

English 3830: History of the Literature of Popular Culture in English
Fall 2001
Lecture/3 Credits (3-0-0) UT
Section A2

SEP. 24 2001

*** Please note that the prerequisite for this course is English 1000 or English 1010 or equivalent

Louise Saldanha
office: C308
office hours: Tuesday 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Thursday 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
or by appointment

telephone: 539 2869
e-mail: saldanha@gprc.ab.ca

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS CLASS:

- 1) Plan enough time to get the assignments done.
- 2) Read actively, take notes, jot down questions as you read.
- 3) Some reading assignments are longer than others; plan your time accordingly.
- 4) Take responsibility for the success of your small group discussions. Since I can't be everywhere (and since I don't think my role is to police your discussions), it's up to each of you to use your time wisely in your small group. This is your opportunity to discuss issues we have not covered in the larger group and to ask questions of your classmates that you may not feel comfortable asking of the larger group.
- 5) Come to my office with your questions. It is difficult to strike a balance in this course between those of you who already have a strong background in literature, and those of you who have less experience with literature and are unfamiliar with literary concepts/conventions; therefore, it is important that you let me know if you are having difficulties, or if you feel that you want more in-depth discussion.

course description:

This course examines aspects of popular culture not as a set of written texts, but as sets of places, media personalities, and events, which create culture(s) in the West that are sometimes "of the people," sometimes manufactured "for the people," and sometimes a bit of both. Our discussions include examinations of Disney, Hollywood, the evening news, soap operas, shopping malls, video games, hockey, the Internet, "trash" fiction, among other cultural texts. By looking at aspects of popular culture practices and theories, we will interrogate the relationship between mass culture and society, with a view towards understanding popular culture's role in consolidating (or eroding) identities based upon race, sexuality, class, gender, etc.

course expectations:

This will be a discussion-oriented course, and so you will be expected to participate actively in this class by contributing regularly to class discussions. You will be expected to attend class regularly and are responsible for obtaining information given in classes you miss, including handouts. Since we meet only once a week, if you miss one class you have missed a week's worth of material!

Because a large part of this class will revolve around discussion, and because we will often be engaged in talking about issues about which we care deeply, it is crucial that we establish and are committed to respect as our primary ground rule. A respectful learning environment means that we should participate with open minds in order that we all feel comfortable sharing our thoughts and ideas, that we all listen respectfully to one another, and that we encourage others who have not spoken to speak. Discussions must, thus, be engaged with a sense of responsibility to contribute constructively and to move the conversation forward.

TEXTS

Judy Giles and Tim Middleton, *Studying Culture: A Practical Introduction*

Reserve Readings (in Library) [indicated with (R) on schedule]

On-line articles [indicated with * on schedule]

EVALUATION

weekly reading responses	10%
group class presentation	20%
journal	30%
final exam	30%
class participation	10% (this includes contributions to class discussions, improvement, attendance, participation in small group work, as well as participation in large class discussions)

OTHER STUFF:

- 1) Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for obtaining information given in classes you miss. I am not able to keep track of who did not receive handouts, so be responsible for yourself.
 - 2) Attendance Policy: You are allowed one unexcused absence. This absence requires no explanation on your part—it is a “freebie.” An excused absence needs to be cleared with me and usually requires documentation. Any unexcused absences beyond one will lower your grade and your participation grade will be affected.
 - 3) Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements for late submissions have been made with me at least two days prior to the date on which the assignment is due.
 - 4) All work must be submitted personally to me. Keep a copy of all your written work.
 - 5) Please see the College Policy on plagiarism under “Academic Conduct” in the Calender. Plagiarism is never allowed. Plagiarism includes representing the ideas or words of another person as your own without proper acknowledgment and extends to the work of other students, the Internet, books, magazines, journals, TV shows, films, etc. This would not only include direct copying without citing the source, but paraphrasing as well.
-

ASSIGNMENTS

1) *weekly reading responses (10%)*

These will be approximately one typed page in length and will respond to the readings assigned. These are due each Monday and are to be submitted to me at the end of the class. NO LATE RESPONSES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

The main goal is simply to respond to the readings assigned, and why you think you responded the way you did.

Reading responses should follow the format outlined in the handout provided in class.

Class presenters are not required to complete the reading responses for the week they present.

