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Required Text: Alexander, Victoria D. 2003. *Sociology of the Arts: Exploring Fine and Popular Forms*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing.

Course Description and Objectives: This course examines sociological issues in the study of American popular culture such as the production, distribution and reception of popular culture, how culture is influenced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and other systems of stratification and how these influences are reflected in various arts.

Students will:

1. apply the basic sociological terms, concepts & theories for analyzing popular culture;
2. demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between popular culture & social change;
3. develop knowledge of meaning in popular culture & how it can be sociologically problematic; and
4. apply a sociological & organizational approach to analyzing the creation, production, distribution & consumption of popular culture.

Course Etiquette:

1. *Collegiality* - You are expected to respect the viewpoints expressed by others. If you disagree with what someone has said, you are encouraged to express your disagreement but are expected to do so in a civil, respectful, & polite manner. Failure to comply will result in course dismissal.
2. *Attendance/Participation* – I record attendance daily. You are expected to attend class daily and participate fully. You will obviously miss critical information if you have excessive absences and this will be reflected in your exam and homework grades. Also, walking into class late is disrespectful to both your professor & your colleagues & will not be tolerated.
3. *Readings* - I write each lecture with the expectation that you have completed the assigned readings for the day. We will use class time to discuss & build on the readings. Reading is required to participate in class and for successful completion of this course.
4. *Cell Phones/Texting/Technology* - **NOT ALLOWED! Turn off or silence all cell phones** before entering class & **DO NOT use them for texting** during class. If I see someone texting, the entire class will have a pop quiz. You also **may NOT use laptops or tape recorders** in class.
5. *Academic Integrity* - You are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards and **you will automatically fail the course**.
6. *Communication* - I am always available to meet with you to discuss grades, lecture, exams or other the course matters. Please make use of my posted office hours, call my office phone, or use email to schedule appointments. If you use email, please be professional and follow standard email guidelines. 1) Put the course # in the subject line (SOC 3420), 2) include greeting (Dr. or Professor Lovekamp), 3) use standard English, write in complete sentences, avoid abbreviations and text slang (TTYL, LOL), 4)) and end with a signature (full name).
7. *Assignment Submissions*: All assignments are due via D2L, using ASA citation and reference standards, and should demonstrate appropriate content, writing style, voice, vocabulary, and

organization of a college course in sociology at the appropriate level. You should provide a full reference for **all sources** used.

8. *Desire2Learn*: You are required to use D2L for this course. Your User ID is your E-mail User ID. Once you successfully log in, our class will be listed as *SOC-3420 Sociology of Popular Culture*. Click the link to our course. There you will find links to the syllabus, assignments, grade book, ASA style guide, additional handouts and websites of interest. Also, in an effort to reduce paper, as a cost savings and environmental act, you will be required to submit homework assignments using the D2L assignment dropbox.

Evaluation:

Exams (4*50pts)	200 pts.	A=(100-90%) 345-311
Homework	145 pts.	B= (89-80%) 310-276
TOTAL	345 pts.	C= (79-70%) 275-242
		D= (69-60%) 241-207
		F= (0-59%) 206 or below

Students with Disabilities Statement: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Student Success Center Statement: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Medical Emergency Statement: For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone & call 911. All Sociology/Anthropology faculty offices have telephones & during normal business hours (8-12 & 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor & room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement: In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement: In case of fire, activate the fire alarm & exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building & cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north & south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closest exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north & south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair & Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.

