

ENGL 126A Reading Popular Culture

3 credits, 16 weeks, 3 hours lecture

This course introduces students to post-secondary studies in English through the close reading of popular culture texts, including zines, magazines, film, television, advertising, the internet, and non-canonical fiction and non-fiction. It will address the aesthetics, concepts, theories, and debates that inform the production and consumption of popular culture, and analyze the role of pop culture in shaping beliefs, identities, and social practices. Materials, themes, topics, and genres will vary among instructors.

Prerequisite: English 30 or 30-1 or equivalent

NOTE: Not to be taken by students with 6 credits in approved junior English

Instructor

Ryan J Cox
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Office Hours

Monday 11:00 – 12:00
Tuesday 11:00 – 12:00
Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00

Hours of Instruction

Monday 1:00 – 2:50
Wednesday 4:00 – 4:50

Required Resources

Captain America and the Falcon: Secret Empire, Eaglehart and Buscema, ISBN 978-0785118367
The Disaster Artist, Sestero and Bissell, ISBN 978-1476730400
Mystery Train, Greil Marcus, 6th ed, ISBN 978-0142181584
Superman: a celebration of 75 years, Various, ISBN 9781401247041
Big Star's Radio City, Bruce Eaton, ISBN 978-0826428981
Saga: Deluxe Edition Vol. 1, Vaughn and Staples, ISBN 978-1632150783
Pope, Lucas. *Papers, Please*. 2013. Steam Download. (Video Game)

Course Outcomes

The successful student will be able to:

1. Engage with Popular Culture on a critical and theoretical level
2. Perform critical readings at a university level
3. Write scholarly argumentative essays in the MLA notational style

Evaluation

Response Papers	20%
Essay #1	10%
Research Essay Proposal	10%
Research Essay	30%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

A grade of C- is required for progression or transfer.

Response Essays

Students are required to complete a series of 4 short essays of 2-3 pages each in which they explore that week's reading in greater detail. Response papers are to be written about the readings in advance of classroom discussion. These essays should advance an argument about the text. These four essays are to be written at your discretion throughout the semester, however, only one paper can be submitted at a time and at least one response essay must be submitted by the week of Oct. 5. Marked out of 5; handed in at the beginning of the first class of the week.

Essay #1

Students will write a short essay of 4-5 pages responding to one of the questions that will be provided on Moodle. The essay will be thesis-driven and students will be expected to use direct evidence (quotations etc.) from the course material to support their argument.

Research Project**A: Proposal**

This assignment includes a proposal where you will articulate which of the two options you have chosen (1 or 2) what you intend to write about/do and how you intend to go about it. The proposal also includes an annotated bibliography in which you list no less than five good secondary sources with annotations indicating what they are and why they are useful to your project. This assignment will conform to MLA guidelines for research papers. Your proposal is subject to my approval; no essay that has not received my approval at the proposal stage will be accepted for grading. Length: Proposal 1-2 pgs + Annotated Bibliography.

B: The Project

Choose either option 1 or 2

Option 1

You will be expected to write a detailed, well researched, thesis driven essay on a text or texts from the course. This essay should demonstrate your mastery of the text(s), your ability to effectively integrate your research into your writing, a familiarity with the current critical discourses surrounding your topic, and your ability to write at the university level. Final Essay 6-8 pgs.

Option 2

You will be expected to execute on a project that blends the theory and critical study of popular culture with practice. This project should demonstrate not only your ability to move from theory to praxis, but also an understanding of the critical discourses surrounding your topic, your ability to plan and research your project, and your ability to execute the project. You will also be expected to write a three (3) page author's note in which you discuss the critical value of the project (what does it demonstrate? what does it tell us about popular culture and its criticism/practice? what can we learn from the activity? etc). The author's note should make reference to your research. Potential projects may include things like focused blogs/vlogs, organizing a pop culture performance or experience, creating a zine, making a film/comic/record/?

Examinations

The final exam will be two hours in length and written during the University Studies examination period. It will involve a combination of short-answer questions and essay questions.

