

Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
CMN 3270, Communication and Popular Culture

1. Catalogue Description
 - a. Course Number: CMN 3270
 - b. Course Title: Communication and Popular Culture
 - c. Credit: 3-0-3
 - d. Term to be Offered: On Demand
 - e. Short Title: Comm and Pop Cul
 - f. Course Description: This course will examine texts normally not thought of as persuasive in an effort to examine how popular culture, as manifested through various forms of discourse, exerts influence on various audiences.
 - g. Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.
 - h. Initial Term of Course Offering: Spring 2007

2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation

- a. Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
 1. Identify the influential nature of popular texts, recognizing the suatory potential that such texts have on cultural and individual attitudes, beliefs, values, and action.
 2. Identify the varying critical and theoretical approaches used to study popular culture from a critical perspective.
 3. Critically analyze popular texts for their social, cultural, and political implications.
 4. Evaluate the social consequences of the influence exerted by American popular culture.
 5. Implement accepted methods of critical research methods to conduct their own research.

- b. Sample Assessment

	Quizzes	Thought Papers	Exams	Term Paper
2.a.1.	X	X	X	X
2.a.2.	X	X	X	X
2.a.3.	X	X	X	X
2.a.4.	X	X	X	X
2.a.5.				X

- c. N/A.
- d. N/A.
- e. This course is writing-intensive; written papers and daily discussion questions allow for frequent writing activities designed to help students master course content and improve their writing. At least 35% will come

from writing assignments and students will be provided the opportunity to revise at least one writing assignment.

3. a. Sample Outline of the Course

Week One	What is culture? What is popular culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the Frankfort school and definitions of culture• British Cultural Studies and varying definitions of culture
Week Two	Theorizing how popular culture functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conceptualizing the interanimation of texts: fragmentation• Conceptualizing the interanimation of texts: bricolage
Week Three	Where do “texts” come from? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Author: fact or fiction?• Epistemes and the production of knowledge
Week Four	The political-economic nature of textual production. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whose interests? Financial pressure versus audience pleasure.• Limiting the range of messages: the hidden costs of delivering audiences
Week Five	Issues of interpretation with popular texts. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polysemy and the overabundance of meaning.• Polyvalence or Ambivalence: the limits of meaning and enjoyment.
Week Six	Advertising and consumer consciousness. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Galbraith and the production of conspicuous consumption• What are you being sold? The interpellation of subjectivity.
Week Seven	The impact of popular culture on notions of citizenship. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The postmodern celebration of cynicism• Rocking the vote: youth culture and civic involvement

Week Eight	<p>The Other in our midst: Constructions of domestic ethnic and racial diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inferential racism on television • Critiquing whiteness as a strategy of racial normalization
Week Nine	<p>Construction of gender in entertainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dialectical tension of femininity and feminism in television sitcoms • Woman with a gun does not equal woman with a phallus: the limits of female physical empowerment
Week Ten	<p>“Selling” Heteronormativity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limits of mainstreaming gay and lesbian lifestyles in television sitcoms. • Encoding, Decoding, and the interpretation of the “ambiguously gay” in advertising.
Week Eleven	<p>Theorizing power in popular texts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social knowledge and the production of social power • Resistive reading as empowerment.
Week Twelve	<p>Children’s entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marx and Mickey Mouse: The formation of consumer identity • The dialectic of innocence and maturity.
Week Thirteen	<p>Adolescent popular culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video games and the formation of alternative identities • Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll: Sticking it to “the man” or celebrating pseudo-resistance?
Week Fourteen	<p>The other Other: Constructions of international cultures, ethnicities, and races.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference embedded within the similar: U.S. constructions of western people • The Heart of Darkness: Modernizing and normalizing savagery.

b. Week Fifteen
N/A

Presentation of Student Papers

4. Rationale
 - a. American popular culture is an omni-present, quotidian presence. While often dismissed as mere entertainment or crass advertising, these messages do exert an influence on our social, political, and cultural awareness. This course is intended to equip students with the theory and skills necessary to make them savvy interpreters of these messages.
 - b. The amount of reading, assessment measures, and nature of the material covered warrant a 3000 level. There are no prerequisites.
 - c. Similarity to existing courses:
 1. There are no courses similar to this one.
 2. No courses will be deleted.
 - d. Impact on the program.
 1. This course is part of a new option in Rhetoric and Public Advocacy. It will serve as an elective for this option as well as other options in the major.
 2. N/A.
5. Implementation
 - a. Angela Aguayo, Suzanne Enck-Wanzer, Olaf Hoerschelman, Shane Miller & Mehdi Semati will all be able to teach this course.
 - b. There will be no additional costs for students.
 - c. Texts

Grossberg, L. et. al. (2004). *Media Making: Mass Media in Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Brummet, B. (2000). *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*. Birmingham, AL: University of Alabama Press.
6. Community College Transfer

A community college course will not be accepted as a substitute for this course.
7. Date approved by the department. 11/04/05
8. Date approved by CAHCC: 4/5/06
9. Date approved by CAA: 4/27/06