

EN2801: POPULAR CULTURE AND SOCIAL LIFE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Popular Culture and Social Life

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

2801

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The popular media is a source of entertainment and excitement, but also social controversy. It is central to the circulation of cultural and subcultural images, thus encouraging communal identities but also underline social divisions. It is

embedded in our culture of media consumption, and it a repository of representations of gender roles, race, sex, and class. This course is designed to help students acquire the critical skills required for the analysis of cultural texts in a range of forms of popular media, including television shows, advertisements, magazines, music, comics, films and the internet. The course will encourage students to reflect critically on the content and form of popular media, and to assess the relationship between their consumption of popular culture and their broader life in society.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand and apply basic theoretical approaches in the field of popular culture studies.	x	x	x
2	Identify and evaluate critically the circulation of cultural and subcultural images and identities in popular cultural texts.	x	x	x
3	Identify, analyze and evaluate the roles of language in construction of images and identities in popular cultural texts	x	x	x
4	Describe and evaluate the relationship between popular cultural images and social issues.	x	x	x
5	Critically evaluate and reflect upon the relationship between the consumption of popular culture and social life.	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Interactive lectures and activities about key concepts, including: - Theoretical approaches to popular culture studies - Consuming, producing and reproducing popular cultural texts - Language in popular cultural texts - Social issues reflected in and through popular culture	Students will do assigned reading and study-questions on the readings; students will contribute, share and evaluate authentic materials they source.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2	Interactive workshops and discussions on - Theoretical approaches to popular culture studies - Analysis of popular cultural texts - Consuming, producing and reproducing popular cultural texts - Language in popular cultural texts - Social issues reflected in and through popular culture	Students will do assigned reading and study-questions on the readings; students will contribute, share and evaluate authentic materials they sourced through an online platform. Students will read and analyze both print-based and multimedia texts on- and off-line.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Collaborative project to investigate popular cultural practice and social life. Presentation and critique of students' research project.	Students will work in collaborative small groups to discover popular cultural practice in communities. Students will present their work in presentation and share to an online platform to get feedback from peers and instructors. Students are expected to base their investigation on comparison between local and international practices to generate insights from theoretical application.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation is crucial in this course. Both in-class and online activities may be considered in assessing presentation.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	-	Yes
2	A written assignment will allow students to apply the skills and knowledge acquired on the course in relation to popular media.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	-	No

3	Multi-media project studying and presenting popular cultural texts and/or practices, and analysing and evaluating texts and/or practices by applying theoretical understanding.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	35	GenAI can be used for some aspects of this project, such as image generation.	Yes
4	Presentation sharing information and analysis on aspects of popular media culture.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	35	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Student has completed all assessment tasks. Student is able to analyse popular cultural texts critically with reference to theoretical understanding. Student is also able to account for and assess personal consumption critically. The student is also able to communicate his/her reflection and analysis in fluent and competent language. Student is able to generate new and critical insights from the reading and understanding of popular cultural practices and/or practices in local or international communities.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student has completed all assessment tasks. Student is able to analyse popular cultural texts relatively critically with some reference to theoretical understanding. Student is also able to account for and assess personal consumption somewhat critically. The student is also able to communicate his/her reflection and analysis in fairly fluent and competent language. Student is able to generate new insights from the reading and understanding of popular cultural practices and/or practices in local or international communities.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student has completed most of the assessment tasks. Student is able to analyse popular cultural texts relatively critically with some reference to theoretical understanding. Student is also able to account for and assess personal consumption. The student has shown some difficulties in communicating his/her reflection and analysis in reasonably fluent and competent language. Student is able to generate some insights from the reading and understanding of popular cultural practices and/or practices in local or international communities.

Marginal (D)

Student has completed most of the assessment tasks. Student has made good attempt but failed to analyse popular cultural texts with reference to theoretical understanding. Student is also able to account for and assess personal consumption. The student has shown some difficulties in communicating his/her reflection and analysis in reasonably fluent and competent language. Student is able to generate some insights from the reading and understanding of popular cultural practices and/or practices in local or international communities.

Failure (F)

Student has failed to complete most of the assessment tasks.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Media, culture and subculture, race, gender, class, femininity, sexuality, work, leisure, television, advertisements, magazines, comics, films, popular music, cultural and critical studies.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Nil

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Buckingham, D. (2003). Media education: Literacy, learning and contemporary culture. Cambridge: Polity.
2	Buckingham, D., & Willet, R. (2006). (Eds.). Digital generations: Children, young people, and new media. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
3	Craig, T.J., & King, R. (2002). (Eds.). Global goes local: popular culture in Asia. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
4	Crystal, D. (2001). Language and the internet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5	Danesi, M. (2008). Popular culture: introductory perspectives. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
6	Johnson, S. (2006). Everything bad is good for you. New York: Riverhead Books.
7	Goddard, A. (2002). The language of advertising: Written texts (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
8	Kenway, J., & Bullen, E. (2001). Consuming children: Education-entertainment-advertising. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
9	McKee, A. (2007). (Ed.). Beautiful things in popular culture. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
10	McLoughlin, L. (2000). The language of magazine. London: Routledge.
11	Saraceni, M. (2003). The language of comics. London: Routledge.
12	Storey, J. (2006). Cultural theory and popular culture: an introduction (4th Ed.). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
13	Strauss, W., Howe, N., & Markiewicz, P. (2006). Millennials and the pop culture: strategies for a new generation of consumers in music, movies, television, the internet, and video games. Great Fall, VA: LifeCourse.
14	Versaci, R. (2007). This book contains graphic language: Comics as literature. NY: Continuum.
15	Villarejo, A. (2007). Film studies: The basics. London: Routledge.