	LECTURE & READINGS	ACTIVITIES & HOMEWORK
8/23,25	Defining popular culture: What is Art? (Ch 1)	Introductions, Syllabus, Homework and Projects
8/30,9/1	Reflection Approach: Does pop culture reflect society? (Ch 2)	CS 2.1: Reflection of Race in Children's Books - Due 8/30
9/6,8	Shaping & Mediated View: Does popular culture shape society? (Ch 3-4)	CS 3.1: Violence & Television -Due 9/6 Hmwk 1: Project Topics -Due 9/8
9/13,15	Summary Discussion	Exam 1 (Ch 1-4) 9/15
9/20,22	Production of Culture: Art Worlds & Conventions (Ch 5)	CS 5.1: From Academy to Public Sale -Due 9/20
9/27,29	Production: Businesses & Industries (Ch 6)	CS 6.1: Innovation & Diversity in the Production of Music -Due 9/27
10/4,6	Production: Networks & Nonprofits (Ch 7)	CS 7.1: Piccolos on the Picket Line -Due 10/4 Hmwk 2: Project Progress Report -Due 10/6
10/11,13	Summary Discussion	Exam 2 (Ch 5-7) 10/13
10/18,20	Production: Artists (Ch 8)	CS 8.1: Nothing Succeeds Like Success -Due 10/18
10/25,27	Audience Studies: The Meaning of Cultural Items (Ch 11)	CS 11.1: Cowboys, Indians, & Western Movies - Due 10/25
11/1,3	Summary Discussion	Exam 3 (Ch 8 & 11)
11/8,10	Social Functions of Popular Culture/Art (Ch 12)	CS 12.1: Framing Heavy Metal & Rap Music - Due 11/8 Hmwk 3: Project Final Papers -Due 11/10
11/15,17	Art in Society (Ch 14)	CS 14.1: A Strange Sensation -Due 11/15
11/29,12/1		Hmwk 4: Presentations
12/6,8		Hmwk 4: Presentations
12/12 (M)	12:30-2:30 p.m.	Final Exam

9/2/16 deadline to drop a course w/ no grade; 11/4/16 deadline to withdraw from course w/ W.

Thanksgiving Break November 21-25

**This syllabus serves as a contract between the student & instructor. The student is responsible for all information contained within this syllabus. Any changes the professor makes will be announced in class.

SOC 3420: Sociology of Popular Culture

Homework Descriptions

All homework assignments must be submitted using D2L. Type your assignment & save it as a Microsoft Word document. **Use the following format for naming the document when saving: YOUR LAST NAME and HOMEWORK # (for example – yourlastnameHmwk1).** If you are working in a group, please select one person in the group to be in charge of submitting the assignment when complete AND make sure everyone's names are included on the submission.

All homework assignments are due (through the online D2L assignments dropbox) by the assigned date at the start of class. If you fail to turn the assignment in by the due date, you have 24 hours to turn in the assignment with a 20% reduction in the assignment grade. If you do not turn the assignment in within the 24 hour grace period, submissions are closed and you will not be allowed to submit the assignment.

NOTE: You will be required to have internet access to submit your assignments. Plan early and submit your assignments when the internet is available to you. There is a computer lab in Blair hall where you can submit your assignments. Internet accessibility is your responsibility and not an excuse for turning in late homework.

Homework 1: Topic Statement (10 points)

Everyone, either individually or as a group, must turn in a written statement explaining their project (1-1½ pages). This summary must include 1) a research question(s) approved by the instructor, 2) a detailed summary of the popular culture issue, 3) a research method, and 4) a plan for dividing the work among group members (if completing as a group).

Homework 2: Project Progress Report: (20 points)

You are to begin working on a draft of your project (2-3 pages). You need to include 1) a catchy title for your project, 2) a clear thesis statement/research question/introductory paragraph that serves as a roadmap for the project with a detailed summary of the popular culture issue, 3) a review of relevant literature with citations and a references page (using ASA style if you are a Sociology major or your appropriate disciplinary citation style for all other students), 4) a detailed discussion of the methodology, and 5) an initial discussion/application of appropriate course concepts and theories.

