

SYLLABUS: COMM 3466: COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE SUMMER 2021 ONLINE 3 CREDIT HOURS

Course Overview

As stated in the course catalog, this course examines “communication causes and impacts of the changing technological environment where traditional differences between cultural products, folk, mass, popular, low, elite, high, knowledge, journalistic, and informational are disappearing.”

Instructor(s)

Instructor: Nina Freiburger
Email Address: Freiburger.12@osu.edu Office Hours: By appointment

Pre-requisites

Not open to students with credit for 666. Credit Hours: 3.0. The course will be presented entirely online.

Course Description

This general elective course will examine how popular culture is reflected in human communication. Although the course will focus primarily on mass communication as a source of popular culture, we will also explore how popular culture influences our interpersonal relationships and how we communicate with each other. For example, one section asks students to apply communication theories related to the spread of information through society to describe how popular culture infiltrates mass communication messages and spreads to more interpersonal contexts.

Presented in an online format, this course will take a dynamic approach to learning. We will venture through various aspects of popular culture: Music, movies, slang, and even memes. Although all assignments are completed individually, you should engage with other students through our online discussions. To this end, certain technologies are required for taking this course (see Course Technology section).

Throughout the 12 weeks of class, you'll develop a more thorough understanding of popular culture through the lens of the communication discipline. Our focus will help you explain popular culture's intersection with the individual. We will explore how popular culture came to be, why it is more important than many people think, and how it helps us to understand our place in the world and how we communicate with others.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Classify various definitions of popular culture and their relationship to the various levels of communication (e.g., interpersonal, group, mass).
- Recognize and categorize different elements of popular culture as they relate to communication phenomena, such as social bonding and group formation.
- Identify the historical and contemporary sources of popular culture as they relate to communication theories, including but not limited to diffusion of innovations, two-step flow, and entertainment appraisal.
- Apply communication theories to understand the communicative functions of popular culture.

Course Materials

No official textbook is being adopted for this course. Readings for the course will consist of chapters and articles posted in digital format on Carmen (see Course Schedule for specific readings).

The readings and other media materials presented in the course are designed to challenge the students' current abilities. They range from chapters in undergraduate textbooks to cutting edge research articles published in the field's best journals.

HOW THIS ONLINE COURSE WORKS

Mode of delivery: This course is 100% online. There are no required sessions when you must be logged in to Carmen at a scheduled time.

Pace of online activities: This course is divided into **weekly modules** that are released one week ahead of time. Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may schedule their efforts freely within that time frame.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a **3-credit-hour course**. According to Ohio State policy (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Student participation requirements

Because this is a distance-education course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Online lectures**
Recorded lectures will be uploaded with all other materials every Monday. More than one lecture may appear in the upload. The videos are short to provide the most optimal viewing experience and to increase attention and engagement. Watch a lecture, take a break, come back to the next.
- **Readings**
All readings are expected to be completed prior to viewing the lectures.

Course technology

Technology support

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** ocio.osu.edu/help
- **Phone:** 614-688-4357(HELP)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Technology skills needed for this course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)
- CarmenZoom virtual meetings (go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings)
- Recording a slide presentation with audio narration (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)
- Recording, editing, and uploading video (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)

Required equipment

- Computer: current Mac (MacOs) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

Required software

- Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found at go.osu.edu/office365help.

Carmen access

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article for step-by-step instructions (go.osu.edu/add-device).
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the Duo Mobile application (go.osu.edu/install-duo) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

Course Requirements

Assignments

The assignments are designed to assess basic-level understandings (e.g., remember and understand) as well as higher-level understandings (e.g., apply and analyze). The specific assignments are presented below along with a short description of the general format of the assignment and its relationship to student learning.

- Introduction Video (10%)
 - Students will create and share with the class a short (~2 minute) introduction video where you describe yourself, some of your current favorite popular culture artifacts, and what you hope to get out of this class.
 - The purpose of this assignment is to allow the instructor and the other students to connect a name and a face with our virtual colleagues.
- 10 Reading Quizzes (40% of grade)
 - Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester on a weekly schedule. All quizzes are due by Saturday of the week they are assigned.
 - The quizzes represent a check-in point for the students and the instructor. They ensure that students are keeping up with the readings and that the students are getting the “overarching lesson” from each reading.
- I will drop the lowest quiz grade.
- Term Paper (50%)
 - The term paper will ask students to trace the history of a popular cultural product and how it has impacted society at large. What are the origins of the cultural product, how did it gain popularity, and how has it impacted society?
 - Students will link their historical analysis to important communication theories discussed throughout the course.
 - There are two milestone assignments related to the term paper at different points in the semester. These milestone assignments will help you stay on track so that your final product is higher in quality.
 - Milestone Assignment 1 is due during Week 4. (10% of grade)
 - This assignment asks students to identify their topic of interest.
 - Students will identify their cultural product, how they intend to research its evolution, and present an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources that they plan on using in their final paper.
 - Milestone Assignment 2 is due during Week 8. (15% of grade)
 - This assignment requires students to present an outline of their final paper.
 - By this point, students should have completed the primary research phase of their project and have an outline of the structure of their final paper. The outline should be at least 1 page long (single-spaced) and have enough detail that the instructor has a firm understanding of what the student will present in their final document.
 - Final Paper: A ~6-page (double-spaced) term paper will be due at the end of the semester. (25% of grade)
- Participation through Discussion Boards (Bonus 3%)
 - Even though this is an online course, students’ participation will be assessed by examining whether they engaged with all course materials and contributed

substantially to the discussion boards. Students who opened and viewed all lectures, readings, etc., and who made substantive contributions to 5 of the course's discussion boards will receive 5% added to their final grade.