2) *group class presentation (20%)*

Your group will be responsible for presenting an artifact or item of “local” popular culture that connects to or reflects the readings assigned for that week. You will need to bring this item to class, or, if this item is not easily transportable, come prepared with slides, video clips, photographs, overheads, etc. of the item. This item must represent Grande Prairie culture in some way. If you are unable to locate something that represents Grande Prairie, you may present something that represents Albertan culture, or, as a last resort, something that represents Canadian culture.

Your role will be to present your artifact as a “local” example of what you perceive as the main

ideas in the readings assigned for that week. Presentations should run between 15-20 minutes and should promote discussion, even controversy, and should be interesting (i.e. no boring lecturing). Use handouts (I can photocopy these if you give them to me in advance) or overheads or power point to present factual material.

Minimum expectations for the presentation:

- a) a description of the item or artifact and why you chose it as representative of local culture. Focus here on the form as well as the content.
- b) how this item or artifact connects to some of the main ideas in the readings assigned for that week. Use specific references to whichever readings are relevant.
- c) what the item of artifact reveals about local culture. What assumptions are embedded in the item or artifact regarding race, class, gender, sexuality, physical ability, etc.? Does this item or artifact promote the status quo or challenge it?

After the presentation, it will be the group's responsibility to facilitate class discussion.

Each group member must participate in the preparation of the presentation as well as the presentation itself.

I strongly recommend that you discuss your item/artifact with me at least 10 days before your presentation to ensure that you are on the right track.

If you need photocopying, transparencies, or any other audio-visual equipment, let me know by the Thursday preceding your presentation.

3) journal (30%):

DUE: OCTOBER 1:	TWO JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE
NOVEMBER 5:	TWO JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE
ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 3:	TWO JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE

Your journal must be submitted in a notebook or duo-tang separate from the one you are using for your notes. Your journal may be typed. Please do not use point-form.

The reading journal consists of six responses to any of the assignments listed in the attached handout. Your grade will be based on the progress you show throughout the journals and the ways in which you demonstrate a concerted effort to achieve the analysis/critique work required for this assignment. This is why I require you to submit all your entries to me, including those I have already read, for each submission. If you are unclear about these requirements, or your progress within the context of these requirements, come and see me before the deadline (remember: if you cannot make my office hours, we can arrange an alternative time). **If you do not see me with your questions, I cannot help you.**

4) *final exam (30%)*

DUE: December 3, 2001

This will be a take home exam and will be distributed in advance of the due date.

5) *class participation (10%)*

This includes contributions to class discussions, improvement, attendance, participation in small group work, as well as participation in large class discussions)

SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE!!!!)

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on-line. For your convenience, they have been hyperlinked on the interactive course outline. Readings marked as (R) are on reserve in the library.

September 10

Introduction

September 17

What is Culture? (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

- Giles and Middleton, Chapter 1 (9 - 29)
- Grimes, "Pop Goes the Culture." (R)
- Felton, "Wrestling With Myself." (R)
- Stinati, "The Narrative and Ideology of the Hollywood Film." (R)
- Fiske, "The Jeaning of America." (R)
- Huey, "America's Hottest Export: Pop Culture" (* Expanded Academic Electronic Research Database)

September 24

Identity and Difference (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read five of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

- Giles and Middleton, Chapter 2 (30 - 55)
- Appleford, "Coming Out From Behind the Rocks: Constructs of the Indian in Recent U.S. and Canadian Cinema." (R)
- Appiah, "No Bad Nigger." (R)
- DeMott, "Visions of Black-White Friendship." (R)
- Boyle and Hanes, "For Men Who Play to Win: Media Sports and Gender." (R)
- Seiter, "Toy Based Video for Girls: *My Little Pony*." (R)
- Giroux, "Animating Youth: the Disarticulation of Children's Culture" (* <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux/Giroux2.html>)

October 1

Representation (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

- Giles and Middleton, Chapter 3 (56 - 80)
- Bobo, "*The Color Purple*: Black Women as Cultural Readers." (R)
- Ewen, "In the Shadow of the Image" (R)
- Coward, "Ideal Homes." (R)
- Berger, "Sex as Symbol in Fashion Advertising and Analyzing Signs and Sign Systems" (R)
- Hendershot, "*Sesame Street*: Cognition and Communications Imperialism." (R)
- Jenkins, "'Her Suffering Aristocratic Majesty': The Sentimental Values of *Lassie*." (R)

October 8

Thanksgiving (No Classes)