Homework 3: Paper/Report (50 points)

Everyone must turn in a written report that applies appropriate course concepts and theories, including the material contained in the presentations, explanation of the research method, and systematic examination of your selected topic. The report must also be organized clearly with a thesis statement/research question, introductory paragraphs that serve as a roadmap for the report, conclusions, clear integration of each member's work, a bibliography of all cited work, and be mechanically free of errors. You should also include examples (citations) of research materials, results of content analyses, quotes from interviews, results of questionnaires, etc. The paper is worth 40 points and paper length guidelines are as follows:

1 person	-	3-5 pages
2 people	-	4-6 pages
3 people	-	5-7 pages
4 people	-	6-8 pages
5 people	-	7-9 pages

Homework 4: Project Presentations (20 points)

A very important part of the group project is to present what you have learned to the rest of the class and worth 20 points. The general rule for presentations is that you will have a maximum of 5 minutes per group member (an individual will give a 5 minute presentation; a group of 5 will

give a 25 minute presentation). You are restricted to 4 slides per person...a slide a minute! Presentation dates and order will be determined by an in-class lottery. If you are not prepared on your assigned presentation date, you lose the opportunity and points.

You are also required to prepare a 1-2 page summary handout of your presentation for the rest of the class and bring copies during your presentation. (If you give your handout to the instructor *at least 2 days before* your presentation, xerox copies will be made for you.) The handout should summarize your presentation as an outline or list *showing the most important points, and leaving space for classmates to write notes*. If you use additional handouts with charts, pictures, quotations, etc. these will not count towards the 2 page limit. You also must submit a separate, instructor version of the handout that contains extensive information about the content of your presentation. In other words, you have a presentation outline for you with detailed information (submit to me) and an abbreviated bullet list outline for the class, with space to write information.

Homework 5: Case Study Responses (45 points)

You are expected to attend class each day prepared to discuss the topics assigned. Therefore, for the fifth homework assignment, in addition to the daily chapter readings, you are required to read case studies associated with the chapters and answer all of the 'points for discussion'. We will use these questions to guide our class discussion that day. So, you answer the questions and bring them to class, you receive 3 points for that day. There are 9 case studies that you are to read and complete. These assignments are not turned in through D2L. They are simply answers that you type and bring to class as part of your lecture notes.

8/30: Case Study 2.1-Reflection of Race in Children's Books

9/6: Case Study 3.1-Violence and Television

9/20: Case Study 5.1-From Academy to Public Sale

9/27: Case Study 6.1-Innovation & Diversity in the Production of Music

10/4: Case Study 7.1-Piccolos on the Picket Line: A Strike in the Symphony

10/18: Case Study 8.1-Nothing Succeeds Like Success: Careers in the Film Industry

10/25: Case Study 11.1-Cowboys, Indians, & Western Movies

11/8: Case Study 12.1-Framing heavy Metal & Rap Music

11/15: Case Study 14.1-A Strange Sensation: Controversies in Art

SOC 3420: Sociology of Popular Culture

Detailed Project Guidelines

You are to complete a paper/project and presentation in groups or independently and systematically examine some component of American popular culture. Your projects and presentations are a very important part of the course. If you choose to work as a Group, they can be as large as 4 or 5 members and ideally organized around topics of common interest. Presentation of group projects is also required of everyone and can take a number of different forms. All presentations **MUST** make use of concepts and theoretical perspectives from the course. Homework assignments 1-4 are directly related to the project.

Project and presentation topics can vary greatly. For example, we will be discussing how *conventions* allow cultural items to be both easily produced and easily consumed by audiences. Presentations might analyze the conventions of alternative rock music, a contemporary painting, rap videos, greeting cards, monster truck competitions....and so on. Also of interest are the evaluative standards that groups of consumers use to distinguish between good and bad exemplars of a genre: what makes for good or bad alt rock, rap video, a good monster truck battle or a dissatisfying one, etc.?