Grading System

Descriptor	Alpha Grade	4.0 Scale	Percent	Rubric for Letter Grades
Excellent	A+	4.0	> 92.9	Work shows in-depth and critical analysis, well developed ideas, creativity, excellent writing, clarity and proper format.
	A	4.0	85 – 92.9	
	A-	3.7	80 – 84.9	
Good	B+	3.3	77 – 79.9	Work is generally of high quality, well developed, well written, has clarity, and uses proper format.
	B	3.0	74 – 76.9	
	B-	2.7	70 – 73.9	
Satisfactory Progression	C+	2.3	67 – 69.9	Work has some developed ideas but needs more attention to clarity, style and formatting.
	C	2.0	64 – 66.9	
	C-	1.7	60 – 63.9	
Poor Minimum Pass	D+	1.3	55 – 59.9	Work is completed in a general way with minimal support, or is poorly written or did not use proper format.
	D	1.0	50 – 54.9	
Failure	F	0.0	< 50	Responses fail to demonstrate appropriate understanding or are fundamentally incomplete.

Proposed Schedule of Topics

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments	Notes
Sept 1-4	Introduction			No Class Sept 1
Sept 7-11	Little Girl in the Big Ten: Why studying Popular Culture is important	McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message;" Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry;" Storey, "What is Popular Culture"		No Class Sept 7, (Labour Day)
Sept 14-18	Seduction of the Innocent, Comics 1: A History and How to Read Visual Texts	<i>Superman: A Celebration of 75 Years</i> (Part 1, "The Super Duel in Space," For The		

		Man who has Everything," "Doomsday")		
Sept 21-25	Seduction of the Innocent, Comics 2: Superheroes and Power	<i>Superman</i> cont'd, Vaughn and Staples, <i>Saga</i> Part 1		
Sept 28-Oct 2	Seduction of the Innocent, Comics 3: Not Super, Not Heroes	Vaughn and Staples, <i>Saga</i> Part 2	Essay #1 Due Sept 30	
Oct 5-9	"People are very strange these days:" The Cultural Value of Cult Film 1	Wiseau, <i>The Room</i> ; Sontag, "Notes on Camp;" Sestero and Bissell, <i>The Disaster Artist</i> (part1)		
Oct 12-16	The Cultural Value of Cult Film 2	Sestero and Bissell, <i>The Disaster Artist</i> (part 2); Telotte, "Introduction: Mapping the Cult," <i>How Did This Get Made: The Room</i> (podcast)		Oct 12 College Closed (Thanksgiving)
Oct 19-23	Little Richard, Pat Boone, and Stagger Lee: Appropriation and Race in Pop Music	Selected audio recordings; Marcus, <i>Mystery Train</i> (Robert Johnson, Sly Stone, Elvis)	Proposal due Oct 23	
Oct 26-30	(Not A) #1 Record/Radio City: "Important" vs Popular Music or Gimmie Indie Rock	Big Star, #1 <i>Record/Radio City</i> (Audio recording), Eaton, <i>Big Star's Radio City</i>		
Nov 2-6	Gathering Your Party: Wesley Crusher, and Marshall McLuhan Play D&D and Revitalize an Industry (Gaming 1)	Selected episodes, <i>TableTop</i> , Selections from <i>D&D Dungeon Master's Guide</i> (introduction, chapters 1-3) and <i>Player's Handbook</i> (chapters 1,2, 9)		
Nov 9-13	When Mechanics Become Narrative: Gaming 2	<i>Play Papers, Please</i>		Nov 11 College Closed (Remembrance Day), No Class Nov 12-13 (Reading Days)

Nov 16-20	"Cannibalism alone unites us:" Internet Culture and the Consumer as Producer 1	Softley, <i>Hackers</i> ; The Mentor, "The Hacker Manifesto;" Barlow, "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace;"	Research Essay due Nov 20	
Nov 23-27	"Cannibalism alone unites us:" Internet Culture and the Consumer as Producer 2	Lessig, (Introduction, Chapters 4 & 12)		Nov 25, Last Day to Withdraw
Nov 30-Dec4	Review			Dec 4, Last Day of Classes
Dec7-11	Final Exams			

Please Note:

Date and time allotted to each topic is subject to change. It is your responsibility as a student to contact the Office of the Registrar to complete the forms for Withdrawal or Change of Registration, and any other forms. Please refer to the list of important dates as noted in the Academic Schedule in the Keyano College Credit Calendar.

