

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Explorations Category

1. What course does the department plan to offer in Explorations? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Arts and Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Natural and Physical Sciences)

- **Introduction to Popular Culture Studies (POP 201)** to be offered under the **Arts and Humanities** subcategory.

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory. Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

- **Use basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Art and Humanities.** This course will introduce students to the concepts, theories, and methodologies of the study of popular culture. Students will come to understand that Popular Culture Studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field that uses various analytical approaches drawn from such disciplines as History, Sociology, Anthropology, and Economics as well as such subdisciplines as Women and Gender Studies, Semiotics, Film Studies, and Literary Studies.
- **Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.** This course will help students understand how to evaluate the reliability and intentionality of both scholarly texts and various kinds of primary evidence including advertisements, television shows, films, music, and popular products and practices.
- **Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.** This course will introduce the historical evolution of popular culture in the United States and globally, illustrating how popular culture of any given time and place is always a product of its social and cultural context. The course will also consider the ways creative expressions in popular culture can both challenge social and cultural norms and parameters and reflect or reinforce these standards and expectations.
- **Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural and historical contexts.** This course will evaluate the role of individuals groups and institutions in transforming popular culture both in the past and in contemporary society. It will consider the role of producers, distributors, and consumers in the making of meaning in popular culture texts to better understand popular culture as a site of political and social struggle.
- **Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.** This course will evaluate the ways popular culture has been and remains a venue for competing conceptions of the human experience including racial, ethnic, gender, and social class differences and constructions. It will also consider debates over the extent of individual and communal freedoms of expression and behavior, and the mediated nature of

individual lives and perspectives in an age in which cultural industries play a central role in shaping the international social, political and economic landscape.

3. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

General Education Learning Outcomes in **bold**:

Students who take the course will be able to:

- **A. Use basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Art and Humanities.** This course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary theories about and methodological approaches to the study of popular culture.
- **B. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.** This course will help students understand how to evaluate the reliability and intentionality of both scholarly texts and various kinds of primary evidence in popular culture products and practices.
- **C. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.** This course will demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence and are shaped by popular culture.
- **D. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural and historical contexts.** This course will evaluate the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in transforming popular culture both in the past and in contemporary society and explore popular culture as a site of political and social struggle.
- **E. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.** This course will evaluate enduring and contemporary issues in human experience by demonstrating the way that popular culture raises and addresses such issues.

4. Brief description of how the department will assess the course for these learning objectives. Students' research papers will be evaluated to assess their writing abilities and their understanding of the central ideas and learning outcomes of the course. In the research paper, students will draw on both scholarly writings and primary sources (Learning Outcome B) to research a specific popular culture form or text using both historical and theoretical analysis. In the paper, students will be able to demonstrate their understanding Popular Culture Studies theories and methodological approaches (Learning Outcome A), the social and historical context of their popular culture form or example (Learning Outcome C), and the role of individuals and institutions in the evolution of its significance (Learning Outcome D). Finally, students will be able to explain the lasting importance of their popular culture form or text to contemporary society (Learning Outcome E). The evaluation of the paper will be based on the attached rubric.

5. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

The program will offer at least 1 section of the course each year.

6. Please attach sample syllabus for the course.

See below.

POP 201
INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES

Western Kentucky University
TR 2:20-3:40 PM, 215 Cherry Hall

Instructor: Dr. Anthony Harkins
Office/ Phone: 218 Cherry Hall/745-3149

E-mail: anthony.harkins@wku.edu
Office Hours: W 3-4 and by appt.

Course Description:

This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to the major theories about and approaches to the study of popular culture. It is meant to help you take popular culture seriously by providing a theoretical framework for analyzing the culture of everyday life. During the course of the semester, we will develop interpretive strategies for evaluating a range of popular texts, products, and practices. We will consider the role of producers, distributors, and consumers in the making of meaning in these texts to better understand popular culture as a site of political and social struggle. Through short reflective essays and a longer interpretative research project, you will also improve your ability to read, think, and write critically as a discerning consumer in a media-saturated age.

