

# **California State University San Marcos**

## **School of the Arts/ Theatre Arts**

### **Power and Popular Culture TA 323**

**Instructor(s):**

Dr. Hans Vermy

**Office Location:**

Arts Bld 341

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

hvermy@csusm.edu

**Office Hours:**

Wednesdays 11am - 2pm

schedule other times by e-mail

**Meeting times:**

Online

**Classroom:**

Cougar Courses

### **Course Catalog Description**

Through critical analysis of advertising, popular film, theatre, and television, this course offers an active interdisciplinary approach for exploring the way women, gays, ethnic minorities, and individuals of different classes are portrayed, allowed access, and share power within these mediums as both cultural expressions and fields of employment. The analysis of popular culture and the meaning it reflects in light of prevailing world conditions poses an awareness of the subsequent choices confronting individuals and communities in U.S. society. Issues of identity, gender, sexuality, race, class, community, and ethnicity will be considered not only for their cultural expression but as the mechanisms of larger world systems. Through individual and group readings,

in-class discussions, and film showings, this course will provide ample opportunities for the development of in-depth research projects.

### **2019 Syllabus Course Description Addendum**

Pop culture is all around us, influencing how we think, how we feel, how we vote, what we buy, and how we live our lives in countless ways. Popular culture is disseminated through media networks including telephone, internet, television, film, theatre, publishing, music, etc.. Media is a mirror that we can use to understand ourselves and others. Media is also a dark mirror that obfuscates certain needs and desires we have in favor of other needs that promote more viewing and buying. Thus media is also a reflection of economics and class structure (the rich and the poor). And money is the greatest concentration of POWER in society. The State (the Nation) has a monopoly on violent power (the military, the police, etc.). The Media has a monopoly on fear (to keep us watching) and a monopoly on normativizing cultural power (it establishes what we view as "normal" social living). The Media also has a monopoly on consumer advertising. Thus Media has hand hold on a lot of the ways we value, use, and understand money. Through the application of an economic and theoretical analysis of advertising, film, and television, this course offers an active interdisciplinary approach to exploring the way power, race, ethnicity, gender, and class are portrayed in popular American culture. We will begin by learning the theoretical models and history of current economic systems that control not only money but how we think about such notions as "freedom of expression" and "liberty" and "private property". This course will use your own expertise as consumers of popular culture as a jumping off point for exploring the various roles played by popular culture in our lives.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

- Students will evaluate theories of popular culture through neoliberal economic analysis and cultural theory via performance studies.
- Students will apply these theories to theatre, film, television, theatre, comics, and advertising.
- Students will describe and analyze the role and value of popular culture.
- Students will critique their own social and cultural constructions of identity, gender, ethnicity, race, and class.

- Students will be able to articulate how larger formations of money and the economy effect what we think, what we like, and how we spend our money and cast our vote.

## School of Arts Theatre Department Course Learning Objectives

- · To evaluate and critique existing ideologies
- · To explain theories of race, gender and performance
- · To breakdown and summarize material via online discussions

## Required Texts/Readings

### Books

- All reading materials will be provided to you via our online platform.

## Required Access

- Required resources include **access** to the paid streaming services CBS All Access (9.99 a month with one month free), Amazon Video Prime (get student discount), Netflix, and maybe Hulu. You may have to pay as much as \$75 for three months of these services though you may partner up with a friend or classmate or two to share the subscription. *Just ensure you have **access** within the first week.*
- It is possible that you will be required to view recently released popular films in a cinema though unlikely this semester.

## Course requirements (number of exams, assignments, etc)

1) This online course demands your full participation. I want students to take initiative and to be active in our online discussions, submit assignments on time, etc. In order to do everything on time this course requirement also has your due dates. Please input them all into your personal calendar and or phone reminders.

2) Through thorough reading of materials and/or employing a hunt for the thesis, cultural importance of the object and its relation to power; be prepared with ideas that you'd like to share online with the class, whose members certainly will have responses toward your ideas. Students should feel free to speak and write your honest responses to the issues that are discussed—there are no “right” or “wrong” positions in this online course. Please be courteous and respectful to others so that we may have lively and provocative threads.

