Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
SOC 3420: Sociology of Popular Culture

Please check one: ☑ New course ☐ Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Course prefix and number: SOC 3420

2. Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces): Sociology of Popular Culture

3. Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):

4. Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit [e.g., (3-0-3)]: (3-0-3)

5. Term(s) to be offered: ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☒ Summer ☑ On demand

6. Initial term of offering: ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☒ Summer ☒ Year: 2008

7. Course description (not to exceed four lines): 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 mass media outlets.

8. Registration restrictions:
   a. Identify any equivalent courses (e.g., cross-listed course, non-honors version of an honors course). None
   b. Prerequisite(s), including required test scores, courses, grades in courses, and technical skills. Indicate whether any prerequisite course(s) MAY be taken concurrently with the proposed/revised course. SOC 1838G or permission of the instructor.
   c. Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?
      ☐ No one ☐ Chair ☑ Instructor ☐ Advisor ☐ Other (Please specify)
   d. Co-requisites (course(s) which MUST be taken concurrently with this one): None
   e. Repeat status: ☑ Course may not be repeated.
      ☐ Course may be repeated – No Limit
   f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to which registration in the course is restricted, if any: None
   g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to be excluded from the course, if any: None

9. Special course attributes [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive] None

10. Grading methods (check all that apply): ☑ Standard letter ☐ C/NC ☐ Audit ☐ ABC/NC (“Standard letter”—i.e., ABCDF—is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)

11. Instructional delivery method: ☑ lecture ☐ lab ☐ lecture/lab combined ☐ independent study/research
    ☐ internship ☐ performance ☐ practicum or clinical ☐ study abroad ☐ other
PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. List the student learning objectives of this course:
   Students in this course will be able to:
   1) Demonstrate an ability to apply the basic sociological terms, concepts and theories for analyzing popular culture;
   2) Display basic knowledge of how popular culture reflects and contributes to social change;
   3) Develop and demonstrate knowledge of meaning in popular culture and how it can be sociologically problematic; and
   4) Apply a sociological & organizational approach to analyzing the creation, production, distribution and consumption of popular culture.

   a. N/A (not a general education course)
   b. N/A (not a graduate level course)

2. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify terms, concepts &amp; theory</th>
<th>Midterm &amp; Final Exam</th>
<th>Homework Assignments</th>
<th>Classroom Quizzes</th>
<th>Research Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of popular culture &amp; social change</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of meaning in popular culture</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply Sociological Approach</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Explain how the instructor will determine students’ grades for the course:

   Grades will be determined by four written homework assignments and quizzes (14.5%), a research project (28.5%), and two multiple-choice/essay exams (57%). Research projects are a very important part of the course and each person will produce a 4-6 page research project that will sociologically analyze some aspect of current or historical American popular culture.

4. N/A (not technology delivered)
5. N/A (not for graduate credit)
6. This course has no writing designation

PART III: OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

*This course is designed for 150 minutes per week across a regular, 15 week semester.

Week 1  PART 1: PRODUCING POPULAR CULTURE
   Defining popular culture: What is Art?
   Alexander, Chapter 1: (pp. 1-6)

Week 2  Making culture: art worlds & conventions
   Alexander, Chapter 5 (pp. 67-88)

Week 3  Making culture: Businesses & Industries
Alexander, Chapter 6 (pp. 89-111)

Week 4  Networks and nonprofits
        Alexander, Chapter 7 (pp. 112-130)

Week 5  Artists
        Alexander, Chapter 8 (pp. 131-156)

Week 6  Globalization
        Alexander, Chapter 9 (pp. 157-177)

Week 7  Review and Exam 1

Week 8  PART 2: CONSUMING POPULAR CULTURE
Does popular culture reflect society? Reflection Approaches
        Alexander, Chapter 2 (pp. 21-40)

Week 9  Does popular culture shape society? Shaping Approaches and the Mediated View
        Alexander, Chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 41-63)

Week 10 Approaches to the meaning of cultural items: reception studies
        Alexander, Chapter 10 (pp. 181-204)

Week 11 Approaches to the meaning of cultural items: audience studies
        Alexander, Chapter 11 (pp. 205-224)

Week 12 Social Functions of popular culture
        Alexander, Chapter 12 (pp. 225-248)

Week 13 Interpreting: Icons
        Alexander, Chapter 13 (pp. 251-277)

Week 14 Art in Society
        Alexander, Chapter 14 (pp. 278-303)

Week 15 Wrap up and review

Week 16 Final Exam

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

1. Explain the department’s rationale for developing and proposing the course.
   Popular culture is an everyday part of our lives that often goes unnoticed. Through this course, students will be
   able to systematically examine ways in which culture is produced, distributed and consumed. Hence, this
   course will tie organizational theories of production and consumption with other sociological theories. Students
   will be able to critically examine social forces and processes in the production and consumption of culture that
   affect their everyday lives on personal, academic and professional levels.
      a. (not a general education course)
      b. (not a technology delivered course)

2. Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.
   As a 3000 level course, students will need some fundamental background in sociology to participate and
   succeed in this class. Hence, the prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Sociology (SOC2710).

3. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering. This
   course has very limited overlap of specific components with any departmental or university course offerings.
   CMN 3270 (Communication and Popular Culture) examines 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. CMN 3710 (Intercultural Communication) is an overview of culture and
   communication on regional, national, and international levels. It examines ways in which cultures respond
differently to business, education and health care contexts and explores how culture influences perceptions and
   communication, and provides guidelines for effective intercultural communication. CMN 4780
   (Communication and Culture) is an overview of key theories, concepts, and approaches to the study of
communication and culture as practiced in communication. It covers the history of the academic study of communication and culture, the application of critical methods, cultural studies and communication, and the study of social relations, power and communication. EIU 4100G (Folklore, Culture, and Society) addresses, through a comparative examination of various folk groups and genres, the ways in which folklore contributes to the beliefs, traditions, and behaviors of individuals and societies. EIU 4104G (World Film: Language and Culture in Film) examines foreign film as a unique art form that strongly reflects the culture of its country of origin. EIU 4128G (Politics and Popular Culture) examines the relationship between politics and popular culture and focuses on how politics and culture interact. Students will examine how various media including music, television, film, and the Internet influence and reflect political behavior and institutions. ENG 3009G (Myth and Culture) examines, through comparative analysis of myths from diverse cultural traditions, relationships among mythical, historical, theological, socio-anthropological and scientific ways of understanding. This course offers a unique disciplinary perspective by focusing specifically on the sociological study of 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 mass media outlets.

4. Impact on Program(s):
   a. This course will count as an approved elective for sociology majors and minors.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned: This course will initially be assigned to Professor Lovekamp, but it may be assigned to any sociology faculty member(s) who have appropriate knowledge in this area.

2. Additional costs to students: None


PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER
N/A. Not a 1000- or 2000-level course.

PART VII: APPROVALS
Date approved by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology: 9-24-07
Date approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee: 10-19-07
Date approved by CAA: 11-8-07