

Brescia University College
English 2017: Reading Popular Culture
Summer Evening 2016: Mondays & Wednesdays 6p.m.-9p.m.
BR -302

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Office Hours: Mondays, 5p.m.-6p.m. (and after classes)

Course Description: This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary critical study of popular culture in a globalized world. We will explore theoretical approaches to cultural processes of production, consumption and representation. Texts to be studied include films, television shows, music, novels, performance texts, and content from media streaming services. Additionally, we will analyze culturally significant practices such as eating, shopping, and tourism. Methods of analysis used will include ethnography, feminist methods and theories, discourse analysis, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and theories of globalization(s), film and visual culture. Throughout the course, we will reflect on our own roles as consumers and producers of popular culture. We will talk about distinctions between so-called “high” and “low” culture and explore the dynamics of subcultures. The role of popular culture in political activism will lead us to a consideration of how (or whether) it is possible to frame popular culture as global. This course may also contain a significant unit on law/crime and popular culture.

Learning Outcomes: Following successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Engage critically and theoretically with various popular culture texts;
- Demonstrate how power and privilege are implicated in cultural processes of production, consumption and representation;
- Develop analytical positions on the global circulation of cultural meanings;
- Apply enhanced oral communication skills to complex topics of discussion;
- Research and write critically and creatively on topics associated with popular culture and globalization.

Required Texts:

Kaling, Mindy. *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (And Other Concerns)*. NY: Three Rivers Press, 2012. Print.

Maggs, Sam. *The Fangirl's Guide to the Galaxy*. NY: Quirk Books, 2015.

O'Brien, Susie and Imre Szeman. *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*. Third Edition. Toronto: Nelson, 2014. Print.

Weir, Andy. *The Martian*. NY: Crown Publishers, 2014. Print.

Selected journal articles and theory texts (available online) will also form part of the required reading for the course.

Required Film and Visual Texts:

Several films, perhaps including the following, will be screened in class. Note: the visual material on this course will be discussed critically, and our considerations of it will be theoretically rigorous. A sophisticated application of theoretical frameworks will be expected.

As part of the course, students will be required to attend a group screening/talk at Silver City, Masonville Place in London during class hours. Details will be given in class.

- *China Blue*. Micha Peled, Director. Teddy Bear Films Inc., 2005, Film.
- *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. Banksy, Director. Paranoid Pictures, 2010. Film.
- *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. Lasse Hallström, Director. Helen Mirren, Actor. Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2014. Film.
- *Mean Girls*. Mark Waters, Director. Tina Fey, Screenplay. Paramount Pictures, 2004, Film. or *Pitch Perfect 2*. Elizabeth Banks, Director. Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson Actors. Universal Studios, 2015, Film.

We will also screen selected material from online media streaming service providers.

Evaluation:

Instructions for the assignments will be explained in class.

Quiz #1	In-class	June 1st	15%
Quiz #2	In-class	June 22 nd	15%
Test	In-class	July 6 th	30%
Presentation	In-class	Various dates in July	10%
Final Assignment		July 27	20%
Participation/Group Exercises (includes completion of short written assignment for June 20 th)	In-class	Weekly	10%

Course Schedule:

The course schedule is flexible and may be altered depending on the length of class discussions and screenings. This course schedule lists major readings/screenings . Students must consult the OWL page for the course as details of additional weekly (online) reading assignments will be posted regularly. Students will also be required to screen visual material available on the internet.

Summer courses are compressed; expect to do several hours of work a week in addition to class time. This is an English course—students will be required to read and write intensively. Students who have other obligations this summer (preparing for standardized tests, working full-time etc.) are encouraged to organize their schedules to ensure they can devote time to the course.

Note: No classes will be held on Victoria Day (May 23rd) or Canada Day (July 1st).

<u>Week One</u> May 9 & 11	Introduction to Course	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 1
<u>Week Two</u> May 16 & 18	Socio-historical Perspectives on Popular Culture	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 2
<u>Week Three</u> May 25	Popular Culture Group Exercise	
<u>Week Four</u> May 30	Representation and the Construction of Social Reality	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 3
June 1	Quiz #1	
<u>Week Five</u> June 6	“Not All Stories End in a Wedding”	<u>Read:</u> <i>Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?</i> (Kaling)
June 8	The Production of Popular Culture	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 4
<u>Week Six</u> June 13	The Production of Popular Culture Screening: <i>Mean Girls</i> or <i>Pitch Perfect 2</i>	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 4
June 15	Research Methods for Popular Culture Studies	
<u>Week Seven</u> June 20	The Consuming Life Participation Assignment due	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 5 and Malcolm Gladwell articles
June 22	Quiz #2 Screening: <i>China Blue</i>	
<u>Week Eight</u> June 27	Identity / Science and Pop Culture <i>The Martian</i>	<u>Read</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpts. 6&7 <u>Read:</u> <i>The Martian</i>
June 29	<i>The Martian</i>	
<u>Week Nine</u> July 4	Screening: <i>Exit Through the Gift Shop</i>	
July 6	Test	
<u>Week Ten</u>	Subcultures and Countercultures	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 8

