify and assess the social, environmental and ethical themes presented in texts.
- Explain how form, genre, media, and context produce meaning.
- Develop an ability to write about culture with precision, clarity and competence.
- Communicate ideas effectively and coherently, in both the persuasive essay, and a variety of other forms.
- Use library resources to research a topic and use what is discovered to illuminate a text.
- Develop professional skills in oral discussion, attentive listening, critical reflection, and persuasive argument.
Course Resources

Required Course Text
The following required text is available for purchase at the Lakehead University Bookstore:


Course Website
Assignment and other material will be regularly posted on the Desire2Learn course website, which you can log into from the Lakehead University website by clicking on mycourselink.

Course Schedule
These are the dates on which the listed chapters will be discussed. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings because we will be actively working with these texts in class. This schedule is subject to change, as announced in class and/or on the online course site.

Jan. 5, 7  Introducing Popular Culture, Chapter 1

Skills: Time management

Writing: Invention / Planning / Drafting

Jan. 12, 14  Introducing Popular Culture, Chapter 1

Research: Research Questions and Arguments

Research: Secondary sources, citation (MLA and titles), avoiding plagiarism

Jan. 19, 21  History of Popular Culture: *PC*, Chap. 2

Writing: Summaries / the paragraph – unity and coherence

Grammar: The Sentence and Major Sentence Errors: Fragments; Comma Splices; Run-On/Fused Sentences

Jan. 26, 28  Representation and the Construction of Social Reality: *PC*, Chap. 3

Writing: Quoting / Revising

Writing: Transitions – sign-posting
January 28th: Research Summary Due

Feb. 2, 4  The Production of Popular Culture: *PC*, Chap. 4

**Writing**: Style and tone

**Grammar**: Punctuation / possessives and plurals / parallelism

Feb. 9, 11  The Consuming Life: *PC*, Chap. 5

**Writing**: Research Paper – thesis and topic sentences

**Writing**: Research Paper – using secondary sources

Feb. 16, 18  **Relaxing/Working: Study Break!**

Feb. 23, 25  Identity and the Body: *PC*, Chapter six

**Grammar**: Active and passive voice / dangling modifiers

Feb. 25th: Essay Outline Due

March 1, 3  Identity, Community, Collectivity: *PC*, Chap. 7

**Writing**: Revising – clear and concise prose

**Writing**: Audience, and writing across the disciplines

March 4th  **Final day to drop courses**

March 8, 10  Subcultures and Countercultures: *PC*, Chapter 8

March 15, 17  Space, Place, and Globalization: *PC*, Chap. 9

**Grammar**: Word Choice, Syntax and Phrasing

**Skills**: Revising, Polish and Professionalism

March 22, 24 : Space, Place, and Globalization: *PC*, Chap. 9

**Skills**: Peer review and work-shopping writing

March 29, 31  Popular Culture in the 21st Century: *PC*, Chap. 10

**Skills**: Using your English skills / degree / other courses, career paths

**Writing**: Preparing for and Writing Exams; Review

March 29th: Research Essays Due in Class
Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Policies
All written assignments are to be well-crafted works of writing without spelling or grammatical errors. Expect to revise and polish your written work.

- Written assignments should be typed and double-spaced with 12-point font and one-inch margins.
- No cover page or cover: instead, put your full name, student number, assignment title, course name and number, submission date, and instructor name at the top of the first page on the left-hand side.
- Put your last name and page number on each subsequent page.
- Use the Modern Languages Association (MLA) for citations and works cited.
- Essays and other written assignments with due dates are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. If you do not hand in your paper in class, it is late. Submit late assignments to the instructor’s office or English office (RB 3029).
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late essays will be penalized by 2% per day (to a maximum of 20%).
- It is the student’s responsibility to retain a photocopy or electronic copy of all assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation.
- Late assignments will not be accepted after March 29th, 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Activities</td>
<td>Throughout term</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>200-400 words each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Summary</td>
<td>January 28th</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Multiple parts – see description below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Outline</td>
<td>February 25th</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>500 words (2 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>March 29th</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2000 words (8 pages)</td>
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| Final Exam            | Registrar-scheduled exam period (Friday, April 8-9, 11-16, 18-21, 2016) | 30%   | 3 hours
|                       | Book no travel during this time period – exams can only be deferred with a doctor’s note |
Details of Assignments

Suggested Activities (15%)

Chapters in *Popular Culture: A User’s Guide* include “Suggested Activities” (ex. page 13, page 32). Throughout the term, hand in 3 responses (5% each) to these suggested activities from 200-400 words in length). These responses need to be critical and analytical, and should be written and presented formally (in MLA style, with proper grammar, style, and citation when needed). They must be handed in on the day in which we discuss that chapter – no late submissions will be accepted.

Research Summary (20%)

This consists of four parts: a statement of interest; a working bibliography of at least 5 secondary sources; 2 short summaries of two texts from your working bibliography; and copies of your searches. It is meant to be a review of articles, books, websites, etc. that you may draw on to support your research. You are expected to consult a number of texts, though you are not expected to read them all – instead, briefly examine them based on keyword and topic searches.

a) **Statement of Interest**
   Introduce the reader to your topic and explain to them why you are interested in this particular subject. Introduce a preliminary problem or research question you hope to address in your final paper.

b) **Working Bibliography**
   Prepare a Bibliography, in MLA style, that has 5 relevant secondary sources, all properly formatted according to MLA citation.

c) **Summaries**
   Write a summary for each of two of your secondary sources from the working bibliography – these should be one paragraph (5-7 sentences) long, and written in objective, descriptive, formal language. Do not refer to your essay or your own argument in your summary, and avoid evaluating the text you are summarizing.

d) **Searches**
   Finally, include copies of searches that you perform (i.e. print out library searches, online searches, etc.). These are meant to give us a sense of what research you have undertaken, and to help guide you to more appropriate sources.
Essay Outline (10%)
Produce a 1-2 page outline for your research paper. This should include:

a) Research question – what problem are you attempting to solve, or issue are you hoping to address? What is the question your paper is attempting to answer?

b) Thesis Statement – this is a working thesis (i.e. it may change in your final paper as you begin drafting your ideas). State what you plan to prove in your paper; this should be an answer to your research question.

c) Topic Sentences – include a brief outline of the topics you will tackle in your paper, including, where needed, references to secondary sources and brief descriptions of your primary text. Use complete, grammatical sentences – you can utilize bullet points, but include enough detail that I can follow your ideas.

Research Essay (25%)
Students will apply the concepts of the course and delve deeper into one topic of popular culture in a research essay that uses the Lakehead University library to access relevant scholarly sources. This topic is of your own choosing – students should pick an aspect of popular culture that is of particular interest to them. The essay will present an interpretive argument about a popular culture text or practice by using relevant secondary sources to place it in context (e.g., historical context, political context, production context, consumption context, identity context, media context, subculture or counterculture context) and to discuss its cultural significance (for example, in constructions of identity, community, collectivity, consumerism, work, leisure, class, landscape, or place). At least two scholarly sources must be cited in the essay.

Final Exam (30%)
A final exam evaluating knowledge and comprehension of all the texts and concepts studied and skills developed in the course will be held during the scheduled examination period.

Marking Standards
All assignments will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards.
Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Code of Student Behaviour.

University Policies
• Students in this course are expected to conform to the Code of Student Behaviour:

• Lakehead University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage and/or the Desire2Learn site for the course.