**INTS 1310-001: Introduction to Popular Culture**

**Fall 2015**

**Dr. Jennifer Miller**

**Email:** jennifermiller@uta.edu

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Office Location:** TBA

**Class Meets:** TH 200

**Class Time:** Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:50

**Description of Course Content**

In this course students are introduced to ideas about the cultural politics of popular culture. Cultural representations produce meanings and meanings shape our lives. We will explore representations across multiple genres and forms.

The course will be guided by a set of questions developed to aid students in developing a critical foundation in the politics of culture:

* Who are the meaning makers?
* Whose voices are heard and whose are left out?
* How do cultural representations (sites of meaning making) produce and/or challenge stereotypes?
* How does popular culture influence our feelings about issues about topics including immigration, marriage, and race?
* Who profits off of mass culture?

Students will develop a critical vocabulary and range of concepts to help them evaluate various cultural representations from a theoretically informed and interdisciplinary perspective. Students will be asked to apply theoretical models and critical thinking skills introduced and developed in class to the analysis of popular culture on our class blog at: <https://intro2popculture.wordpress.com/>.

**Student Learning Outcomes for Course**

* Define keywords and concepts pertaining to theories of popular culture.
* Identify, describe, and analyze various forms and functions of popular culture.
* Analyze popular cultural texts using ideas developed in class.

## **Textbook**

*Representations* (Second Edition). Edited by Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon.

**Grading Policy**

The following scale will be applied to both individual assignments and to the course grade as a whole:

A= 90-100 points

B=80-89 points

C=70-79 points

D=60-69 points

F=<60 points

**Assignments**

*Blogs*

Students are responsible for writing three 500+ word original blog posts in response to instructor generated prompts. For extra credit consideration students may respond to each other’s posts (up to 10 points added to blog post grade). Blogs must be submitted by noon on the date assigned.

*Final Exams*

There will be a midterm and final exam.

Final grades for the course will be based on the following assignments:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Blog 1 (Original post) | 10% |
| Blog 2 (Original post) | 10% |
| Blog 3 (Original post) | 10% |
| Midterm Exam | 35% |
| Final Exam | 35% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

**Late Work Policy**

* 10 points will be deducted for every 24 hour block the paper is late, beginning at 12:01pm the date the blog is due.
* Midterm and final exams cannot be made up. Students are expected to work their schedules around exams.
* Exceptions may be made when students present documentation of an unforeseeable, significant, and unavoidable situation that prevented their completion of the assignment on time**. Please contact the instructor if you think this applies to you.**

## **Drop Policy**

**The last Day to Drop is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

Academic Dishonesty

**Academic Integrity:** students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services Available:

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

Americans with Disabilities Act

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

E-Culture Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the university email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UTA is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

Students are responsible for checking their UTA email regularly, and the instructor will not be responsible for missed messages sent to UTA email accounts.

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

Emergency Exit Procedures

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located as discussed in class. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**COURSE CALENDAR—Fall 2015**

\*Note – Reading assignments should be done by the day that they are listed on the syllabus. The instructor may change readings with advanced warning.

\* **Warning – This syllabus/course contains adult content. Much of the course explores representations of sex, violence, racism, and sexism.**

**8/27 Thursday – Introduction**

* Course Overview
* Review Syllabus

**Part One: Key Words and Ideas**

**9/1 Tuesday**

“Introduction” (xvii – xxii) Note: You do not need to read chapter summaries

**9/3 Thursday**

“Representation, Meaning and Language” (1- 15)

**9/8 Tuesday**

“Saussure’s Legacy” (16 – 20)

Class Blog Overview

**9/10 Thursday**

“From Language to Culture: Linguistics to Semiotics” (20 – 26) and Reading B: Roland Barthes “The World of Wrestling” (50 – 51)

Cultural Text: “ Hulk Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior: WrestleMania VI - Champion vs. Champion Match” (1990)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfqV3xI8l_s>

**9/15 Tuesday**

“Discourse, Power, and the Subject” (26 – 36)

**9/17 Thursday**

“Where is the Subject?” (39 – 40)

Cultural Text: Coming Out on Talk TV: Lesbians Come Clean – Jerry Springer (2010) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etOcgH1fPFQ>

**Part Two: Recording Reality**

**9/22 Tuesday**

“Introduction” (60 – 65) and Reading A: “Bill Nichols, “The qualities of Voice” (100 – 102)

**9/24 Thursday**

“Types of Documentary” (66 – 75)

**9/29 Tuesday**

“Dramatization and the Documentary” (75 – 79)

Cultural Text: *Capitalism: a love story* by Michael Moore

**10/1 Thursday**

*Capitalism: a love story* by Michael Moore

**Part Three: The Spectacle of the Other**

**10/6 Tuesday –** Blog One Due (Documentary)

“Introduction” (215 – 228)

**10/8 Thursday**

“Racializing the ‘Other’” (228 - 230) and Reading A: Anne McClintock “Soap and the Commodity Spectacle” (272 – 275)

**10/13 Tuesday**

“Meanwhile, down on the plantation…” (232 – 242)

**10/15 Thursday**

“Stereotyping as a Signifying Practice” (247 – 251)

Cultural Text: D.W. Griffiths’ *His Trust and His Trust Revisited* (1911)

**10/20 Tuesday**

“Power and Fantasy” (251 – 259) and Reading C: Sandra Gilman “The Deep Structure of Stereotypes” (278 -279)

**10/22 Thursday - Midterm Exam**

**Exhibiting Masculinity (and Femininity)**

**10/27 Tuesday**

“Introduction” (287 – 294)

**10/29 Thursday**

Visually Coding Femininity

Cultural Text: *Killing Us Softly 4* by Jean Kilbourne

**11/3 Tuesday**

Reading Gender and Race in ads – class activity

**11/5 Thursday –** Blog Two Due (Ads)

“Psychoanalysis and Subjectivity” (312 – 318)

**11/10 Tuesday**

“Does 'Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt' go too far?” by Henry Hanks, *CNN* (2015) <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/25/entertainment/kimmy-schmidt-controversy-feat/>and

# “Candy Girl: The bright-pink resilience of “Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt” By [Emily Nussbaum](http://www.newyorker.com/contributors/emily-nussbaum), *The New Yorker* (2015)

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/30/candy-girl>

Cultural Text: *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*

**11/12 Thursday**

“Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images” by Patricia Hill Collins Available on Blackboard

Lecture – Race in Hollywood

**11/17 Tuesday**

“Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912- 1915” (169- 186) by Lee Grieveson Available on Blackboard

Cultural Text: Jack Johnson vs. James Jeffries (1910) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnMJL36_oCs> and *The Great White Hope* Trailer (1970) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkDUx82RnIs>

**Genre and Gender: The Case of Soap Opera**

**11/19 Thursday**

“Introduction” (335 – 341)

Cultural Text; Episode of *Nashville*

**11/24 Tuesday**

“Mass Culture and Gendered Culture” (341 – 346)

**11/26 Thursday – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**12/1 Tuesday**

“Genre, Representation, and Soap Opera” (347 – 354)

**12/3 Thursday**

“Signification and Reference” (355 – 366)

**12/8 Tuesday –** Blog Three Due (Television)

“Soap Opera’s Address to the Female Audience” (366 – 376)

**12/17 Thursday (11am to 1pm) – Final Exam**