

This is a sample syllabus only. The instructor may make changes to the syllabus in future courses.

**Popular Culture  
Sociology 316 - 1B**

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Office Hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
and by appointment

**Course Text:**

Grazian, David. 2010. *Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society*. New York: Norton.

Jonshon-Woods, Toni. 2007. *Blame Canada: South Park and Contemporary Culture*. New York: Continuum.

**Course Description:**

Relationship between popular culture, our cultural heritage, and present cultural identity. Connections with big business, music, sports, politics, film and mass media. Analyze cultural objects (movies), compare past mindsets with the present. (UAB Undergraduate Catalog 2014-2015).

In this course, we will examine popular culture through the three primary sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict or the social power perspective, and interactionism. We will address several questions. What is popular culture? How it is different from culture more generally and other types of culture? How does it develop, maintain and change? How does popular culture influence individuals, groups and society? We will examine themes of race, class, gender, commodification, globalization, subculture groups, identity, resistance, and domination in reference to popular culture This class will give students the knowledge and skills to critically examine popular culture. Students will be asked to move beyond their everyday understanding of popular culture to see how it is shaped by society (on the individual and structural/institutional levels), and conversely how society is shaped by it.

**Course Objective:**

1. Understand and analyze why the popular becomes "popular."
2. Discuss and apply sociological theories to the analysis popular culture.
3. Discuss and compare high culture, mass culture, low culture, subculture and counterculture, etc.
4. Examine the various elements of popular culture and how they inform our attitudes, behavior, and society.
5. Discuss the relationship between popular culture and gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, region and sexuality.
6. Discuss popular culture within context of individual, social, historical, political, economic, and global dimensions.

## Course Requirements:

**Attendance:** Attendance is highly recommended, and attendance will be taken daily. While attendance is not graded, it will be used to gauge student commitment. If you are absent from class, for any reason, it is your responsibility to let me know. You should also obtain class notes from another student. All power point presentations will be post on Canvas. I do not provide copies of my course notes.

**Assignments:** There will be five (5) assignments over the course of the semester. Each assignment will be worth 20 pts. The assignments will vary in task, from writing a critical commentary, a personal reflection paper, to group projects involving conducting social experiments. The assignments will be posted on Canvas after their announcement in class. You will be given 7 days to complete assignments.

**Critical Writing:** There are **Fourteen (14)** critical writing opportunities over videos/films we will watch throughout the semester. You will be required to complete **Two (2)** critical writings over the course of the semester, and only the top three critical writing grades will count toward one's final grade. You are encouraged to write about topics/chapters you find most interesting. Critical writings are due the **each Friday at 11:59pm** the week they are assigned (but you are encouraged to turn them in early).

The **FIRST** writing must be completed on *or before* \_\_\_\_\_.

The **SECOND** writing must be completed on *or before* \_\_\_\_\_.

Each commentary is worth 50 points. The purpose of the writing activities is to apply critical thinking skills to address the social problem addressed in the film.

*Directions:* Within each chapter section, there is a link to a critical writing assignment. The critical writings provide students with the opportunity to articulate an academic argument, or take a well-thought out sociological position on the week's film selection **AND relating this back to the class reading material.**

The paper should be a well-written 2-page (double spaced, 1" margins, 11 pt. Cambria font) essay discussing a point/perspective **integrating the week's chapter reading material with the film.** A superb paper would be well organized and focused. Remember you have limited space to make your argument, so being concise is paramount. A remarkable paper would also synthesize information from various sources (chapter readings, the discussion board, and outside readings).

**THIS IS NOT A FILM SUMMARY; you need to integrate sociological ideas from the text, not just summarize the film, or play film critic (I want to know what you learned from the film, not what you think about the film).**

**Section Exams:** There will be **FOUR (4)** section exams during the semester. Each exam will cover 2-5 chapters and assigned readings. Each exam consists of multiple choice and essay questions (6-8 sentences). The purpose of the section exam is to test your conceptual and factual knowledge about the section material covered, including **films** we watch in class.

- Mini Exam I: Part I 50pts
- Exam II: Part II 75pts
- Exam III: Part III 75pts
- Exam IV: Part IV 100pts

**Points:**

Assignment	5 graded x 20pts each	= 100pts
Critical Writings	2 graded x 50pts each	= 100pts
<u>Exams</u>	<u>4 exams x 50-130 each</u>	<u>= 300pts</u>
Total		500pts

**LETTER GRADES:**

<b>447-500 = A</b>
<b>397-446 = B</b>
<b>347-396 = C</b>
<b>297-346 = D</b>
<b>0-296 = F</b>

**Communications:**

All official correspondence will be sent **ONLY** to the @uab.edu address. All students are responsible for ensuring that the correct e-mail address is listed in Canvas by the beginning of Week 1. UAB E-mail is the only method I will use to electronically communicate with students. It is your responsibility to make sure a valid email UAB address is provided. Failure on your part to do so can result in you missing important information that could affect your grade.

**Drop/Add:**

According to UAB policy \_\_\_\_\_ is the last day to add/drop this course. The last day to withdraw from this course with a grade of "W" is \_\_\_\_\_. Students registering late will be able to make up all class material.

**Accommodation of Religious Beliefs:**

Religious beliefs shall be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements. Please notify the professor in advance if there is a conflict.

**Reasonable Accommodations:**

Any students who need reasonable accommodations are invited to share these concerns or requests with the professor. All accommodations must be approved by Disability Support Services (DSS), If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call 934-4205 or visit DSS at 516 Hill University Center.

**Academic Honest Policy:**

UAB Faculty expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Academic dishonesty and misconduct includes, but is not limited to, acts of abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation. Candidates are expected to honor the UAB Academic Honor Code. Please consult this resource for additional information regarding the specific procedures to be undertaken when a student violates the UAB Academic Honor Code.

<https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/honor-code>

**Let me make it clear:** if you cheat or plagiarize you will **fail** the course and your name will be forwarded to the University Compliance Office.

**Make-up Policy:**

If you must miss a commentary, discussion, quiz or exam, you will need to schedule a time to make-up the assignment *before* your absence. Only in extreme cases will this policy be modified. **REMEMBER**, not all quizzes, discussions, and papers are used to calculate final grades, you may not need of a make-up.

**Etiquette:**

Respect fellow students and myself. Topics in this class can become sensitive and someone (including myself) may say something with which you disagree. Critical discussion is encouraged, but respect differences of theoretical perspective. All class discussions must be sociological in nature.

**Reservation:**

I reserve the right to make changes in this syllabus to better serve the class's needs. Any changes will be announced in class in advance.

SAMPLE