- Note: We will have a discussion board for each week where students can post questions or observations about the readings. To receive the 5% points, students must open all the readings, lectures, etc. throughout the course and make **substantive** contributions to 5 of the 10 course's discussion boards. A simple comment is not a substantive contribution. Linking various theories, topics, etc. and bringing in outside information is. Although the discussion boards are open-ended and students can present any information they wish, I've included suggested topics for each week in the course schedule.

Grading scale

93–100: A

90–92.9: A-

87–89.9: B+

83–86.9: B

80–82.9: B-

77–79.9: C+

73–76.9: C

70–72.9: C-

67–69.9: D+

60–66.9: D

Below 60: E

Please note: Carmen and Buckeyelink do not round up grades. Your grades will be exactly what is earned and will not be rounded up. Extra credit will be offered for students who wish to earn a chance to improve grades.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback

For assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **10 days**.

E-mail

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on week days**. Please email through Buckeyemail and not Carmen Messages. **DO NOT** reply to a Carmen message through Buckeyemail.

Instructor communication

At times announcements will be made to the class via Carmen Announcements and sent through a Carmen message. Please regularly check both to ensure you do not miss a communication.

Communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** This course is intended to prepare you for future communications as a professional. Assignments should be approached in this manner. Please proofread, edit, and include appropriate language.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Furthermore, rude or impatient communications are generally not appreciated in professional situations. Please consider your words as if you were a professional when communicating with other students, the instructor, and the teaching assistant.
- **Citing your sources:** When requested, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)

Academic integrity policy

See **Descriptions of major course assignments**, above, for my specific guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this online class.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university’s *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- Committee on Academic Misconduct web page (go.osu.edu/coam)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)

Student Services and Advising

University Student Services can be accessed through BuckeyeLink. More information is available here:

<https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/>

Advising resources for students are available here:

<http://advising.osu.edu>

Copyright for instructional materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Statement on Title IX

All students and employees at Ohio State have the right to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender, and the university can arrange interim measures, provide support resources, and explain investigation options, including referral to confidential resources.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or discriminated against based on your sex or gender, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, you may find information about your rights and options at titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu. Title IX is part of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at Ohio State, which responds to all bias-motivated incidents of harassment and discrimination, such as race, religion, national origin and disability. For more information on OIE, visit equity.osu.edu or email equity@osu.edu.

Commitment to a diverse and inclusive learning environment

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. I/We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

More information on OSU's land acknowledgement can be found here:

<https://mcc.osu.edu/about-us/land-acknowledgement>

Your mental health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learn, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University's Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, on-demand resources are available at go.osu.edu/ccsondemand. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614- 292-

5766, and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The Ohio State Wellness app is also a great resource available at go.osu.edu/wellnessapp.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requesting accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Accessibility of course technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- Canvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)
- Streaming audio and video
- CarmenZoom accessibility (go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility)
- Collaborative course tools

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings (Available on Carmen)	Assignments Due
1	5/12 – 5/16	Introduction	-	• Introduction Video
2	5/17 - 5/23	Defining popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story (2018). “What is popular culture?” • Gans (1974). “The Critique of mass culture” 	• Reading Quiz 1
3	5/24 - 5/30	Methods for explaining popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danesi (2019). “Explaining pop culture” • McQuail (2010). “Mass communication and culture” 	• Reading Quiz 2
4	6/1 - 6/6	Sources of popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danesi (2019). “The business of pop culture” • McQuail (2010). “The production of media culture” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 3 • Milestone Assignment 1
5	6/7 - 6/13	How does popular culture spread? (pt. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rogers (1983). “Elements of diffusion” • Xu et al. (2016). “Networked cultural diffusion...” 	• Reading Quiz 4
6	6/14 - 6/20	How does popular culture spread? (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayahara et al. (2007). “Searching for culture” • Choi (2015). “The two-step flow of communication...” 	• Reading Quiz 5
7	6/21 - 6/27	Defining experts and mavens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boster et al. (2011). “Identifying influence...” • Carpenter et al., (2015). “Evidence for the validity of a social connectedness scale...” 	• Reading Quiz 6
8	6/28 - 7/4	Defining popularity of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Askin et al. (2017). “What makes popular culture popular...” • Eden et al., (2015). “Mixed and mashed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 7 • Milestone Assignment 2
9	7/5 – 7/11	Defining popularity of film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litman (1983). “Predicting success of theatrical movies” • Lewis et al. (2019). “Are enjoyment and appreciation both yardsticks of popularity” 	• Reading Quiz 8
10	7/12 - 7/18	How people select different media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubin (2006). “Uses and gratifications...” • Knobloch-Westerwick (2006). “Mood management...” 	• Reading Quiz 9
11	7/19 - 7/25	How does popular media reflect society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith et al. (2016). “Inequality in 700 popular films” • Schug et al. (2017). “Gendered race in mass media...” 	• Reading Quiz 10
12	7/26 – 7/30	-	-	• Final Term Paper