Pop Goes the Culture: Race, Class, and Gender in Popular Media

INSTRUCTOR: PAT GILL (PATGILL@ILLINOIS.EDU)

Office Hours: 10:30-12:00 Tuesdays and by appt.

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Course Rational
This course is an introduction to cultural media studies. Through a critical perspective on media culture, the course examines the theories, debates, and methods of contextual analyses of race, class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. As cultural theorists have argued, media culture provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, and of “us” and “them.” In analyzing popular media and the critical readings that assess them, students will be working with the critical assumption that media culture is now the dominant form of culture, that no experience is unmediated, and that the media function both as social constructions and as reflections of personal and cultural knowledge.

Required and Recommended Readings
Included in Xerox packet

Course Requirements
* Weekly, punctual class attendance. I am a stickler about both attendance and punctuality.
* Weekly synopses of 1800-2200 words (about 6-page) to be handed in at the beginning of each class. (Please print legibly, and you are typing the paper, please double-space.) Essays must provide a concise summary the main points of the articles assigned for the week and analyze their similarities and differences. No late papers will be accepted.
* Active participation in class discussions that reveals thoughtful critical engagement with reading assignments. Students must come prepared to address at least one point or argument in the required reading discussed for the day that they found annoying, interesting, surprising, amusing, puzzling, or alarming.

Grading
Grades will be determined by response essays (50%) and class participation (50%).

**Class Schedule**

**January 24 — Topical Issues**

**REQUIRED READING:**
- Evgeny Morozov, “The Nonsense of ‘the Internet’— and How to Stop It,” To Save Everything, Click Here 17-62
- Vincent Miller, “The Internet and Everyday Life,” Handbook of Internet Crime 67-87

**Recommended Reading:**
- Evgeny Morozov, “Solutionism and Its Discontents,” To Save Everything, Click Here 1-16

**January 31 — Meditations on Mediations**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Katherine N. Hayles, “How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine,” How We Think 55-79

**Recommended Reading:**
- Sherry Turkle, “No Need to Call,” Alone Together 187-209

**February 7 — Refining the Terms**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Clint C.Wilson II, Félix Gutiérrez, and Lena M. Chao, “Race, Culture, and Gender in the New Media Age,” Racism, Sexism, and the Media 103-124
- Katie Milestone and Anneka Meyer, “Consuming Popular Culture: The Role of Gender,” Gender and Popular Culture 151-183

**Recommended Reading:**
- Katie Milestone and Anneka Meyer, “Introduction,” Gender
February 14 — Raced Associations

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Eric Deggans, “Fox News Channel’s Focus on Scary Black People Leaves Race Relations as Collateral Damage,” *Race-Baiter*: 65-88

*Recommended Reading:*

February 21 — Racial Constructs

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

*Recommended Reading:*

February 28 — Gendered Forms and Sexual Formulae

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

*Recommended Reading:*
March 7 — Class Matters

REQUIRED READINGS:

Recommended Reading:
- Sherry Turkle, “True Confessions,” Alone Together 229-24

March 14 — Mediating Realities

REQUIRED READINGS:
- Henry Jenkins, “Buying into American Idol: How We Are Being Sold on Reality TV,” Convergence Culture 59-93
- Eric Deggans, “From Flavor Flav to All-American Muslim: Searching Past the Stereotypes in ‘Reality TV,’” Race-Baiter 179-201
- Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, “Makeover Television, Governmentality and the Good Citizen,” The Media Studies Reader 573-585

Recommended Reading:
Katja Aas, “Beyond ‘the desert of the real’: Crime Control in a Virtual(ized) Reality,” Crime Online 160-177

March 21 — The Intermediate Age

REQUIRED READINGS:

Recommended Reading:
March 22-30

Break

(Rest, Read, Review)

Spring

REQUARED READINGS:
- Karen Sternheimer, “Does Social Networking Kill?”
  Connecting Social Problems and Popular Culture 45-69
- Wally Barr and Maria Leitner, “For Better or For Worse?”
  Suicide and the Internet in the World Today,”
  Internet and Suicide 285-289
- Paul Levinson, “The Dark Side of New New Media,”
  New New Media 168-179

Required Reading:
  Connecting Social Problems and Popular Culture 1-20

April 4 — Immediate Concerns

April 11 — Politics and/of Media “Self” Presentations
**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Paul Levinson, “Twitter,” *New New Media* 133-142

**Recommended Reading:**

**April 18 — Diversions and/or Dangers**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Scott Rigby and Richard M. Ryan, “Dangerous Waters: The Addictive Undertow of Games,” *Glued to Games* 97-118

**Recommended Reading:**

**April 25 — The New News**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Eric Deggans, “Fox News Channel vs. MSNBC: Downgrading All Journalism in the Race to Win a Political Fight,” *Race-Baiter* 17-39
- Maggie Wykes, “Constructing Crime – Stalking, Celebrity. ‘Cyber’ and the Media,” *Crime Online* 128-143

**Recommended Reading:**

**May 1 — YuTubing**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Paul Levinson, “YouTube,” New New Media 58-83

Recommended Reading:
- LaChrystal Ricke, “Political Tube: The Impact of YouTube on Politics,” Politics and Popular Culture 113-134

May 9 — Re-Solving Concerns

REQUIRED READING:
- Sherry Turkle, “Conclusion: Necessary Conversations,” Alone Together 279-296

Recommended Reading:
Evgeny Morozov, “The Superhuman Condition,” To Save Everything, Click Here 268-317

Required Readings
(in order of assignment)


Marshall, David P. “The Promotion and Presentation of the Self: Celebrity as Marker of Presentational Media.”
Recommended Readings

(in order of assignment)


