



CURRICULUM GUIDE: OFFICIAL COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code	SOCI 230	Course Title	Sociology of Popular Culture			
Credit Value	3	Department	Social Sciences			
No. of weeks	14	Hrs. per week	<i>Lecture</i>	<i>Tutorial</i>	<i>Laboratory</i>	<i>Total</i>
			3	0	0	3
Course Description	<p>What are the patterns, meanings, rituals in popular culture that shape our lives and serve as a mirror of society? This course will show how the study of popular culture is a window into sociological thinking about the construction of social reality. Through the medium of popular culture (art, music, film, fiction, fashion, television, and the mass media) societal actors both reproduce and resist dominant values propagated by the culture industries in society. By thinking deeply about our ostensibly trivial popular pleasures, the sociological imagination can unveil how we routinely maintain and sometimes challenge popular social forces such as gender inequality and racial prejudice. In essence, the course will explore the domain of the popular in order to highlight the</p>					
Prerequisite(s)	ENGL 100, SOCI 100 or SOCI 103					
Initial Articulation Targets	<i>UBC</i>	<i>SFU</i>	<i>UVic</i>	<i>UNBC</i>	<i>TRU</i>	
	SOCI 2nd (3)	SA 2XX (3)	SOCI 2XX (1.5)	SOSC 2XX (3)	SOCI 2170 (3)	
	<p>For updated information on the transferability of this course, please consult the BC Transfer Guide, www.bctransferguide.ca</p>					
Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a rationale for the importance of studying popular culture • Distinguish between folk, elite, popular, and mass culture • Summarize and compare key elements in the major sociological theories of popular culture (its production, circulation and consumption) • Trace the impact of social networks on the emergence and growth of popular culture trends, fads and fashions (including fan and celebrity cultures) • List ways in which everyday life is becoming increasingly mediated • Explain how brands/corporate logos aim to manage or program everyday life, chiefly in order to generate market value • Identify implicit market ground rules for the production of popular culture • Describe how market power operates through the media and digital technology in the harnessing of popular culture • Explain how the media and culture industries typically reinforce dominant stereotypes of race, class, and gender in society • Interpret popular culture as an ongoing project of ideological contestation 					



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify some of the key features of contemporary demographic change, and describe how they differ from traditional demographic characteristics• Trace the dialectical interplay between structure (“incorporation”) and agency (“resistance”) in the formation of popular culture• Provide evidence for the increasing fluidity and fusion of “elite” and “mass” cultures in post-modern popular culture• Discuss the global power of transnational cultural conglomerates and identify the local challenges to them through the medium of popular culture• Analyze examples and the production of Indigenous popular culture• Discuss popular culture’s interrelationship with sustainability.
Content	<p>Core topics – all of the following will be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction – Reasons for the Study of Popular Culture: new focus of critical intellectual work; interdisciplinary, gradual infusion in the halls of Academe; synthesis of cultural studies, the sociology of everyday life, media studies, and the sociology of consumption; the importance and centrality of the culture industries within contemporary society.• Defining Popular Culture: the traditional boundaries and distinctions between elite, folk, mass and popular culture (according to advocates and critics) and the current fluidity between them.• The Culture Industries (music, art, film fashion, etc.): their multi-national corporate patrons, and their aesthetic-economic bottom line.• Research Methods and Strategies for the Study of Popular Culture: quantitative and qualitative.• Theoretical Approaches to the Sociological Analysis of Popular Culture and the Culture Industries: functional, critical, interactive• The Mass Media and Popular Culture: radio, television, film, advertising, newsprint; corporate mass media as primary agents of civilization in the 20th and 21st centuries; social life increasingly mediatized and monetized.• Social Media and Popular Culture: influence of viral technologies on the creation of popular culture; impacts on identity-formation and social life; differential effects on utilization of social media across race, class, and gender.• Fandom and Celebrity Cultures: how value and meaning are enacted and shared in contemporary life; the way fan and celebrity cultures appropriate and poach identities and themes from the media.• Popular Culture and Social Control: manipulation and indoctrination of consumers by the cultural industries and gatekeepers in behalf of market capitalism; popular culture as a key site for the production and reproduction of hegemony; culture industries promoting passivity, conformity and resignation via technologies of social control.• Popular Culture and Social Change: how consumers (‘the people’) make meaning from objects and practices produced and circulated by the culture industries such that imposed meanings can be challenged and transformed; attempts to democratize participation in society and free individuals to establish their own identity through involvement in common culture; popular culture as a site of resistance on the terrain of ideological struggle (where hegemony is won or lost).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion - Popular Culture Around the World: popular culture as an agent of 'globalization' wherein cultural products are marketed around the world solidifying the power of the culture industries versus popular culture as an agent of 'glocalization' upholding uniqueness and diversity and resisting homogenization. <p>Additional topics may also be covered, at the discretion of the instructor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenization and popular culture – examples of Indigenous popular culture, including its production Popular culture and sustainability – Analyze the environmental impact of popular culture and its interrelationship with sustainability and climate change. 		
Methods of Instruction	Lectures, class discussion, audio-visual materials, guest speakers, assignments, research project, exams.		
Required Textbook(s)	<p>The following textbook(s) is/are required, or approved equivalent(s).</p> <p>Kidd, D. (2014). Pop culture freaks: Identity, mass media, and society. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.</p> <p>Case Study Hong, E. (2014). The birth of Korean cool. London, UK: Picador.</p> <p>Supplemental Textbook(s)</p> <p>Lightning Guides. (2015). Social media: Facebook, twitter, and the modern revolution. San Diego, CA: Arcas</p>		
Required Equipment and Technology	<p>Students are required to have a computer with internet access.</p> <p>The following resources are provided by the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office 365 Student email 		
Homework Hours	At minimum, students can expect one hour of homework for every hour of instructional time.		
Evaluation	<i>Component</i>	<i>% Value</i>	
	Participation	5-15%	
	Two minor quizzes or assignments	10-20%	
	Midterm examination	20-30%	
	Project-analysis of local pop culture event	25-35%	
Final examination	20-30%		
Completion Requirements	The minimum grade to pass this course is D (50%). Unless otherwise stated, a minimum grade of C- (55%) is required for this course to fulfil a prerequisite.		
Course Designer(s)	Bob Ratner, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology, University of British Columbia	Consultant(s), if applicable	Joseph Moore and Marnie Westerman, Douglas College



Dean's Approval	Barbara Moon, Ph.D., Dean of Arts and Sciences, Alexander College	Dean's Approval Date	February 14, 2018
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	February 14, 2018	First Term Offered	Fall 2018
Last Review Date	February 15, 2024	Next Review Date	February 15, 2029
Revision History	February 3, 2022 – English prerequisite increased from ENGL 098 to ENGL 099, effective from Spring 2022 term. July 14, 2024 –Minor revisions by Bob Ratner. September 1, 2024 – English prerequisite increased to ENGL 100.		