

**English 3830: History of the Literature of Popular Culture**  
**Fall 2003**  
**Lecture/3 Credits (3-0-0) UT**  
**Section A2**

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

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office hours: Mondays 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
                  Thursdays 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
                  or by appointment

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**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.

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**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. Thus, discussions must be engaged with a sense of responsibility to contribute constructively and to move the conversation forward.

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### TEXTS

Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, eds. *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

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

On-line articles [indicated with \* on schedule]

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### 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)

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### 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 Calendar. 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.
  - 6) All assignments must be typed and double-spaced.
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## ASSIGNMENTS

### **1) *weekly reading responses (10%)***

These will be approximately one typed page (double-spaced) in length and will respond to the readings assigned for the week. These are due each Monday and are to be submitted to me at the end of the class. No late responses will be accepted.

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

A minimum of two of your reading responses will be, at some point during the semester, marked in detail and graded. These will be selected at random. The grade on the remaining reading responses submitted will be the average grade on the two (minimum) marked and graded in detail.

Assignments not submitted will receive a grade of 0.

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 in some way 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 30 – 40 minutes, 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), 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 or 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%):**

<b>DUE: September 22:</b>	<b>two Journal Entries Due</b>
<b>October 20 :</b>	<b>two Journal Entries Due</b>
<b>November 17:</b>	<b>two Journal Entries Due</b>

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

The reading journal consists of **six** responses to your experience of any of the popular cultural texts listed on the course outline (excluding the one you are using for your class presentation)—movies, leisure, advertising, etc. Your focus can be on one example (i.e. a specific television programme, a specific shop, a specific song, etc.) or on the cultural text in general. 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.**

No late journals will be accepted.

Each of your entries should show me that you have read and thought about the text, and should contain a substantial critique. To do this you won't be able to do an entry in any fewer than 2-3 double-spaced typed pages. Please carefully proofread your entries and ensure that they are without grammatical or mechanical errors.

Each entry must involve the following intellectual work:

i) level one: response

- What is the predominant effect of the popular cultural text on you? (pleasure, disgust, anxiety, boredom, amusement, etc.)

ii) level two: self-critique

- Why do you think the text had that effect? To answer, this you should ask yourself questions such as the following:  
Where does my response come from? Why did I respond this way? What assumptions/expectations did I bring to my experience of this text? How does this text challenge my assumptions/expectations? What challenges me the most about this text? What things in this text do I resist? Why? Where and why was I taught the beliefs that are being challenged by these texts? What knowledge/lack of knowledge am I discovering? Overall, what does your response tell you about your values, your assumptions, your race or gender or class or sexual orientation location? (There is no need to answer all of these questions. They are meant as ways to get you thinking. Respond to the ones that work for you.)

iii) level three: cultural critique

- This needs to be less AI-oriented and must move into a societal critique, focussing on dominant, or mainstream, society's attitudes towards the issues you raise in the self-critique section. What are society's ideas/norms/conventions/codes regarding the issues you've discussed in your self-critique?

#### **4) final exam (30%)**

This will be a take home exam and will be distributed in advance of the due date. The examination will be based on topics discussed in class lectures and discussion.

#### **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)

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## GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE GRADING GUIDELINES

Alpha Grade	4-Point Equivalence	Percentage	Designation
A+	4.0	90 – 100	Excellent
A	4.0	85 – 89	Excellent
A-	3.7	80 – 84	First Class Standing
B+	3.3	76 – 79	First Class Standing
B	3.0	73 – 75	Good
B-	2.7	70 – 72	Good
C+	2.3	67 – 69	Satisfactory
C	2.0	64 – 66	Satisfactory
C-	1.7	60 – 63	Satisfactory
D+	1.3	55 – 59	Poor
D	1	50 – 54	Minimal Pass
F	0.0	0 – 49	Failure

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### SCHEDULE (tentative!!!!)