This course counts as a required course for the major in Popular Culture Studies. This program offers WKU undergraduates the chance to broaden their understanding of the arts and culture of everyday life including such areas as television, film, music, sports, advertising, customs and rituals. Through innovative interdisciplinary coursework the major helps students critically analyze a wide range of popular cultural forms, their uses by audiences, and their impact on the broader social, political and economic landscape. If you are interested in learning more about this exciting and innovative program, contact your instructor or check out the Popular Culture Studies website at <http://www.wku/pop/>.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand and use basic interdisciplinary theories about and methodological approaches to the study of popular culture.
- Evaluate the reliability and intentionality of both scholarly texts and various kinds of primary evidence in popular culture products and practices.
- Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence and are shaped by popular culture.
- Evaluate the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in transforming popular culture both in the past and in contemporary society and explore popular culture as a site of political and social struggle.
- Demonstrate the way that popular culture raises and addresses enduring and contemporary issues in human experience.

Required Texts:

--David Grazian, *Mix It Up – Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society* (W.W. Norton, 2010)
ISBN: 9780393929522

--All other readings will be available through the course Blackboard site

Course Requirements:

Attendance

You are expected to attend all required class sessions and roll will be taken. More than two class absences over the course of the semester can affect your participation grade. Any student who misses **6 or more** scheduled classes will receive an **“F” grade** for the entire course, regardless of the quality of their other work for the class.

Participation/Discussion

This is primarily a discussion not a lecture-based class. Beyond merely showing up, you are expected to participate fully in class discussions and group work, share your ideas and listen intently.

Quizzes

Most weeks during the semester there will be a quiz questions based on the readings and discussions for that day. These will be conducted via the Top Hat app through your phones or ipads. These quiz questions are designed to encourage close reading of the assignments for each class, to facilitate listening and participating in discussions, and to prepare students for the exams and for writing their papers. *If you miss class you cannot make up the questions you’ve missed.* The quiz portion of the grade will be 150 points but more possible points will be available.

Exams

There will be an in-class midterm that you will complete in a blue book and a final with an in-class and takehome component.

Written Assignments

There will be three types of graded writing assignments during the semester: 2 brief (2 pg.) reflective reviews of the films; an in-class midterm and take home final exam, and a longer multi-stage research project on a particular popular culture product or practice. This project will require you to write a proposal, two separate 3 pg. papers analyzing your chosen subject from first a historical and then a theoretical approach, and then a 6-8 pg. final paper that integrates your two earlier papers. Much more information on all of these assignments will be handed out in class shortly and during the course of the semester.

Students should keep all graded course materials until the final course grade has been recorded and posted by the Registrar’s office.

Grading Policies

Failure to submit both examinations and all three papers will result in an “F” grade for the course, regardless of your grade average for the course.

Your work will be graded on the following scale:

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	93-96	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	83-86	F	59 and below
B-	80-82		

Your final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

Participation (incl. attendance and group work)	100 pts.
Reflective Film Review 1	100 pts.
Reflective Film Review 2	100 pts.
Quiz questions	150 pts.
Research Project:	
--Prelim. Proposal	50 pts.
--Historical Analysis	100 pts.
--Theoretical Analysis	100 pts.
--Final Integrated Research Paper	150 pts.
Midterm Exam	50 pts.
Final Take-home Exam	100 pts.
	1000 points total

Late Work and Make-Up Exams

All papers and exams must be turned in on time. I will mark down written work that is turned in late 1 full grade (from a B to a C for example) for each day it is late. Late work may be turned in without penalty only in the case of prior consultation for legitimate reasons (contact one of us in person or by email or phone prior to missing the due date for a paper or an exam), or in the case of serious emergency with documentation.

Withdrawal from the Class

Students who wish to withdraw from the course must complete the withdrawal procedures by the deadline designated by the University. If you stop coming to class and fail to withdraw officially by this deadline, an “FN” will be recorded as your course grade.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of turning in work that is not your own. This can be anything from quoting material in a paper and not crediting the original author through a footnote, to copying from a book, to pasting in the text from web pages or some Internet paper mill. The consequences for plagiarism in this course are simple: If you are caught plagiarizing, **you will receive an “F” for the course**. No exceptions. In addition, a letter reporting your conduct will be sent to your college dean recommending appropriate disciplinary action, regardless of the quality of the student’s prior work in the course. Student work may also be checked using plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.com.

