SYLLABUS
COMM 3466

Communication and Popular Culture
Summer 2024 (8-week term)
3 credit hours
Online

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Instructor: Annie Dooley

Email address: dooley.129@osu.edu

Online Office hours: By appointment

Course description

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

This general elective course will take a broad perspective examining 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. Written/media assignments, tests/quizzes, and online discussions will aid students' understanding of the intersection of popular culture and communication.

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, TV shows, books, clothing, and even memes. Although all assignments are completed individually, you are expected to engage other students through our online discussions. To this end, certain technologies are required for taking this course (see Course Technology section).

Throughout the 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.

  - 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 and participation requirements: Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of students' expected participation:

- **Participating in online activities for attendance**: **AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**
  You are expected to log in to the course in Carmen every week. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible.*
- **Office hours and live sessions**: **OPTIONAL**
  All live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are optional.

- **Participating in discussion forums**: **2+ TIMES PER WEEK**
  As part of your participation, each week you can expect to post at least twice as part of our substantive class discussion on the week's topics.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

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.

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.

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.

GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

Descriptions of major course 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. All assignments will be due by Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. of the week they were assigned.

5 Weekly Quizzes (25% of grade)

o Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester on a weekly schedule.

o The quizzes represent a check-in point for the students and the professor. They ensure that students are keeping up with the lectures/readings and that the students are getting the "overarching lesson" from each lecture/reading.

o I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

7 Discussion Posts (35% of grade)

o Students' participation will be assessed by examining whether they <u>substantially</u> contributed to weekly discussion boards. Students are required to participate in 7 discussion boards throughout the semester.

o To receive points for each discussion board, students are required to make at least 1 discussion board **post** and 1 discussion board **reply** each week. The purpose of these requirements is to allow students to engage with one another with respect to the weekly material. Students can feel free to post more each week if they choose to do so.

Note: Students are encouraged to post either questions or observations about the readings. To receive points, a student's post must make a ***<u>substantive</u>*** contribution the 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.

Term Paper (40%)
o 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?
o Students will link their historical analysis to important communication theories discussed throughout the course.
o 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 (10% of grade): Due Week 3

- 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 (10% of grade): Due Week 6

- 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 2 pages long (single-spaced) and have enough detail that the professor has a firm understanding of what the student will present in their final document.

Final Paper (20% of grade)

An approximately 6 page (double-spaced) term paper will be due during week 8.

Late assignments

Late submissions will not be accepted. Please refer to Carmen for due dates.

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

Instructor 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 **614-688-4357(HELP)** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and feedback:** For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**.

- **Email:** I will reply to emails within **48 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.

- **Discussion board:** I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Discussion and 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**: While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.
- **Tone and civility**: Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online.
- **Citing your sources**: When we have academic discussions, 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.
- **Backing up your work**: Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, such as Microsoft Word, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

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 ⌷OBJ⌷HYPERLINK "http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/" **http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/**⌷OBJ⌷.

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.
 Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@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

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 or someone you know are 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 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 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requesting accommodations

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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.
If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site for

resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

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

Refer to the Carmen course for up-to-date assignment due dates.

Week	Topic	Reading	Due
1 May 7-11	Syllabus and Course Overview What is Popular Culture?	• Syllabus • Story, J. (2018). What is popular culture? (pp. 1-17). • Gans, H. (1974). The critique of mass culture (pp. 17-64). Optional: • What is communication?	Quiz 1 Discussion Post 1
2 May 13-18	How can we study popular culture?	• Danesi, M. (2019). Explaining pop culture (pp. 63-101). • McQuail (2010). Mass communication and culture (pp. 1-19). Optional: • "Media Giants: What is the point?" - • "Here's who owns everything in Big Media today"	Quiz 2 Discussion Post 2
3 May 19-25	Popular language	• Danesi, M. (2019). The business of pop culture (pp. 102-142). • McQuail, D. (2010). The production of media culture (pp. 307-336). • Danesi, M. (2019). Pop language (pp. 337-363).	Discussion Post 3 Milestone Assignment 1
4 May 26-Jun 1 (No class Memorial Day May 27)	How does pop culture spread?	• Rogers, E. M. (1983). Elements of diffusion. (pp. 1- 37). • Xu, et al. (2016). Networked cultural diffusion and creation on YouTube: An analysis of YouTube memes (pp. 104-122). • Choi, S. (2015). The two-step flow of communication in Twitter-based public forums (pp. 696-711).	Quiz 3 Discussion Post 4
5 Jun 2-8	Identifying experts in pop culture	• Boster, et al. (2011). Identifying influence: Development and validation of the connectivity, persuasiveness, and maven scales (pp. 178-196). • Carpenter, et al. (2015). Evidence for the validity of a social connectedness scale: Connectors amass bridging social capital online and offline (pp. 119-134).	Quiz 4 Discussion Post 5
6 Jun 9-15	What makes movies and music popular?	• Walser, R. (1998). The rock and roll era.(pp. 345–387). • Litman, B. R. (1983). Predicting success of theatrical movies: An empirical study (pp. 159-175). • Lewis, et al. (2019). Are enjoyment and appreciation both yardsticks of popularity? (pp. 55-64).	Discussion Post 6 Milestone Assignment 2
7 Jun 16-22	How people select media and how popular media reflects society	• Rubin, A. M. (2009). Uses and gratifications: An evolving perspective on media effects (pp. 147-160). • Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2006). Mood management: Theory, evidence, and advancements (pp. 239-254). • Smith, et al. (2016). Inequality in 700 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race, & LGBT Status from 2007 to 2014.	Quiz 5 Discussion Post 7
8 Jun 23-28	What does it mean to have "taste"?	Optional: • Excerpts from Gans, H. J. (1974). The evaluation of taste cultures and publics (pp. 119-160).	Term Paper Due