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

September 8: **Introduction**

September 15: **Defining Popular Culture**

(In addition to the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, read four of the others listed)

Lull, "Hegemony" (Dines and Humez)

Raymond, "Popular Culture and Queer Representation: A Critical Perspective" (Dines and Humez)

Appiah, "No Bad Nigger" (R)

Nachbar and Lause, "Getting To Know Us: An Introduction to the Study of Popular Culture" (R)

Giles and Middleton, "What is Culture?" (R)

O'Neill, "Introduction" (R)

Felton, "Wrestling With Myself" (R)

Huey, "America's Hottest Export: Pop Culture" (\* Expanded Academic Electronic Research Database)

### September 22: Movies

(Read eight of the following)

- Lause, "Seeing What We've Said: The Top Ten American Box-Office Hits Taken Seriously" (R)
- King, "Why We Crave Horror Movies" (R)
- Stinati, "The Narrative and Ideology of the Hollywood Film" (R)
- Appleford, "Coming Out From Behind the Rocks: Constructs of the Indian in Recent U.S and Canadian Cinema" (R)
- Mir, "Muslims: within Hollywood and without" (\*<http://php.indiana.edu/~smir/holly.htm>)
- DeMott, "Visions of Black-White Friendship" (R)
- Wright, "The Structure of Myth and The Structure of Western Film" (R)
- Dyer, "Lighting For Whiteness" (R)
- Prince, "True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images, and Film Theory" (R)
- Collins, "Genericity in the Nineties" Eclectic Irony and the New Sincerity" (R)
- Ward, "Hung Like a Horse: Male Stripping in Recent Films" (R)
- Bobo, "The Color Purple: Black Women as Cultural Readers" (R)

### September 29: Leisure

(In addition to the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, read five of the others listed; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

- Davis, "Space Jam: Media Conglomerates Build the Entertainment City" (Dines and Humez)
- Schor, Juliet "The New Politics of Consumption" (Dines and Humez)
- Stabile, "Nike, Social Responsibility, and the Hidden Abode of Production" (Dines and Humez)
- Drew, "'Anyone Can Do It': Forging a Participatory Culture in Karaoke Bars" (R)
- Kincheloe, "McDonalds, Power, and Children: Ronald McDonald (aka Ray Kroc) Does It All For You" (R)
- Miller and McHoul, "Food/Eating" (R)
- Miller and McHoul, "Sport" (R)
- McSorley, "Of Time and Place and Hockey" (R)
- Schrank, "Sport and the American Dream" (R)
- Berger, "Seven Points on the Game of Football" (R)

### October 6: Advertising

(Of the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, read six; of the others listed, read two; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Jhally, "Image Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture" (Dines and Humez)

Kilbourne, "'The More You Subtract, the More You Add': Cutting Girls Down to Size" (Dines and Humez)

Kirkham and Weller, "Cosmetics: A Clinique Case Study" (Dines and Humez)

Ghosh, "'Con-fusing' Exotica: Producing India in U.S. Advertising" (Dines and Humez)

Wilson and Gutiérrez, "Advertising and People of Color" (Dines and Humez)

Haller and Ralph, "Current Perspectives on Advertising Images of Disability" (Dines and Humez)

Sender, "Selling Sexual Subjectivities: Audiences Respond to Gay Window Advertising" (Dines and Humez)

Crane, "Gender and Hegemony in Fashion Magazines: Women's Interpretation of Fashion Photographs" (Dines and Humez)

Fejes, "Advertising and the Political Economy of Lesbian/Gay Identity" (Dines and Humez)

Fiske, "The Jeaning of America" (R)

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)

### October 13: Thanksgiving Day (no classes)

### October 20: Television (information or gossip?)

(In addition to the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, read five of the others listed; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Moorti, "Cathartic Confessions or Emancipatory Texts? Rape Narratives on The Oprah Winfrey Show" (Dines and Humez)

Peck, "The Mediated Talking Cure: Therapeutic Framing of Autobiography in TV Talk Shows" (Dines and Humez)

Tavener, "The Case Against Sleaze TV" (Dines and Humez)

