Dear Students,

Welcome to American Studies 7! We will take an interdisciplinary approach utilizing theories and methods from history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology in order to dissect how popular culture informs the construction of various American identities. We will deconstruct how race, class, and gender identities have been historically constructed through various means of popular culture and tease out the meaning and functions in American society.

Best,
Professor Hong

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course examines how popular culture contributes to the search for meaning in everyday American life. Various forms of popular culture including music, film, television, advertising, sports, fashion, design, toys, magazines, comic books, and cyber culture will be analyzed. Students will assess how American popular culture reveals historical forces at work that influence our lives.

Required Text

3. Articles posted on myetudes.org

Contact Info:

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Phone: (310) 660-3593 ext. 3756

Office Hours:
M/T/W/Th: 7:15 am-7:45 am (SOCS 209)
M/W: 12:45 pm-1:15 pm (SOCS 209)
T/Th: 11:00 am-Noon (SOCS 110)
Course Objectives

1. Define and apply culture theory to American popular culture in terms of what is distinctly American and popular culture.

2. Identify and distinguish between various forms of popular culture, such as high-brow, low-brow, and youth culture.

3. Identify innovations and trends that appear in the Gilded Age and analyze their role in reflecting and shaping contemporary concerns and expectations.

4. Assess several innovations in popular culture that appear at the turn of the 20th century and can be associated with the emergence of modernity in the United States.

5. Define major historical, political, social, and economic forces and interpret their influence on American popular culture from Prohibition through the end of the Great Depression.

6. Differentiate and recognize the merits and dangers of popular culture masked within media structures such as film, music, and comic books.

7. Follow the evolution of the American aesthetic and analyze how popular culture created an identity that was distinctly American.

8. Identify and examine social, economic, and political influences on American popular culture.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. In a written assignment, oral presentation or creative work, students will apply interdisciplinary methodologies to develop an original argument about American popular culture and use those methods to prove the validity of their interpretation.

Expectations and Goals

This is your education and your space to learn. I expect you to complete your reading assignments before the start of class and complete your assignments on time. Conversations regarding popular culture without the proper historical and theoretical background contained in your readings will prevent our class from having critical dialog and lead to a superficial understanding of the topic. Furthermore, without this preparation you will not be able to fully understand and engage in class discussion. I encourage you to push yourself and contribute to class discussions and ask questions. The quality of the course is dependent on how much time and effort you contribute.
Title IX Employee Reporting Obligations:

El Camino College is committed to protecting the safety of our students. If you have been a victim of misconduct/assault (including experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and intimate partner violence), help is available. You can:

1) Speak with an instructor. By law, faculty must report to the Office of Staff and Student Diversity any information about sexual or gender-based misconduct shared by students in person, via electronic communication and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. Once an incident has been reported you can decide whether to cooperate with the investigation.

2) Speak with a psychologist at Student Health. This assistance is free and confidential – psychologists are not required to report to the Office of Staff and Student Diversity. To schedule an appointment, call the Student Health Center at 310.660.3643 or visit their website: [http://www.elcamino.edu/studentservices/health/](http://www.elcamino.edu/studentservices/health/)

3) Contact the Office of Staff and Student Diversity at 310.660.3813 or visit their website for more information about resources on and off campus: [http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/hr/diversity/](http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/hr/diversity/)

Student Resources and Student Success Act:

Student Resources: Your success is the number one priority at El Camino College. College resources to help you succeed include computer labs, tutoring centers, health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. For a comprehensive list of Academic Resources and Support Programs, visit: [http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/vpas/aims/aims_docs/ARSP.pdf](http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/vpas/aims/aims_docs/ARSP.pdf)

Student Success Act: New state regulations may affect your eligibility for financial aid, your registration priority, and your ability to repeat classes. For more information, visit: [http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/vpas/aims/aims_docs/S3PF15.pdf](http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/vpas/aims/aims_docs/S3PF15.pdf). After completing 15 units or prior to the end of the third semester, all students must declare a major and complete a comprehensive educational plan. Schedule an appointment to see a counselor for an up-to-date educational plan by visiting: [https://www.elcamino.edu/studentservices/co/appointments.asp](https://www.elcamino.edu/studentservices/co/appointments.asp)
Assignment

Reaction Papers

Reaction Papers are worth 25 points each. These are short papers that will require you to respond to a prompt I will discuss and post on Etudes. They are informal in style, but must be proof read and edited before submission. Reaction papers should be 250-500 words long or about 1-2 pages. Please submit completed work to Etudes.

Popular Culture Poster

The Popular Culture Poster is worth 25 points. You will put together a poster collage of the popular culture surrounding your childhood. You will bring them to class and we will have walking gallery where you will present your poster and discuss the impact of popular culture and your childhood. The presentation should be around 3-5 minutes long.

Western Movie Paper

The Western Movie Paper is worth 100 points. It should be about 1,250 words pages long or about 5 pages. You will select two movies (or television series) of the Western genre to compare. The first should have been produced before 1970 and the second within the last 20 years. You will also use the chapter from Richard Slotkin’s Gunfighter Nation posted on Etudes to frame your analysis. You must address the Western genre as being an integral part of American myth making and shaping a particular American ideology. Guidelines and rubric will be posted on Etudes. Please ask questions during week 4 when we address Westerns.

Book Review

This book review is based on Eric Avila’s book, Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight, worth 75 points. This book review should be about 750 words or 3 pages. Remember a book review is not a book report and is not a summary of analysis that identifies the argument and then uses the evidence presented to support or reject the author was successful in convincing the reader of his or her argument.