The university’s policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty are outlined in detail in the student handbook and at the following Internet address:

<http://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php>

If you do not understand what plagiarism is, **it is your responsibility to ask your instructor for clarification.**

Behavior Policies

Simply put, show respect for your classmates and instructor. Arrive on time and don’t disrupt the class.

- Students who are more than 5 minutes late will be considered absent every time after the first couple of warnings. If you will be consistently late or must leave early, please inform me before class as to the reason.
- If you are consistently talking to another student or getting phone calls in class during a lecture, you will be considered absent for that day.

Other Comments:

I am happy to accommodate students with disabilities. Students who qualify for special accommodations should contact David Coffey at the Office for Student Disability Services, in the Student Success Center in DUC (745-5004). The OFSDS will work with you and with us to arrange the appropriate services. Please meet with me at the start of the semester to help make the necessary arrangements.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- devote sufficient time to studying and keep up with reading and writing assignments
- come to class and take notes in class and as you read assignments
- seek help and suggestions from us during office hours or via email
- carefully read the syllabus and make sure you understand the assignments and their sequence
- make sure you get started early on your research assignment!
- Enjoy reading and thinking about popular culture. I hope you learn a lot and have fun!

COURSE SCHEDULE (Except for Exam and Paper due dates, subject to change)
Readings not from textbook are on class Blackboard site and marked [Bb]

Week 1	What is Popular Culture and Why Study It?	
Aug 26	Introduction	
Aug 28	Idea Channel Assignment	
Week 2	Popular Culture and Cultural Hierarchy	
Sept. 2	Grazian, ch. 1	
Sept. 4	Grazian, ch. 7 (to 139); [Bb]: Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy"; Levine, "Shakespeare in America"	
Week 3	A Functionalist Approach/ Sports and Religion	
Sept. 9	Grazian, ch. 2	
Sept. 11	<i>Guest Lecture- Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo, Philosophy</i> ; [Bb] Bain-Selbo, "Ecstasy, Joy and Sorrow: The Experience of Southern College Football"	
Week 4	A Critical Approach: Cultural Marxism	
Sept. 16	Library Visit	<u>Research Project Proposal Due</u>
Sept. 18	Grazian, ch. 3; [Bb] Tyson, "Marxist Criticism;" Marx, Readings excerpts MacDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture"	
Week 5	An Interactive Approach/ Selling Pop Culture to Tweens and Teens	
Sept. 23	Grazian, ch. 4; [Bb] Gladwell, "The Cool Hunt"; Fiske, "Understanding Popular Culture"	
Sept. 25	In class FILM: <i>Generation Like</i>	
Week 6		
Sept. 30	Discuss Film/ Midterm	
Oct. 2	<i>No Class - Fall Break</i>	
Week 7	The Business of Pop Culture	
Oct. 7	Grazian, ch. 6	
Oct. 9	[Bb] Crothers, <i>Globalization and American Popular Culture</i> (Excerpts)	
Week 8	Creating Pop Culture and Technology	
Oct. 14	Grazian, ch. 5 /boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> (excerpts)	
Oct. 16	<i>Guest Speaker: Ed Rugnetta, Idea Channel</i>	<u>Historical Analysis Due</u>
Week 9	Pop Culture and Social Class	
Oct. 21	Grazian, ch. 7/ other TBA	
Oct. 23	[Bb] Brasted, "Through the Looking Glass: Class and Reality in Television" TV and Film clips	
Week 10	Race and Pop Culture	

Oct. 28	[Bb] Kidd, "The Revolution will not be available on iTunes: Racial Perspectives"	
Oct. 30	Harkins, "Hillbilly in Popular Culture"; Dean, "What Honey Boo Boo Really says about American Culture"	
Week 11	Gender and Popular Culture	
Nov. 4	[Bb] Kidd, "Men are from Marlboro Country, Women are from Wisteria Lane"; Orenstein, "What's Wrong with Cinderella"; Boxer, "Why are all the Cartoon Mothers Dead"	
Nov. 6	<i>Guest Lecture: Dawn Hall, School of University Studies</i>	
Week 12	Fan Culture	
Nov. 11	No Class – Go to "Thoughts on Pop" instead	
Nov. 13	FILM: <i>Comic-Con Episode IV: A Fan's Hope</i>	<u>Theoretical Analysis Due</u>
Week 13	Fan Culture, Audiences and Everyday Life	
Nov. 18	Grazian, ch. 8; OffBook Video: Fan Culture; Ghanash, "The Bey Hive"	
Nov. 20	Grazian, ch. 9	
Week 14	Pop Culture in the Digital Age	
Nov. 25	Grazian, ch. 10	
		<u>FILM2 Refl. Essay Due</u>
Nov. 27	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving</i>	
Week 15	Popular Culture in the Digital Age Continued	
Dec. 2	<i>Guest Lecture, Sam Ford, WKU and Peppercom; [Bb] Spreadable Media (Intro.)</i>	
		<u>Final Papers Due</u>
Dec. 4	Pop 498 Student Presentations	
Week 16	Final Take home Exam Due, Dec. 11, Thursday 3 pm	