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)

Abt and Seesholtz, "The Shameless World of Phil, Sally and Oprah: Television Talk Shows and the Deconstructing of Society" (R)

"Reading and Writing About Culture: The Case of Daytime Talk TV" (R)

October 27: **Television** (escapism)

(Of the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, read eight; of the others listed read one; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

- Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class and Ethnicity in Early Network Television" (Dines and Humez)  
Coleman, "Black Sitcom Portrayals" (Dines and Humez)  
Fiske, "Gendered Television: Femininity" (Dines and Humez)  
Rogers, "Daze of Our Lives: The Soap Opera as Feminine Text" (Dines and Humez)  
Hayward, "Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Soap Opera" (Dines and Humez)  
Butsch "Ralph, Fred, Archie, and Homer: Why Television Keeps Re-creating the White Male Working-Class Buffoon" (Dines and Humez)  
Hart, "Representing Gay Men of American Television" (Dines and Humez)  
Hubert, "What's Wrong With This Picture? The Politics of Ellen's Coming Out Party" (Dines and Humez)  
Lindsey, "In Their Prime: Women in Nighttime Drama" (Dines and Humez)  
Bogle, "Workplace Dramas, Ensemble Cast, 1990s Style" (Dines and Humez)  
Turner, "This is For Fighting, This is For Fun: Camerawork and Gunplay in Reality-Based Crime Shows" (Dines and Humez)

- Clark, "Race, Class and Gender on 'The Cosby Show.'" (R)  
Greenwald, "Future Perfect: How Star Trek Conquered Planet Earth." (R)  
Crosbie, "Hate in the Afternoon: Ecstasy Goes Underground on The Young and Restless." (R)

November 3: **Popular Literature**

(Read all of the following)

- Radway, "Women Read The Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context" (Dines and Humez)  
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)  
TBA

November 10: Fall Session Break (no classes)

### November 17: Music

(In addition to the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, please read five of the others listed; class presenters are required to read all of the following))

Perry, "Who(se) Am I? The Identity and Image of Women in Hip-Hop" (Dines and Humez)

Rose, "Hidden Politics: Discursive and Institutional Policies of Rap Music" (Dines and Humez)

DiFranco, "Open Letter to the Editors of Ms" (R)

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

Dyer, "The Sound of Music" (R)

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

Rose, "Rap Music and the Demonization of Young Black Males" (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)

### November 24: Children's Culture

Read all of the following; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

Jenkins, "Lessons From Littleton: What Congress Doesn't Want to Hear About Youth and Media" (Dines and Humez)

Giroux, "Animating Youth: the Disnification of Children's Culture"

(\*<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux/Giroux2.html>)

Jenkins, "'Her Suffering Aristocratic Majesty': The Sentimental Values of Lassie" (R)

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

Wolfenstein, "Fun Morality" (R)

M<sup>c</sup>Donnell, "March of the Tweens" (R)

### December 1: Cyberculture

(In addition to the assigned articles in Dines and Humez, find an on-line article of your choice that focuses on Internet culture; class presenters are required to read all of the following)

McChesney, "The Titanic Sails On: Why the Internet Won't Sink the Media Giants" (Dines and Humez)

Nakamura, "'Where Do You Want to Go Today?': Cybernetic Tourism, the Internet, and Transnationality" (Dines and Humez)

Seiter, "Television and the Internet" (Dines and Humez)

Clark, "Dating on the Net: Teens and the Rise of 'Pure' Relationships" (Dines and Humez)

"I Think Of Them as Friends: Interpersonal Relationships in the Online Community" (Dines and Humez)

**December 8: Canadian Popular Culture**

(Read all of the following)

Bodroghkozy, "As Canadian as Possible . . . : Anglo-Canadian Popular Culture and the American Other" (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)

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

Szuchewycz and Sloniowski, "Canadian Identity: The Shifting Terrain" (R)

Szuchewycz and Sloniowski, "Canadian Notes: Singing a Different Tune" (R)