3) It your responsibility to be proactive about checking your email and Cougar Courses for updates, changes made to our syllabus, due dates, etc.

4) Weekly Posts will focus on the selected materials for the week. This should go beyond a summary of the screening materials and readings. Each week, you will be required to submit a post containing ALL OF the following:

- A citation from one of the texts we've read for the week that is relevant to your response, and or a question about a citation at the end of your response to the prompt.
- A scene from the week's assigned cultural object of the week that exemplifies your response or pose a question about this scene at the end of your response to the prompt.
- Ask one question about the film or texts we've read that you would like to introduce into the week's class discussion. You may also include additional questions about material from our lectures about which you would like some clarification.

Due Dates: Every Thursday Morning at 11AM

5) Responses to Peers Posts. Using my posted response to all posts add constructive applause followed by critique of a any peers post. Use the Q and A forum to respond directly to their original post.

Due Dates: Every Friday Night by 11PM

6) The midterm is two outlines of potential final papers. Guidelines posted in week 7.

Due Date: 3/14 11pm

7) The final is a written essay. A critique or review of one of the pieces from the course, it's economic and cultural lessons, and a comparative analysis between that object and more contemporary object of your choosing (you may choose another piece by one of the artists and or theorists that we study).

Due Date: 5/8 11am

8) Work well with your group. Everyone will comment on group work at end of semester.

9) 4 Group Close Readings. Small groups will be formed online and charged with taking a essay section on theory and/or economics and break it down to a one page synopsis using non-academic language to the best of their ability.

Due Dates: Weeks 2-5 Due Fridays at 2PM

10) Almost-weekly quizzes to assure that you have at least scanned through the reading to find the dates, important thesis, and cultural significance of whatever object or theory is under examination in the text (whether the text is a film or book or essay etc.). Once quizzes are posted an open they will remain so until end of semester. They are timed.

Due Dates: Can be completed at anytime. End of semester. (There is not a quiz every week.)

11) For extra credit you may attend *Latino History for Morons* at the Ahlmanson Theatre in LA. and or one of the Theatre Department's and or Drama Clubs Fall 2019 productions. Submit one written paragraph answering how the performance piece you viewed reflects ideas of power and popular culture. Please post on the EXTRA CREDIT FORUM on the main page.

### Grading Standards

#### Grading Standards

Assignments	Points Possible: 100
15 Online discussion Posts (15@2 points)	30 points
Weekly Responses (15@1 point)	15
Group Reading Colloquial Synopsis (4@3.75 points)	15
Midterm: 2 1st Draft Outlines for Final Critique or Review	10
Final: Critique or Review in Relation to Newer Pop Cultural Object	18
Quizzes (12 @ 1 point)	12

## **Policy on late work and/or missed exams**

Quizzes can be taken at any time.

Late posts and responses will be taken but at a reduced rate. 1-7 days late removes 20% from full marks. 20% deduction each subsequent week.

Late submission of larger assignments on a per student, per crisis, and per assignment basis. Email instructor to begin process for getting a late submission date.

## **Schedule**

Weeks 1-2 on Definitions of Power, Popular Culture, Neoliberalism, and Performance Studies

Weeks 3-15 Each week a new form of media and or its effects are introduced and explored from Social Media and Identity to Religious Icons and Superheros.

Week 16 All work and Quizzes must be turned in

## **Academic Honesty**

Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All assignments must be original work, clear and error-free. All ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated accordingly.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Students are responsible for honest completion and representation of their work. Your course catalog details the ethical standards and penalties for infractions. There will be zero tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.

[http://lynx.csusm.edu/policies/procedure\\_online.asp?ID=187](http://lynx.csusm.edu/policies/procedure_online.asp?ID=187)

### **ADA Statement**

Example: Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours in order to ensure confidentiality.



## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/21 - 1/26  What is Pop Culture? Power? Tools to Analyse Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading 1 - Practices of Looking</li> <li>• Reading 2 - Conspicuous Consumption</li> <li>• Reading 3 What is Performance Studies by Schechner</li> <li>• Reading 4 Theatre and Performance Studies by Schechner</li> </ul>
2	1/27 - 2/2  Critical Approaches and Neoliberalism	<p>History of Neoliberalism Parts 1 and 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading 1 "History of Neoliberalism Parts 1 and 2</li> <li>• Reading 2 The Inter of Performance Studies</li> <li>• Reading 3 Reality TV and Simulation Schechner</li> <li>• Listening 1 Full Faith and Credit What is Money from On the Media listen to the episode</li> </ul>
3	2/3-2/9  Social Media	<p>Reading 1 - Social Media Autobiographies</p> <p>Reading 2 - Instagram</p> <p>Viewing 1 ContraPoints on Incel Groups and Beliefs and Actions online</p> <p>Viewing 2 Contra-Points Trans- bullying</p>

		 Listening 1 Repairing Justice: How to Fix the Internet
4	2/10-2/16  Identity Constructs and Protest Part 1	Film - He Named Me Malala on Amazon  Reading 1 - Why Identity Matters  Reading 2 - Identity and Media
5	2/17 - 2/23  Identity Constructs and Protest Part II	Viewing 1 Film - 13th Documentary Netflix  Read Transcript and Or Listen to Looking Up and Up from On The Media  Viewing 2 Watch Star Trek Discovery on CBS All Access S01 E01
6	2/24-3/1  Race and Gender and Comedy	Reading 1 Harvey Young on Blackface  Viewing 1 Tina Fey's Weird Obsession with Racial Humor  Viewing 2 Key and Peele The Obama Translators  Viewing 3 Please Watch Hannah Gadsby's Nanette on Netflix  Viewing 4 In Living Color S01 Ep01

		<a href="#">Reading 2 Homie Dont P Lay That Can we Say That</a> <a href="#">Viewing Watch Bamboozled</a>
7	3/2-3/8  Race and Sexuality	Watch <i>Moonlight</i>
8	3/9-3/15  Sexuality and Animation and Midterm Week	<a href="#">The Queer ART OF Failure</a>  <a href="#">Midterm and Final Paper Assignment Outline</a>
9	3/16-3/22  Disney and Imperialism	<a href="#">Watch Salduos Amigos and The Three Caballeros</a>  <a href="#">How to Read Donald Duck</a>
10	3/23-3/29 Gender and Harrasment	<a href="#">Film - NY Times Short, Why Sexual Harassment Still Exists</a>  <a href="#">Reading - #MeToo Movement 1 Year Later</a>  <a href="#">Reading - #MeToo Movement and Men</a>  <a href="#">Reading - Men and #MeToo</a>

		<p>Reading - Tarana Burke</p> <p>Film - #MeToo, Now What? (Watch Ep. 1 and 2, approx. 1 hour)</p>
11	<p>3/30 - 4/5</p> <p>Spring Break</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p>Pop Music and Sexual Harrasment</p>	<p>Reading 1 The Exile</p> <p>Reading 2 Kesha vs Dr. Luke Rollingstone Article</p> <p>Kesha Praying Video</p>
12	<p>4/6-4/12</p> <p>Pop Music and Women of Color</p>	<p>Film - Lemonade</p> <p>Videos - Jay-Z 4:44</p> <p>Video - Jay-Z NY Times Piece</p> <p>Reading 1 - Lemonade Explained</p> <p>Reading 2 - Why Lemonade is for Black Women</p> <p>Reading 3 - Lemonade is Beyonce's Body and Blood</p> <p>Reading 4- Bell Hook on Beyonce</p> <p>Reading 5- Jay-Z and Black Vulnerability</p> <p>Reading 6- Art History of "APESHIT"</p>

13	4/13-4/19  Icons, Comics, Superheroes	<a href="#">Watch Into the Spider-Verse</a>  Reading 1 <a href="#">Understanding Comics</a>  Reading 2 <a href="#">Alan Moore on the Dangers of Superhero Fandom</a>
14	4/20-4/26  Cable News and Proliferation of Talk Journalism	TBA
15	4/27-5/3  TVs response to Trump	Watch on Hulu:  <i>Black-ish</i> S03 E12 "Lemons"  Watch on CBS AllAccess:  <i>The Good Fight</i> S01 E01 "Inauguration"  <i>Murphy Brown</i> S01 E01  <i>The Good Fight</i> S02 E07 "Day 450"
16	5/8	Get all assignments in

--	--	--