RUBRIC for Popular Culture Studies RESEARCH PAPER

	1. EXCELLENT	2. GOOD	3. NEEDS WORK	4. POOR
A. TITLE PAGE and LENGTH	Argumentative title and at least 6 FULL pages	Non-argumentative title and at least 6 FULL pages	Non-argumentative title and less than 6 FULL pages	Lacks Title and/or less than 6 FULL pages
B. INTRODUCTION	Clearly establishes historical context of the popular culture form or text and fully identifies the theoretical approaches the analysis will incorporate.	Mentions historical context and theoretical approaches but in overly general way that only partly identifies the issues the paper will address.	Introduction exists but lacks much sense of historical context and/or theoretical approaches. Little sense of issues the paper will address.	Lacks an introduction or includes one that lacks a historical focus and/or theoretical approach. Little sense of issues the paper will address.
A. THESIS	Thesis is easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, and clear. It clearly reflects a historical and theoretical interpretation of a popular culture subject.	Thesis is promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking insight or originality. It introduces a historical and theoretical interpretation of a popular culture subject but does not explain it fully.	Thesis is unclear or unoriginal. Uses vague language. Provides little around which to structure the essay. It offers a historical and theoretical interpretation of a popular culture subject but only in the most general terms.	Thesis is difficult to identify, non-existent, or merely restates the question. Shows little effort or comprehension of the essay prompt. It lacks either or both a historical and theoretical interpretation of a popular culture subject.
B. STRUCTURE	Structure is evident, understandable, and appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.	Structure is generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. Essay may have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.	Structure is generally unclear, often wanders, or jumps around. Transitions are few and/or weak, and many paragraphs lack topic sentences.	Structure is unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Essay has little or no structure or organization. Transitions are confusing and unclear. Topic sentences are few or non-existent.
C. USE OF EVIDENCE	Primary source and contextual information is incorporated to support every point. Examples support thesis and fit within paragraph. Specific, explicit references to assigned readings and factual information is incorporated. Sources are properly cited.	Author uses examples to support most points. Some evidence does not support point or is out of place. Quotations are generally integrated well into sentences and paragraphs. Some factual information is incorporated. Some sources are properly cited.	Author uses examples to support some points. References to assigned readings unclear or incorrect. There may not be a clear point. Moderate amount of factual information is incorporated. Sources are improperly cited.	Very few or weak examples. Essay is weakened by a general failure to support statements. Evidence supports no particular point. Little or no factual information is incorporated, and primary sources remain mostly not interpreted or are merely summarized. No citations for sources.
D. LOGIC AND ARGUMENTATION	All ideas flow logically. The argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments. Makes original connections that illuminate thesis.	Argument is clear and usually flows logically and makes sense. Some counter-arguments are acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to evidence appear.	The argument may often be unclear or not make sense. Author may not address counter-arguments or make sufficient connections with the thesis. Essay may contain logical contradictions.	Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Essay displays simplistic view of topic, and no consideration of possible alternative views. Any attempts to relate evidence to argument are very weak. Argument is too incoherent to determine.
E. CONCLUSION	Clear conclusion thoughtfully and specifically reflects on the broader significance of findings about this form or example of popular culture.	Includes conclusion but with only a vague sense of broader significance of findings about this form or example of popular culture.	Includes conclusion but simply restates thesis or reiterates the topic. Offers no meaningful sense of the broader significance of findings about this form or example of popular culture.	Lacks conclusion.