

# Creativity & American Culture

ADV 316 (06235), TR 11am-12:15pm

**Instructor:** Robert J. Lewis

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**Office Hours:** F 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Rationale:** This course exists to familiarize students with the creative process, theories of culture from both a social-scientific and humanities-based perspective, and to apply these understandings to human expression in the United States and elsewhere. The course is useful for creators of entertainment, advertising, or other media content, or anyone who wants to have a basic grasp of previous literature on American culture. Description from course catalog: “A cross-disciplinary view of the creative process and creative products. The conceptual core of film, fine arts, advertising, architecture, and literature.”

## **Course Objectives:**

### **Specific Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will:

- Have knowledge of multiple theoretical viewpoints on American culture and creativity, and from fundamentally different approaches to its study.
- Know about specific (historical and current) constraints and enablers of creativity in the U.S. and elsewhere on various different domains, including those listed in the course description above.
- Be able to apply this knowledge to understand the origins and evolution of newly encountered cultural artifacts in the U.S.

## **Format and Procedures:**

There will be three exams. Final exam is not cumulative but it is scheduled during the final exam time slot (see below for specific time/date). Grades will be determined by performance on exams, the five in-class essays, the YouTube assignments, and the research assignment. In most cases, students are expected to do the assigned readings before coming to class.

**Tentative Course Schedule:** \*\* This syllabus schedule represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans WILL change to enhance the class learning opportunity (this is especially true in this class, as cultural events during the semester can influence content). Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected. Exam dates and grading procedures will not change.

### *Schedule*

Week 1	Jan 22	Lecture 1, 2
	Read: Lears on Fables of Abundance	
Week 2	Jan 29	Lecture 3, 4
	Read Csikszentmihalyi on creativity and culture	
Week 3	Feb 5	Lecture 5, 6, 7
	Read: Orientalism, Smith, culturalist theories	
Week 4	Feb 12	Lecture 8, 9, 10
	Read: WEIRD people, social science viewpoints	
Week 5	Feb 19. (review day on Tues; no class Thurs.)	Lecture 11, Review Wednesday (bring questions)
Week 6	Feb 26. (Exam 1, Tues.)	Lecture 1
	Read: Medium is the Message and futurism in media theory	
Week 7	March 5	Lecture 2
	Read: Perfectionist Project, Lears on critical theory	
Week 8	March 12	Lecture 3
	Read: Gladwell Diffusion, Rogers on the diffusion of culture	
Week 9	March 19 (SPRING BREAK WEEK)	Lecture 4
	Read: Conquest of Cool, Salon Irony & Advertising article	
Week 10	March 26 (Exam 2, Thurs)	Lecture 6, Review Wednesday (bring questions)
Week 11	April 2 (no class Thurs)	Lecture 1
	Read: Levine Wallowing in Sex (ads for condoms, beer, and )	
Week 12	April 9	Lecture 2, 3
	Read: Culture Jamming, No Logo (cultural resistance to advertising)	
Week 13	April 16 (no class Wed. or Fri.)	Lecture 4
Week 14	April 23	Lecture 5
	Read: Lessig - Free Culture, Ch. 1 (culture & copyright)	
Week 15	April 30	Lecture 6, 7
	Read: Crockett on social media and political culture, Enlightenment	

Now – Pinker, Is the world getting better or worse?

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Course Readings/Materials:**

- All readings are posted to Canvas.

### **Use of Canvas in class**

In this class I use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. —to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

### **Grading Procedures:**

- Three exams \* 100 = 300
- Five in-class essays \* 10 = 50
- Research studies participation \* 10 = 30
- One YouTube video 20 = 20
- **Total points in class = 400**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Number Grade (%)</b>
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A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-.89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	66-69.99
D	63-66.99
D-	60-62.99

#### **In-class activities:**

- There will be five in-class essay activities worth 10 points each. The lecture days for these in-class activities will be chosen randomly, so coming to class is important in order to complete them.
- **Free pass rules (Caution! Some people find this complicated but it's not.):** You will get one “free pass” to miss one of the in-class essays and have the chance to complete a make-up in-class essay at the end of the semester. You only get one free pass for the entire semester, so use it wisely. If you wish to use your free pass, you must email the TA or me *before* the missed class period begins to inform us that you would like to use your free pass. You must explicitly state that you would like to use your free pass, or else you will be responsible for the missed points. Once you’ve done that you no longer have a free pass whether there’s an essay that day or not. Provided that we have such an email from you before the class

period begins, even if it is one minute before our class period, you may use your free pass for that day. Once you have used your free pass you may not use it again that semester, even if no in-class activity was assigned for that day. To use your free pass and actually get credit, you have to be at the last lecture where I administer the make up. So having a free pass does not ensure that you get credit. It just allows you to get credit if you attend the final lecture.

# Academic Integrity

## University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code. **[See the UT Honor Code above.]** Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Collaboration is allowed only for the in-class activities assigned in this course.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

## Other University Notices and Policies

### Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

- All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay

current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

## **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

**Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for\\_cstudents.php](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.**