Performance Requirements**Late Policy**

Late work will be accepted, however, it will be penalized at a rate of 10%/Business Day. If it is turned in a week or more late, it will not be accepted. It should also be noted that late material will receive no feedback from the instructor. It is your responsibility to meet the due dates for the assigned material.

Standards for Written Assignments

Learning how to follow house style sheets is one of the most important skills a writer can develop. To aid you in your quest to learn these skills I have provided a document entitled "Standards for Written Assignments" on Moodle. If your paper does not conform to these standards, expect to lose marks.

All work must be TYPED, double spaced, and have proper MLA documentation (unless instructed otherwise). Do NOT submit work to me by e-mail.. Hard copies are not only preferred, they are required. Be sure to keep a copy of any essay that you hand in.

Sensitivity, Respect, and Subject Matter

Some of the material we will be covering this semester is of a charged nature—whether in terms of form, content or politics. As critics, we cannot shy away from this material; however, we must understand that this material may generate a wide variety of reactions and opinions among our colleagues in the classroom. Thus, it is imperative that we remain aware of, and sympathetic to the reactions and opinions of our classmates. Respect and sensitivity will produce a stronger learning environment and generate better, more nuanced discussions.

Student Attendance

Class attendance is useful for two reasons. First, class attendance maximizes a students' learning experience. Second, attending class is a good way to keep informed of matters relating to the administration of the course (e.g., the timing of assignments and exams). Ultimately, you are responsible for your own learning and performance in this course.

It is the responsibility of each student to be prepared for all classes. Students who miss classes are responsible for the material covered in those classes and for ensuring that they are prepared for the next class, including the completion of any assignments and / or notes that may be due.

Academic Misconduct

Students are considered to be responsible adults and should adhere to principles of intellectual integrity. Intellectual dishonesty may take many forms, such as:

- Plagiarism or the submission of another person's work as one's own
- The use of unauthorized aids in assignments or examinations (cheating)
- Collusion or the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing work
- The deliberate misrepresentation of qualifications
- The willful distortion of results or data
- Substitution in an examination by another person
- Handing in the same unchanged work as submitted for another assignment
- Breach of confidentiality.

The consequences for academic misconduct range from a verbal reprimand to expulsion from the College. More specific descriptions and details are found in the Student Rights and Student Code of Conduct section of the Keyano College 2015-2016 credit calendar. It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of the guidelines outlined in the Student Rights and Student Code of Conduct Policies.

In order to ensure your understanding of the concept of plagiarism, you must successfully complete the online tutorial found on ilearn.keyano.ca. Then print the certificate, sign it, and show it to each of your instructors. Your course work will not be graded until you show this signed certificate.

Specialized Supports

Counselling and Disability Services

Counselling Services provides a wide range of specialized counselling services to prospective and registered students, including personal, career and academic counselling.

SKILL Centre

The SKILL Centre is a learning space in the Clearwater Campus at Keyano College where students can gather to share ideas, collaborate on projects and get new perspectives on learning from our tutorial staff.

The SKILL Centre, through a variety of delivery methods, provides assistance in skill development to Keyano students. Assistance is provided by instructors, staff and student tutors. Individuals wishing to improve their mathematics, writing, grammar, study, or other skills, can take advantage of this unique service.

Authorization

This course outline has been reviewed and approved by the Program Chair.

Ryan J. Cox, Instructor

Louis Dingley, Chair

Date Authorized

Guy Harmer, Dean

Date Authorized

Signed copies to be delivered to:

Instructor

Registrar's Office