In Class Assignments

Are worth 25 points each and cannot be made up.

Grading Scale

A: 400-360
B: 359-320
C: 319-280
D: 279-240
F: 239-0

Due Dates:
1. Reaction #1-9/8
2. Pop Culture Poster-10/6
3. Western Movie Paper-10/27
4. Book Review-11/10
5. Research Paper-12/1
6. In Class #1-12/6
7. In Class #2 12/15
8. Reaction #2-12/15
Research Paper

This assignment requires students to demonstrate their understanding of the influences of popular culture through critically assessing and analyzing the underlying ideological scripts present in some form of popular culture of their choosing. The paper will be 1,250-1,750 words (5-7 pages) in length and is worth 100 points. Students are expected to not only identify ideological influences but also connect them to the larger social and/or historical forces that feed into and out of those social scripts.

Topic
The object of your analysis needs to be drawn from the world of popular culture. Examples include movies, television, music, sports, toys/games, advertising, the news, etc. Keep in mind that your topic should be recognizable as a form of popular culture to any reasonable person. For example, studying gang violence is not an appropriate topic. However, studying representations of gang violence in video games would be appropriate. Your paper should contain the following elements:

Thesis Statement
What is your topic? What example(s) from popular culture will you be analyzing? What will you be looking for, in terms of ideological scripts? What is your argument?

Historical Context
What is the historical context of this paper? For instance, if your paper deals with the stereotype of African Americans in film, you would discuss the emergence of the image of African Americans and the functions of these particular tropes in film.

Analysis
This sections breaks down what conclusions you have reached based on your research.
What kind of ideological scripts do you think are operating?
What relationship do you think these scripts have to larger social tensions/anxieties/fantasies, etc?
How might we explain these specific scripts by examining social trends?

Conclusion
Sum up what you learned.
There will be a grading rubric posted on Etudes.
### Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>8/30</th>
<th>9/1</th>
<th><strong>Franz: Ch 1- Why Study Popular Culture?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td><strong>Franz: Ch 2-Popular Culture Expresses and Constructs Race: Minstrel Shows Across Two Centuries, 1850-1950</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Avila: Ch 1. Chocolate Cities and Vanilla Suburbs: Race, Space, and the New &quot;New Mass Culture&quot; of Postwar America</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper #1: Due 9/8 via Etudes by 11:59 PM</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td><strong>Franz: Ch 3-Nineteenth-Century Audience Contribute to Popular Culture, 1849-1880</strong></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>9/22</td>
<td><strong>Franz: Ch 4-World’s Fairs, Circuses, and Wild West Shows Express Ideas U.S. Imperialism, 1876-1918</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Avila: Ch 2-The Nation’s &quot;White Spot&quot;: Racializing Postwar Los Angeles</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Etudes: Gunfighter Nation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>9/29</td>
<td><strong>Franz: Ch 5- Workers Demand Leisure Time, 1866-1914</strong></td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>10/4</td>
<td>10/6</td>
<td><strong>Franz: Ch 6-Movies, Gender, and Making of Fans, 1910-1935</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Avila: Ch 3-The Spectacle of Urban Blight: Hollywood’s Rendition of a Black Los Angeles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Popular Culture Poster Due: 10/6 (Please bring to class)</strong></td>
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| Week 7 | 10/11  
| 10/13  | Franz: Ch 7 - Advertising and the Culture of Consumption, 1880-1930  
|        | Avila: Ch 4 - "A Rage for Order": Disneyland and the Suburban Ideal  |
| Week 8 | 10/18  
| 10/20  | Franz: Ch 8 - Cars as Popular Culture: Democracy, Racial Difference, and New Technology, 1920-1939  
|        | Avila: Ch 6 - The Sutured City: Tales of Progress and Disaster in the Freeway Metropolis  |
| Week 9 | 10/25  
| 10/27  | Franz: Ch 9 - Radio Enters the Home, 1920-1942  
|        | Avila: Ch 5 - Suburbanizing the City Center: The Dodgers Move West  |
| Week 10| 11/1   
| Week 11| 11/8 (ELECTION DAY!)  
| 11/10  | Franz: Ch 11 - Television Become Part of the Family, 1955-1965  |
|        | Western Movie Paper Due: 10/27 via Etudes by 11:59 PM  |
|        | Book Review Due: 11/10 via Etudes by 11:59 PM  |
| Week 12| 11/15  
| 11/17  | Franz: Ch 12 - Youth and Popular Culture during the Cold War, 1952-1960  |
| Week 13| 11/22  
| 11/24 (NO CLASS)  | Franz: Ch 13 - Popular Culture and Globalization: Beyond Imperialism  |
| Week 14| 11/29  
| 12/1   | Franz: Ch 14 - New Media, New Networks, New Content, New Methodologies: Popular Culture’s Past Illuminates Is Future  |
|        | Research Paper Due: 12/1 via Etudes by 11:59 PM  |
Your Responsibilities

1. Arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class period.

2. Complete readings before class.

3. Timely submission of assignments. No late work is accepted without consent of instructor.

4. Refrain for using electronic devices in class—includes texting, recording, and taking pictures.

5. Participate, ask questions, and be active in the learning process.

Attendance Policy

Being on time is a very important component of a college class. If you are not present when attendance recording has been completed you will be marked absent. If you are marked absent more than three times in the course of a semester, you may be dropped from the course. Please email me or see me if you feel your absence should be excused.

**Failure to adhere to the above may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the following:**

**Student Code of Conduct**
http://www.elcamino.edu/studentservices/activities/codeofconduct.asp

**Student Rights and Grievances Procedure 5530**
http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/policies.asp