July 11	Subcultures	<u>Read:</u> <i>The Fangirl's Guide to the Galaxy</i>
July 13	Fans and Fandom	
<u>Week Eleven</u> July 18 & 20	Presentations	
<u>Week Twelve</u> July 25	Globalization and Popular Culture Screening: <i>The Hundred-Foot Journey</i>	<u>Read:</u> <i>Popular Culture</i> Chpt. 9
July 27	Final Assignment Due	

Copies of Work:

Students must keep copies of all of their written work. Please save each file on an external hard drive or memory stick in addition to a saved copy on your computer/laptop. In case of lost essays, students are responsible for providing a replacement. All written assignments are subject to plagiarism checking.

Late Assignments:

The instructor will deduct 5% per day for late assignments (including weekends). Hard copies of assignments are due in class on the day indicated. Electronic submission of assignments is not accepted. (For example, the following situation is not appropriate: "I am in Toronto for a wedding. Can I just email you my assignment?") **No make-up exams or quizzes will be provided.** A grade of zero will be entered for students who do not write the quizzes or exams (subject to the policy on academic accommodation). Students who do not show up to deliver their presentation on the scheduled date will receive a grade of 0% (subject to the policy on academic accommodation).

Expectations for Class Participation;

This course encourages students to take personal responsibility for learning, and all students ought to prepare thoroughly for each class by reading, taking notes, and reflecting critically on the assigned material. All members of the class ought to be prepared to contribute to class discussions, to listen to others, and to respond to the queries of others. Some of the topics this course explores may be unsettling for some students; therefore, it is essential that students frame their comments in a respectful manner and demonstrate respect for the ideas that others articulate.

Mere attendance in class will not constitute sufficient participation for this course. In assigning participation marks for this course, the instructor will assess the following:

- 1) your contribution to group learning;
- 2) your attitude to learning;
- 3) your knowledge of the subject matter;
- 4) your ability to develop ideas and think critically;
- 5) your attendance at class film screenings and participation in subsequent discussion; and

6) your oral communication skills.

Students who miss a class are responsible for obtaining lecture notes from another student. The instructor does not give out lecture notes, nor will she meet with students to re-deliver a lecture that they have missed. It is in the interest of each student to keep up with the reading and class discussions. The instructor will not respond to emails asking whether we covered “anything important” in class. Emailing the instructor to indicate that you will not be in class that evening does not influence the instructor’s assessment of your participation mark.

Format of Written Assignments:

All written assignments, except in-class tests, must be written and formatted in accordance with MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines, APA guidelines or in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The Library at Brescia has copies of both the *MLA Guide for Writers of Research Papers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Information on *Chicago Style* can be found at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Students in this course will be expected to express their ideas clearly and use proper grammar. Serious grammatical errors such as sentence fragments, comma splices, improper paragraphing and errors of agreement obscure the meaning of written work. **This is an English course: papers and in-class tests will be graded according to form and content;** therefore, students should proofread their work in order to ensure that it is free from grammatical errors. Any student who submits a written assignment that is very difficult to comprehend because of grammatical or stylistic errors will earn a failing grade on that assignment. If you are concerned about the quality of your writing, please visit the Writing Centre.

All assignments must be typed with one-inch margins on each side. Please do not use a font smaller than 12-point. The lines of the main text should be double-spaced, but lines in block quotations (which should also be indented), endnotes/ footnotes, and bibliographies should all be single-spaced. Pages must be numbered consecutively (exclusive of the title page). Please include your name and ID number on your essay, along with the course number and instructor’s name. All references (bibliographies/works cited pages) must be written in either *MLA*, *APA* or *Chicago Style* format. Students will not earn marks if written assignments (completed at home) are formatted incorrectly.

Marking and Grade Point Scale:

Note: The instructor will not be influenced by student requests for particular grades (as in, “I need 85% to get into Ivey”). The instructor carefully explains the assessment criteria for assignments, and students should take care to read/listen to this information. Form and content are considered in the assessment of all assignments.

All grades achieved in the course assignments are given in numerical form with respect to the following grading system:

90-100	(A+) work of excellence; one could expect little more from a student at this level
80-89	(A) superior work, exhibiting well-developed critical skills, and a sophisticated approach

70-79	(B) good to very good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
60-69	(C) competent work, meeting basic requirements
50-59	(D) fair work, minimally acceptable
0-49	(F) failure; unsatisfactory work, not meeting basic requirements

Statement on Academic Offences:

Please consult the Brescia Academic Policies and regulations document, paying particular attention to the section on plagiarism and academic misconduct.

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.html>. The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.