October 15

History (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read five of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 4 (81 - 103)

Wilson, "The Death of Princess Diana: Mourning a Very British Girl." (R)

Kotsopoulos, "Our Avonlea: Imagining Community in an Imaginary Past" (R)

Cameron and McGinnis, "Ambushed by Patriotism: The Wit, Wisdom, and Wimps of Heritage Minutes." (R)

Francis, "Marketing the Imaginary Indian." (R)

Wright, "The Structure of Myth and The Structure of the Western Film." (R)

October 22

Spaces and Places (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read three of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 5 (104 - 125)

Wilson, "Playing and Being Played: Experiencing West Edmonton Mall." (R)

M^cSorley, "Of Time and Place and Hockey." (R)

Nolan, "Memo to Sheila Copps: Forget Those Flags. The Slickest New Nationalism is in the Latest Wave of Beer Ads." (R)

Duncan, "American vs. Canadian TV Families: The Way We Would Like it to Be."

(*<http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/support/mediacy/tele/tvfamil.htm>)

October 29

High Culture/Popular Culture (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 7 (163 - 189)

Radway, "The Readers and their Romances." (R)

Dorfman and Mattelart, "How to Read Donald Duck and Other Innocent Literature for Children" (R)

Cawelti, "The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature." (R)

Malmgren, "Anatomy of Murder: Mystery, Detective, and Crime Fiction" (R)

Patrouch, "Some Thoughts on American SF" (R)

Shuker-Haines and Umphrey, "Gender (De)Mystified: Resistance and Recuperation in Hard-Boiled Female Detective Fiction." (R)

November 5

Subjects, Bodies, Selves (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 8 (190 - 212)
Hooks, "Straightening Our Hair" (R)
Leppert, "The Male Nude." (R)
Bordo, "Never Just Pictures." (R)
(Visual Essay) "Public Health Images." (R)
(Visual Essay) "Rewriting the Image" (R)

November 12

Consumption (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 9 (213 - 237)
Kincheloe, "M'Donald's, Power, and Children: Ronald M'Donald (aka Ray Kroc) Does It All For You." (R)
Szuchewycz and Sloniowski, "Media Bias: Slants on the News." (R)
Szuchewycz and Sloniowski, "Media Ownership: He Who Pays the Piper." (R)
Dorland, "The Last Circle of Journalism Hell: The Bargain Basement of the Tabloids." (R)
Chomsky, "A Propaganda Model" (R)
Postman, "The Peek-a-Boo World." (R)

November 19

Culture and Technology in the Late Twentieth Century (In addition to Giles and Middleton, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Giles and Middleton, Chapter 10 (238 - 258)
George and Trimbur, "Reading and Writing about Culture: The Case of Daytime Talk TV" (R)
Fischhoff, "Confessions of a TV Talk Show Shrink." (R)
Harrison, "The Importance of Being Oprah." (R)
Rapping, "In Praise of Roseanne." (R)
Gabler, "Grieving for the Camera." (R)
Clark, "Race, Class and Gender on 'The Cosby Show.'" (R)
Crosbie, "Hate in the Afternoon: Ecstasy Goes Underground on *The Young and Restless*." (R)

November 26

Culture and Technology in the Late Twentieth Century (cont'd) (in addition to finding an on-line article of your choice that focuses on Internet culture, read four of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Hamilton, "Sub-Alternet Counterpublics: Feminist Interventions into the Digital Public Sphere" (R)

Spender, "Education." (R)

Szuchewycz and Sloniowski, "Cyberpolitics: A Brave New World." (R)

Kadi, "The Internet is Four Inches Tall." (R)

Baym, "Interpreting Soap Operas and Creating Community: Inside a Fan-Mediated Culture" (R)

Spender, "Social Policy for Cyberspace."(R)

Winner, "Who Will We Be in Cyberspace?"

(* <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/pagere/tno/September-1995.html>)

December 3:

Popular Music (read six of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Craft, Cavicchi, and Keil, "My Music" (R)

Dyer, "The Sound of Music" (R)

Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music" (R)

Rose, "Prophets of Rage: Rap Music and the Politics of Black Cultural Expression" (R)

Cash, "Rebels With Sponsors" (R)

Fenster, "Genre and Form: The Development of the Country Music Video" (R)

Walser, "Forging Masculinity: Heavy-Metal Sounds and Images of Gender" (R)