

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2018-2019 C LIT: 228 A1 Literature, Popular Culture and the Visual Arts
(Spring Term)

Instructor: Jay Friesen
Office: 409-A Arts Building
E-mail: jayf@ualberta.ca
Course Website: eClass

Time: M/W/F 2:00 - 3:50PM
Place: Tory Building 1-5
Office Hours: Mondays 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
(or by appointment)

Course Prerequisite: N/A

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of pop culture, focusing on all forms but especially literature and visual arts. Pop culture can be examined from many different perspectives. For this class, we will consider the topic by focusing on the following: the historical and social contexts of the field, an overview of theories used to understand pop culture; different ideological and genre expectations; audiences and reception; and, mediums of performance and transmission. Class time will include lectures, group discussions and activities, and students will be encouraged to bring their interests to the class.

By the end of this course, successful students will achieve the following:

- Comprehend the main theories, historical/social/media realities, and genre conventions relevant to pop culture;
- Apply the above categories to demonstrate how they intersect to create the conditions of reception for specific examples of pop culture;

- Utilize critical thinking and reflection skills, recognizing how pop culture is a valuable way to understand society and social issues as well as considering our positionality within these contexts; and,
- Analyze examples of pop culture that are personally interesting, drawn from outside class discussions, using theories and strategies covered in class.

Texts:

Required:

- O'Brien, Suzie and Imre Szeman, *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (4th ed.).
- Hamid, Mohsin, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Any edition).
- Reed, Brian, *S-Town* (Podcast, available free at www.stownpodcast.org).
- In addition to the above texts, a selection of *other required* literary and critical resources will be available to students on eClass.

Recommended:

- Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (5th ed.) On reserve in the Rutherford Library.

Important Dates:

First Day of Class: May 6, 2019	Add/Delete Date: May 9, 2019
50% Withdrawal Date: May 21, 2019	Withdrawal Date: June 5, 2019
Last Day of Class: June 12, 2019	Final Exam Date: June 14, 2019

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Component	Weighting (%)	Date
In-Class Participation: Weekly reflections	25	Full-term (ongoing)*
Presentation: Pop culture show and tell	20	May 29
Blog posts (2)	25	June 10 (both due)
Final Exam (take home)	30	June 14
Total	100	

* Marks for participation will be provided to students once per semester, as requested by the student. The ongoing nature of this grade means students can gather detailed feedback when they find it most suitable. *Requests should be made via email.*

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):

Please consult the following site:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations> (Exams)

For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

1. **Participation (ongoing):** This mark comes from in-class participation. Importantly, these marks come from the “Weekly Reflections” that are completed at the end of each week.

At the core of the participation grade is an emphasis on reflective habits. This portion of the grade intends to make reflection an essential part of what we do in manageable, but regular, intervals.

I believe that class participation does not look the same for every student; some love to talk in class; others are less inclined. This breakdown of participation provides an outlet for all students to take time to contribute to a broader conversation, maintaining anonymity by using online submissions.

Here are the essential parts of the Weekly Reflections:

- a. Questions will be available throughout the week and will be due at 12 PM the following Sunday.
 - b. Time: expect each reflection to take approximately 15 minutes. Time in class will be allotted to work on the reflection. The goal is to make it so that you rarely need to take the assignment home to complete the task.
 - i. This assignment requires you to bring a laptop or smartphone to class if you wish to use the time provided during class.
 - c. Refer to the rubric on eClass for detailed marking breakdowns and examples.
 - d. The goal for this assignment is to demonstrate your reflections on the value of our discussions as they relate to your interests and thoughts about pop culture. In other words, you are describing how you can use what we've covered in class for your own way of thinking.
 - e. Some of your responses may be shared in the lectures. However, **this usage will always be anonymous, not reveal placements or identifying personal details, and be done only to further critical thought in the class.**
 - f. Marks for participation will be provided to students once per semester, as requested by the student. This request system means students can gather detailed feedback when they find it most suitable. *Requests should be made via email.*
2. **Presentation: Pop culture show and tell (May 29th):** this assignment is designed to have students use their creativity, presentation, and critical thinking/analytical skills.
 - a. Students will select a piece of pop culture to bring to class and discuss with classmates (can be tangible or digital). The classroom will be arranged so that students can mingle with and have discussion with others about their selection. In addition to bringing a piece of pop culture, students will be responsible for a way of “presenting” it. For instance, students may make an infographic, a small PowerPoint, a movie poster, a board game, a creative writing piece (e.g., a poem or script), a lesson/business style plan, etc. that describes the key features of your selection and your overall discussion points for the upcoming blogs (which is due later in the semester, June 10th).
 3. **Blog posts (both due June 10th):** based on the presentation, students will write two (2) blog posts about their piece of pop culture. The intent is for each student to write as a cultural critic and integrate concepts and ideas from class to analyze parts of pop culture

that are personally interesting.

- a. Each blog will be approximately 750 words. Together, both blogs should be about 1,500 words.
 - b. Each blog post should examine the chosen piece of pop culture from a different angle. For example, one blog might consider its ideological aspects, while the other may consider its historical context.
 - c. These blogs are not research assignments; I am looking for critical, personal reflections that draw on ideas from class. However, should you wish to bring in secondary sources, that is also fine.
 - d. Each post should include both words and one multimedia aspect (e.g., a YouTube clip, photo, etc.). Students are not expected to create any multimedia; this part of the assignment can be as simple as providing a relevant link.
4. **Final (take home) exam:** The final exam for this course will consist of four (4) take-home questions. Students will receive a list of questions provided on the last day of class and will be responsible for answering two (2) long answer questions and (2) short answer questions. Submissions will be made via eClass and will be due June 14th @ noon.

Reading Schedule:

Dates	Topic	Readings & Schedule
May 6/8/10	Course introduction & the history of popular culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular Culture: A User's Guide (PCUG) Chapters 1 & 2
May 13/15/17	Representation and production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCUG Chapters 3 & 4
May 22/24	Literature case study: <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>.
May 27/29/31	Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCUG Chapters 6 & 7 • Show & tell (May 29th)
June 3/5/7	Consumption and subcultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCUG Chapters 5 & 8
June 10/12	Case study: <i>S-Town</i> & course wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>S-Town</i> (all episodes) • Blogs due (June 10th) • Final exam (June 14th)

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the

University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or,
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

University of Alberta Sexual Violence Policy:

The Sexual Violence Policy was approved by GFC in June 2017. It plays a vital role in ensuring a safe and respectful learning and working environment. As defined in the policy, **sexual violence** is any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. **Sexual violence** is a complex and serious problem in society and on university campuses. Sexual violence can affect individuals of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations, as well as those from all ages, abilities, racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. Through this policy, the University of Alberta recognizes its responsibility to reduce sexual violence in the University community. The university aims to do so by fostering a culture of **consent** and support through education, training and policy. The University recognizes the possible effects of trauma on those who have experienced sexual violence and supports the efforts of individuals to seek support and recover.

To read the policy in more detail, please visit:

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Sexual-Violence-Policy.pdf>

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse will be granted for late assignments, the student will be penalized at one letter grade per day (including weekends), unless you requested an extension for a valid reason.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59