Other presentations may debate popular culture topics. Pornography, for instance, is one of the fastest growing segments of popular culture. Is this something we should tolerate morally, sociologically, or otherwise? Should it be restricted to certain people (elderly, 30 year old men, children)? Similarly, a lawsuit has just been filed against fast food companies claiming injury to health. Should this industry, like pornography, be regulated? Should *NPR* be supported by taxpayers' money? Is the reputed globalization of culture a good or a bad thing? Underlying each case are important issues of political philosophy, with which all liberally-educated students should be familiar.

Still other presentations will involve research attempting to answer interesting questions. For instance: Has Elvis become, in sociological terms, a minor divinity? How, and by whom, are the episodes of *Orange is the New Black* written? Are they written differently than *The Walking Dead*? How have Amazon, HBO and other original series changed the way of creating series when compared to mainstream (NBC, ABC, etc.) series? *Do* women consistently consume forms of culture different from men? How does Hollywood deal with the fact that only one in ten movies makes money? Why does Hollywood make only 300 films a year and how are the films selected? What accounts for the increasing popularity of reality TV shows such as *The Voice*, *American Idol*, *The Bachelor*, *Survivor*, *Love and Hip Hop*, *Gold Rush*, *Teen Mom*, etc.?

Whether you work individually or as a group, you must begin by selecting a topic and develop a research question(s). Your research topic and question(s) must be approved by the instructor. If you are forming a group, keep in mind that, in general, *group members will all receive the same grade for the project*, and everyone must do their part of the work in a timely fashion to complete the project successfully. Much of the commitment to the project will require work outside of class.

BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH

When researching your topics, here are a few tips to keep in mind. While some very good information on the web, there is also a lot of bad information. You must always carefully consider whether or not the source you are using is reliable and this is especially important for information obtained from the Web. You should try to use the same standard as most news reporters who get *independent confirmation* of the information provided by any single source. (In other words, find two independent sources who say the same thing!)

Trade books, magazines, and other “popular” literature are usually good sources of information,

since these authors often use the independent confirmation standard, and because these sources are usually checked and re-checked by professional editors and other workers in the publishing process. Academic books and journal articles are excellent sources of reliable information because academic publishing is an art world with rigorous conventions governing the collection and analysis of data. Furthermore, many academic publishers require a peer review, that is, a review and critique by other experts in the field.

Academic sources can be useful even if you disagree with the author's theories. You can use their analysis and results as evidence for your own perspective! And now that so many academic sources are available on the web, you don't even have to go to the library to use them!! In sum, you **must use at least 2 academic sources (books or professional journal articles) other than your textbook** to some extent and **3 additional sources** that can be non-academic in your reports and all must be properly cited.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD RESEARCH QUESTION?

You all know how to ask good questions even though you might not realize it. What distinguishes ordinary questions from 'research' questions is the way you seek answers. Rather than relying on your opinion or works of opinion, you rely on scientific principles and literature to seek answers.

The most common mistake that students make in choosing a research question is that their questions are too general. For example, you might be interested in the structure of professional sports industries, but this topic could fill up a whole book or even two or three! Then, you realize that you could never get this done and you just give up on the topic or conclude that it is not a good question. DON'T give up on your questions. Begin the process of narrowing or focusing. Your research question(s) should be specific enough that you can give a substantial explanation in a few pages and a short presentation. So, you may decide to ask two or three very specific but related questions to narrow your topic down instead of the very general question you began with. For example, rather than asking whether different groups of people have different tastes in general, you could focus on whether they have different tastes in magazines and/or television shows. The most important part of this is to keep working, narrowing, refining and asking questions. The process is like shaping play-doh...KEEP MOLDING!

Another good way to narrow down a topic that is too general is to choose just one type of popular culture or one art world or one group of people to study in depth. For example, you might decide to study the comic book art world and describe the people, collective activities and conventions of that art world. Or you could study the history of media censorship laws and practices, or how the introduction of sound (technology) changed the film industry.

A third option is to choose two types of popular culture or art worlds etc. and compare them or study how they influenced each other. For example, you could compare the similarities and differences in the role of the director in television vs. in live theater. You could study how story conventions differ in books and movies.

