

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

**2019-2020 C LIT 440: Comparative Studies in Popular Culture**

(B1 Winter Term)

Instructor: Russell Cobb

Time: 12:30-1:50TR

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Place: CAB 369

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or by appointment

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**Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:**

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

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**Course Prerequisite:** No prerequisites.

**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:**

None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

Exam registry – Students' Union

<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exams>

See explanations below

Document distributed in class

Other (please specify)

NA

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This seminar explores theories of popular culture that trouble nationalist formulations of culture. In particular, we want to understand and problematize the formation of national symbols of “authentic culture” by studying texts that move across media and cultures. Key terms to be discussed include: hybridity, globalization, transculturation, and authenticity.

Course format: Lectures, discussions, and activities in class. Substantial reading and writing outside of class.

**Objectives:** Successful students will be able to do the following:

- Understand theoretical concepts including pastiche, irony, postmodernism, hybridity, cultural appropriation, globalization.
- Write a case study evaluating two texts that cross boundaries
- Develop a creative project of pastiche, remix, or cultural translation
- Talk about a problematic case of appropriation in front of class in the form of an oral presentation.

**Important Dates:** See Academic Schedule in current Calendar

First Day of Class: January 6, 2020

Add/Delete Date: January 17, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: February 5, 2020

Winter Term Reading Week: February 18-21, 2020

Withdrawal Date: April 1, 2020

Last Day of Class: April 8, 2020

**Date of Deferred Final Exam** (if applicable): Please consult the following site: [https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806 - Examinations \(Exams\)](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806 - Examinations (Exams))

**Deferred Final Examination:** For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see "I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?"

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**Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):**

**Term Work 100% No final exam**

- Four short reaction writing assignments (5% x 4 = 20%) various dates
- Analytical case study paper (20%) February 11
- Pitch/prospectus for Creative assignment (5%) March 17
- Creative assignment--adaptation, remix of classical text (20%) April 10
- Presentation (10%) Various dates
- Pop quizzes (15%) Various dates
- Class participation (10%) Various dates

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

**Texts (all required):**

- Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*

- All other readings will be scanned and hosted on eClass. It is your responsibility to either bring a physical copy of the reading or access to them digitally every class day.

**Four informal writing prompts (20%)**

(5% each) to be marked one out of 10. The default mark here is a 8/10 which is a good, solid response with references to texts in question. Superbly thought-provoking and very well written responses may receive a 10/10 (100%), but these marks will be rare. 6/10 (60%) will be given to responses that meet the word count but are sloppily written and/or not referring to the texts in question. To be hosted on eClass discussion threads. Word count 200-250 words.

**Two formal papers (40%, 20% each)**

Paper 1: Analytical paper that addresses one identity across two authors. (1800-2000 words) Rough draft will be assessed a mark, with the student able to improve that mark by up to 10% with significant revisions.

Paper 2: Creative nonfiction with critical reflexion. In this paper, student will adopt the style (not the words) of an author studied to narrate their own “identities in tension.” (1600 word max.) This will be accompanied by a (500 word) critical reflection on the author’s paper using the concepts developed in class.

**Presentation (10%)** For the presentation, students will pair up to discuss a how a reading or readings relate to a pointed question detailed in the daily work schedule. You need to think creatively about how to bring the concepts to life and foster discussion!

**Class Participation (10%)**

This grade evaluates physical presence in class as well as engagement with discussion and lecture. For example, if you don’t even bother to bring our texts to class, this grade will suffer. Students will evaluate their performance on the last day of class. “80% of life is showing up”

**Pop quizzes (15%)**

Pop quizzes will be given to assess whether students are keeping up with the reading. These quizzes may or may not be announced. There will be 4-5 quizzes. Students can drop either: One pop quiz or one informal writing assignment at the end. I know this sounds terrible, but it’s the best way to ensure accountability for reading. Quizzes cannot be made up, but if you have excusable absence, it may be--at the discretion of the instructor--dropped.

**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](http://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.

***Sexual Violence Policy:***

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material 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.

In this course, attendance is evaluated by your presence in the classroom, your active participation in classroom discussions, and presence in online forums. Sleeping, texting, and facebooking in class will reduce your participation grade. Every absence after two unexcused absences results in a 10% reduction of the class participation segment of the course. Participation will also be assessed by preparation for discussion and will be self-assessed at the end of the course.

***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 once throughout the course with no penalty. Late excuses will not be accepted for any reason. Assignments handed in late will be deducted 10% per each working day they are handed in late. For example, if a paper is due on Tuesday, but you hand it on Thursday, that will incur a 20% deduction.

***Disclaimer:***

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass.

**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	%
<b>Excellent.</b> 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.	<b>A+</b>	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	<b>A</b>	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	<b>A-</b>	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> 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>B+</b>	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	<b>B</b>	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	<b>B-</b>	2.7	<b>80-82</b>

<b>Satisfactory.</b> 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.	<b>C+</b>	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	<b>C-</b>	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> 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.	<b>D+</b>	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	<b>D</b>	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>

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Case studies:  
Hamilton-Biography and musical  
Rod Stewart-Jorge Ben  
Moacyr Scliar-Yan Martel