

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for SOC 12

POPULAR CULTURE

Effective: Fall 2012

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

SOC 12 — POPULAR CULTURE — 3.00 units

The course explores the historical, theoretical, political, and economic factors that influence the creation and diffusion of popular culture. It examines the impact of technological innovation and globalization on how popular culture is consumed and how this affects society.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Identify various theories of popular culture
- B. Outline the various processes of globalizing popular culture
- C. Apply content analysis methodology to various popular culture mediums
- D. Identify the impact of the growing consumption culture on our daily lives
- E. Identify the impact of popular culture consumption on our political processes
- F. Outline the growing role of popular culture in the various stages of socialization

V. CONTENT:

- A. Defining popular culture
 1. In terms of content - 'High' v. 'low' culture
 2. In terms of production - 'select' as opposed to 'mass's
 3. In terms of organization - 'individual' or 'authentic' v. 'corporate' or 'inauthentic'
- B. History of popular culture
 1. Folk culture
 2. Impact of rise of literacy rates/printing technology
 3. Impact of photographic, film, video and internet technology
- C. Popular culture theory
 1. Adorno, Marxism, the Frankfurt School
 2. Leavinism
 3. Culturalism
 4. Structuralism
 5. Poststructuralism
 6. Feminism and Queer Theory
 7. 'Spectacle' culture
- D. Globalization and popular culture
 1. The debate over cultural imperialism
 2. Homogenization of culture (e.g. McDonaldization, Hollywoodization, etc.)
 3. Local adaptation of western cultural products (creating new localized meaning of the afore-mentioned McDonalds, etc.)
 4. Cultural resistance (the re-emergence and new markets for traditional culture)
 5. Fusion culture - the merging of different forms of popular culture (such as food, dance, etc)
 6. Western media monopolies v. localized media monopolies (e.g. Hong Kong, Brazil, Egypt, India)
 7. The impact of globalization on fashion
 8. The impact of globalization on toy production and sales
- E. Reading popular culture - how to do content analysis
 1. Images of class
 2. Images of gender
 3. Images of race
 4. Images of sexuality

- F. Consumerism, mass media, and advertising
 - 1. Defining 'consumption culture'
 - 2. Fast food industry - advertising and consumption habits
 - 3. Alcohol and cigarettes - advertising and consumption habits
 - 4. Images of male and female sexuality
- G. Popular culture and politics: The News Industry
 - 1. History of journalism and television news
 - 2. Edward Murrow and 1950s/1960s investigative journalism
 - 3. The introduction 'edutainment' and 'news magazines' - the introduction of 'spectacle'
 - 4. The ratings v. accuracy debate
 - 5. The new 'Culture of Fear'
- H. A new generation: Children's popular culture
 - 1. Challenges of researching children: understanding agency, being clouded by politics, etc.
 - 2. Television research
 - 3. Music research
 - 4. Internet research
 - 5. Research on Disney Corporation

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Practicum's for content analysis - direct application of methodology
- C. Films
- D. **Discussion** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Content Analysis Paper
 - 1. Watch an episode of Disney's Kim Possible. Do a content analysis of gender (modes of speech, agency v. victimization, physical attributes, etc.) Does Kim Possible follow the traditional representations of femininity and masculinity as discussed in your reading? What 'lessons' in norms and value construction remain the same? What 'lessons' are different? How are girls and boys likely to 'play' Kim Possible?
- B. Reading
 - 1. Both articles and full works such as Barkin's American Television News

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
 - 1. Exams/Tests
 - 2. Papers
 - 3. Group Projects
- B. **Frequency**
 - 1. 2 - 3 exams
 - 2. 1 term paper
 - 3. 1 group project

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Crothers, Lane. *Globalization and Popular Culture*. 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, 2009.
- 2. Barkin, Steve. *American Television News: The Media Marketplace and the Public Interest*. 1st ed., W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.
- 3. Glassner, Barry. *The Culture of Fear*. 1st ed., Oxford University Press, 2010.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. None