A fourth option is to compare two or more different time periods. For example, you could study how the internet and technology has changed the music industry. Or you could compare sitcoms of the 1970s, 80s and 90s.

Whether you choose to analyze one culture industry or to compare more than one, think about the art world's perspective we have discussed in class, and use it to help you select your topic. For example, what are the roles of individuals in television production and how are they related to each other (The division of labor in one art world)? What are the differences and similarities in

the jobs as a “writer” in television and film (Comparing roles or occupations across two art worlds)? How do the conventions of cop shows constrain what screenwriters write about (Conventions in one art world)? How do the conventions of romance novels differ from and/or similar to the conventions of comic books (Comparing conventions across two genres of literature)?

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE RESEARCH METHODS?

Expanded Literature review

All of the projects will need some literature review, although your literature review can be shorter *if* you also use one of the other research methods as well. Literature reviews (that all groups must include in their projects) are accounts of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. In a literature review analysis, you would conduct an extensive investigation (much more extensive than a basic review requiring 5 academic sources and 5 additional sources) of the literature that exists on a particular topic. Then, present and critically evaluate the information pointing to various strengths and weaknesses of the research that has been conducted.

Social history

Use published sources (newspapers, books, etc) to reconstruct the history of a type of artwork or cultural product, a genre, an organization, or a role. Are events or trends in the history related to more general historical events or social trends? Are the historical trends or events related to events or trends in other art worlds?

Unobtrusive Research - content analysis

Critically examine the content of some form of popular culture. You might identify the conventions used in the content of popular culture objects like films, newspaper or magazine articles, CDs or advertising, television shows or commercials. How are the standards of the validity of facts different for newspapers compared to films? Are there similar themes in the teen films of the 1980s and 90s? What are the gendered messages that are being sent in commercials?

Qualitative Field Research (interviewing) or Survey Research (distributing questionnaires)

Interview people who *work* in an art world or culture industry. Interview people who write or teach about an art world or culture industry. Administer questionnaires to a sample population of college students to investigate consumption patterns of the Simpsons or other form of popular culture (If you interview or distribute questionnaires, you must speak to me about IRB approval).

CASE SELECTION – WHAT DO I STUDY?

The second most common mistake students make is in their selection of cases to study. For example, consider a project comparing TV programs of different decades. How do you choose which particular TV programs to analyze? If you choose only the TV shows that you yourself watched in each time period, then you could end up studying “family” shows of the 1980’s to “adult dramas” of the 1990’s, 2000’s, etc. Are these really comparable artworks, or do they actually come from two different types or genres of shows? You could also end up studying only the most popular or most controversial programs of each time period, which may or may not be similar to less popular or controversial programs. Is “Seinfeld” a typical sitcom from the 1990’s? Is “Keeping up with the Kardashians” typical?

The point is that you want to make *objective, systematic choices* about which cases you will analyze. For example, you could do the project above comparing sitcoms of different decades. Make a list of all the sitcoms shown in the 1980’s (or in just one year — 1985) and randomly choose which programs to use. Do the same for the 1990’s (or just 1995), 2000’s (or 2005), and

2010's (2015). Another option is to rank the sitcoms on your list in order of their popularity and pick every third show, so that you analyze cases of both the most and the least popular shows.

Using the internet and other publications, finding comprehensive lists of TV programs or films or records is relatively easy. *If you have trouble finding lists or devising a strategy for choosing cases, please consult the instructor!*

