

SYLLABUS: COMM 3466:

COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE

Autumn 2023 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

Instructor: Dr. Emily Davidson
Email Address: davidson.536@osu.edu Online Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. or by appointment Office hours Zoom link: https://osu.zoom.us/j/93309403995?pwd=a1d3Umk5OWw1VTEyUE1rQU1ReE5CZz09

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 CarmenCanvas (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 CarmenCanvas at a scheduled time.

Pace of online activities: This course is divided into **weekly modules** that are released at least 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 CarmenCanvas 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 week. More than one lecture may appear in the upload. The videos are designed 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, CarmenCanvas, 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 CarmenCanvas (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.

CarmenCanvas access

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in CarmenCanvas. To ensure that you are able to connect to CarmenCanvas 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.

Assignment	Number	Points each	Points total
Intro video	1	10	10
Discussions	8 (+2 extra)	15	120
Quizzes	10 (+1 extra)	10	100
Milestone assignment 1	1	20	20
Milestone assignment 2	1	25	25
Final paper	1	75	75
Total			350

- **Introduction Video (10 pts)**
 - 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.
- **Reading Quizzes (100 pts ~30% of grade)**
 - Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester on a weekly schedule. All quizzes are due by Friday 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.**
- **Participation through Discussion Boards (120 pts ~35% of grade)**
 - 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.
 - Note: We will have a discussion board for each week where students can post questions or observations about the readings. **To receive full credit, students must make *substantive* contributions to 8 of the 10 discussion boards.** Although the discussion boards are open-ended and students can present any information they wish, suggested topics for each week will be noted in lecture
 - All posts will be due on the Thursday of the week when they are assigned. **Two responses to classmates will be due the following Sunday.**
 - **Students may participate in an extra discussion board for up to 5 points of extra credit**
- **Term Paper (120 pts ~35% of grade)**
 - 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 5. (20 pts ~5% 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 12. (25 pts ~7% 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 (75 pts ~20% of grade):** A ~6-page (double-spaced) term paper in [APA format](#) will be due at the end of the semester.

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 major assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **14 days**.

Discussion post feedback should be available within **5 days** of the response posts

E-mail

I will reply to e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays. You can reach me through the osu.edu email and Carmen Messages

Instructor communication

At times announcements will be made to the class via Carmen Announcements and sent through a Carmen message. I will also contact the whole class through Buckeyemail and Carmen Messages, but generally use Buckeyemail to contact individual students. It is very important to frequently check your email when participating in an online course.

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. Plagiarism is an example of academic misconduct, which could lead to reporting to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). Please carefully review [what constitutes plagiarism](#). I will explain in greater detail in the semester.

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.

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the [University’s academic regulations](#). **You may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.**

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 Greeneville 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

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, 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. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the **Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS)** by visiting <https://ccs.osu.edu/> or calling **614-292-5766**. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on- call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available through the **Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org**

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

The tentative schedule is available on the next two pages

Course Schedule

Pop culture is an ever-evolving topic that can change at any moment. Therefore, the below schedule and content is tentative and subject to change. You will be contacted immediately if a reading or due date is changed. All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m.

R = Thursday; F = Friday; Su = Sunday

Week	Date	Topics	Readings (Available on CarmenCanvas)	Assignments Due
1	8/22/2023 – 8/25	Introduction	<i>Feel free to get started on the readings for next week</i>	• Introduction Video (F)
2	8/28 – 9/1	Defining and critiquing popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storey (2018). “What is popular culture?” • Gans (1974). “The critique of mass culture” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post 1 (R/Su) • Reading Quiz 1 (F)
3	9/5 – 9/8 (Monday Labor Day)	Methods for explaining popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danesi (2019). “Explaining pop culture” • McQuail (2010). “Mass communication and culture” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post 2 (R/Su) • Reading Quiz 2 (F)
4	9/11 – 9/15	Sources of popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danesi (2019). “The business of pop culture” • McMenamin (2023) “SAG-AFTRA, WGA strikes are trying to topple a broken industry” • McQuail (2010). “The production of media culture” (<i>skim</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post 3 (R/Su) • Reading Quiz 3 (F)
5	9/18 – 9/22	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...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 4 (F) • Milestone Assignment 1 (F)
6	9/25 – 9/29	How does popular culture spread? (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayahara & Wellman (2007). “Searching for culture” • Choi (2015). “The two-step flow of communication...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post 4 (R/Su) • Reading Quiz 5 (F)

7	10/2 – 10/6	Defining influence	<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...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post 5 (R/Su) Reading Quiz 6 (F)
8	10/9 – 10/11 (Autumn Break RF)	Defining popularity of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Askin & Mauskapf (2017). “What makes popular culture popular...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Quiz 7 (WEDS)
9	10/16 – 10/20	Defining popularity of film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litman (1983). “Predicting success of theatrical movies” (<i>skim</i>) Lewis et al. (2019). “Are enjoyment and appreciation both yardsticks of popularity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post 6 (R/Su) Reading Quiz 8 (F)
10	10/23 – 10/27	Parasocial interactions/relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Klimmt, et al. (2006). “Parasocial Interactions and Relationships.” Hoffner & Bond (2022). “Parasocial relationships, social media, & well-being” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post 7 (R/Su) Reading Quiz 9 (F)
11	10/30 – 11/3	How people select different media (pt. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubin (2006). “Uses and gratifications...” Knobloch-Westerwick (2006). “Mood management...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post 8 (R/Su) Reading Quiz 10 (F)
12	11/6 – 11/09 (Veteran’s Day [observed] Fri)	How people select different media (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oliver & Raney (2011). “Entertainment as pleasurable and meaningful...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Quiz 11 (Thursday) Milestone Assignment 2 (SUNDAY)
13	11/13 – 11/17	How popular media reflects 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...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion post 9 (R/Su) Reading Quiz 12 (F)
14	11/20 – 11/21 (Thanksgiving break W-F)	TBD	Lecture only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. Eat, drink, and be merry!

15	11/27 – 12/1	TBD	Lecture only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post 10 (R/Su)
16	12/3 – 12/8	N/A	Writing Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing time • Final Term paper (Friday 12/8)
17	4/27 – 5/3	Finals Week		