ARCHIVED TOPICS

1. Content Analysis of Two Children's Movies: Parent Trap (1961/98) & Annie (1982/99).
2. The Success of Movies & Their Sequels in Different Movie Genres.
3. Music With a Message: Protest Songs from the 1960s to the 1990s.
4. Psychological versus Visual Effects in Horror Film Series.
5. Unisex Fashions and Gender Roles from the 1960s to the 1990s.
6. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1930s: Literature, Music and Fashion.
7. The History of Playboy Magazine.
8. War Films of the 1940s and 1960s.
9. Hip Hop Culture: Regional Differences in Language, Music and Fashion.
10. Tattooing History, Conventions and Techniques.
11. A Look at Cosmopolitan Magazine: 1920 to 2000.
12. Teen Movies of the 1980s and 1990s.
13. Cult Followings in American Popular Culture.
14. Hong Kong Action Cinema and its Influence on Western Cinema.
15. The Effects of TV Violence on Children's Behavior.
16. Dead Head Subculture.
17. Age Differences in Marriage: Why Are Celebrities Different From Other Americans?
18. The Art World of Professional Wrestling.
19. Messages about Body Weight in Television, Magazines and Retail Stores.
20. Editorial and Advertising Conventions and Regulation in Newspapers.
21. Social Characteristics of Bar Clients on the Strip.
22. Women's Fashions from the 1950s to the 1990s.
23. Consumption of the Simpson's and Representation in American Culture.
24. Analysis of Gender and Ethnic/Racial Stereotypes of Disney Movies.
25. Structure v. Agency in the Movie Ratings System...Empowerment for Whom?
26. Gatekeeping Structures in Determining Success of Various Musical Genre's 1980-2000.
27. Effects of Rock Music Videos on their Viewers.
28. Analysis of Thematic Representations in Reality Television.
29. Innovative Cultural Forms: Archie Bunker to Cops.
30. Body Image Abercrombie Style: Abercrombie for Whom??
31. Graffiti as a Popular Art Form.
32. Oprah as a Cultural Icon/Gatekeeper.
33. Examination of Synergy in Film: Incredible Hulk vs. Spiderman.
34. Celebrity Fan or Celebrity Stalker & the Media.
35. A Flashback of Fashion (1990's and 2009).
36. Sex on Slick Paper: Gender Issues in Cosmo vs Maxim.
37. Seinfeld: How a Show About Nothing Changed Television.
38. Celebrity Juice, Not From Concentrate: A Look into the Overexposure of Celebrity Gossip.
39. Sex & the City: A Fashion Icon.
40. Examination of Boy Bands & Their Conventions: 1990-2000.
41. I want my MTV.
42. Body Dissatisfaction in the Media.
43. Hip Hop Musical Influence on Young Adult Culture.

44. Fast Food Attacks Society.
45. Harry Potter: A Cult Following.
46. Group Disintegration & Declarations of Independence: Films of Danny Boyle.
47. Reflections of Society in George Romero's Zombie Films.
48. What a Long Strange Trip It's Been: The Influence of the Grateful Dead.
49. Say No to Drugs in Sports.
50. Teen Movies: Comparison of influence on Teen Girls (1980 to present).
51. Tattoo on You? Body Modification as an Art Form.
52. Poindexter's Rise to Power: A Look at the Nerd in Popular Culture.
53. Graffiti on the Move: A Popular Art Form.
54. An Analysis of Computer-Animated Films: The Pixar Formula.
55. Off to the Races: The Best 30 Seconds heard round the World (Super Bowl Commercials).
56. Pokemon vs. Disney: A Battle of Gender Stereotypes.
57. Boys come from Mars, Girls come from Venus...Gender differences in Maxim and Cosmo.
58. Who's Watching Who? Reflection and Shaping in Fashion Trends in Pop Culture Society.
59. A Rare Tradition to Popular Culture: The Changing Conventions of Tattooing.
60. Tattooing: The Meaning behind the Art.
61. Who's Afraid of Detroit? A Social History of Detroit Techno.
62. Latin Culture in Mainstream Pop Music: An Increase in Influence.
63. The Luckiest Guy on the Planet: Hugh Hefner and Playboy.
64. Are We All Just Desperate Housewives? A content analysis of gendered advertisements.
65. Cartman's View on Bart and Today's World: A Study on Adult Cartoons and Society.
66. Reality: Changing the History of Television.