

SYLLABUS: COMM 3466-0010 (31992) ONLINE COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE

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

Instructor(s)

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
Matthew Grizzard, Ph.D. Email Address: grizzard.6@osu.edu Online Office Hours: Tuesday 3pm-4pm; By appointment	Joe Francemone Email Address: francemone.1@osu.edu Online Office Hours: Friday 2pm-3pm; By appointment

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 15 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.

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 (5%)
 - 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 professor and the other students to connect a name and a face with our virtual colleagues.
- 12 Reading Quizzes (15% 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 professor. They ensure that students are keeping up with the readings and that the students are getting the "overarching lesson" from each reading. The quizzes also present in an abbreviated format, similar questions as to those that will be found on tests.
 - I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

- 2 Tests (40% of grade)
 - 2 tests will be administered during the semester: Test 1 is during Week 6, and Test 2 is during Week 12
 - The tests will assess students' knowledge of the readings and lectures as well as their ability to apply their knowledge to related contexts.
- 1 Term Paper (40%)
 - 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. (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 10. (10% 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 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: A ~10-page (double-spaced) term paper will be due at the end of the semester. (25% of grade)
- Participation through Discussion Boards (Bonus 5%)
 - 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 8 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 8 of the 15 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 or the TA will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**. Please email through Buckeyemail and not Carmen Messages. DO NOT reply to a Carmen message through Buckeyemail. You should include both the Instructor and the TA on your email.

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.

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.

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 Misconduct

All of your work in this class is expected to be your independent contribution. You should not seek help from other students, friends, family, etc.

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/>.

Late Assignments

Late work is not accepted in this class. Assignments turned in after the deadline will only be accepted with a valid medical or university excuse that is presented within 5 days of the missed deadline. It is the student’s responsibility to be sure the assignment submitted correctly. Please check your Carmen folder after submission to ensure the upload is there and complete.

Disability Services

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; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

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 Yountkin 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 through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1--800--273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Sexual Misconduct/Relationship Violence

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, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Diversity Policy

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.

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7. The following technologies may be used in this course. You should familiarize yourself with them if you have questions.

- **Carmen:**
 - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
 - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
 - **This online course requires use of Carmen (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.**
 - [Carmen accessibility](#)
- **Secured Media Library:**
 - Media materials for this course will be made available via the Secured Media Library. go.osu.edu/SecuredMediaLibrary
 - To obtain additional help for use of the Secured Media Library, please email emedial@osu.edu
 - Frequently Asked Questions and support can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/secured-media-library>
- **CarmenZoom**
 - Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, CarmenZoom.
 - Help guides on the use of CarmenZoom can be found at https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmenzoom/getting-started-carmenzoom?search_text=with%20all%20the%20functionality%20of%20a%20Zoom%20pro%20account%20that%20includes%20up%20to%20300&search_terms=zoom
- **Proctorio:**
 - Proctorio, an online proctoring tool, will be used during this course. Proctorio offers you flexibility to take your exams at the time and in the location of your choosing. Students are required to have a webcam (USB or internal) with a microphone and a strong and stable internet connection. During the course of an

exam, Proctorio will record the testing environment, therefore students should select private spaces for the exam session where disruptions are unlikely and where recording devices can be enabled. Instructions for Proctorio use will be provided. To use Proctorio you must be **over 18 years of age**. Additionally, the tool has **limitations in its accessibility for students reliant upon screen readers and keyboard navigation**. If you have concerns about using an online proctoring tool for the reasons listed above or in general, please work with your instructor to find an equivalent alternative. Additional information on academic integrity at Ohio State and [recommended proctoring options](#) are available.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam and microphone recommended for office hours, chat function available for students without webcam or microphone.

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Course Schedule

- Week 1 (Jan. 6)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - Defining popular culture and its relationship to high and low culture and youth. – Online Lecture 1
 - Examining origins of popular culture and how it spread and developed over time from ancient societies to the modern world. – Online Lecture 2
 - What is the discipline of communication? – Online Lecture 3
 - Assignments
 - Reading
 - Story, J. (2018). What is popular culture? In *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (pp. 1-17). New York, NY: Routledge.
 - National Communication Association. (n.d.). What is communication? Retrieved from <https://www.natcom.org/about-nca/what-communication>
 - Gans, H. (1974). The critique of mass culture (pp. 17-64). In *Popular culture and high culture*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
 - View online lectures
 - Introduction Video (Due Jan. 11)
 - 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.
 - Reading Quiz 1 (Due Jan. 11)
 - Discussion Post 1 Suggested Topic
 - Identify areas of intersection between communication research and popular cultural theories. Propose a research question related to popular culture that a communication student/communication researcher might attempt to answer.
 - Students can critique and respond to another student's Discussion Post 1 by asking:
 - Is the question that they proposed novel? How might you extend or refine the student's idea? What would be a way to measure and observe the processes described by the student?

- Week 2 (Jan. 13)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - Methods for explaining and describing popular culture, including communication theories, critical theories, psychological and sociological theories, semiotic approaches, and transgression theories (e.g., moral panics). – Online Lectures 4, 5, and 6
 - Assignments
 - Reading
 - Danesi, M. (2019). Explaining pop culture. In *Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives* (pp. 63-101). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
 - McQuail, D. (2010). Mass communication and culture (pp. 111-134). In *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
 - View online lectures
 - Reading Quiz 2
 - Discussion Post 2 Suggested Topic
 - Identify and describe the epistemological assumptions of one of the methodological approaches from the lectures and readings. What assumptions does the method of choice make about the structure of knowledge and the world?
 - Students can re-examine their question from Discussion Post 1 and link it to another students' Discussion Post 2 post. How might the assumptions of the method described in Discussion Post 2 be utilized to answer your question? Be sure to try to find the best “match” among the various approaches. Not all approaches are equally capable of answering all research questions.

- Week 3 (Jan. 20)
 - Topic and Online Lectures
 - Current sources of popular culture; the media industries and the consolidation/fragmentation of the media landscape; this section outlines how media economics can play a role in how popular culture spreads by examining technological and economic convergence. – Online Lectures 7 and 8
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Danesi, M. (2019). The business of pop culture. In *Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives* (pp. 102-142). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
 - McQuail, D. (2010). The production of media culture (pp. 307-336). In *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
 - "Media Giants: What is the point?" - <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2002/05/23/what-is-the-point>
 - "Here's who owns everything in Big Media today" <https://www.vox.com/2018/1/23/16905844/media-landscape-verizon-amazon-comcast-disney-fox-relationships-chart>
 - View online lectures
 - Reading Quiz 3
 - Discussion Post 3 Suggested Topic
 - Identify one of the current mega-conglomerates and describe its evolution into its current state. Where did the various entities that make up the mega-conglomerate in its current state begin? When were they acquired/consolidated into one company?
 - Find a classmate who chose the same company as you and one who chose a separate company.
 - For the classmate who chose the same company as you, does your timeline match up? If not, figure out who is right.
 - For the classmate who chose a different company, are there similarities between the company your classmate chose and the one you chose? What do you make of the similarities and differences? What observations can you glean that might help you understand how mega-conglomerates operate today and what impacts they might have on the development and spread of popular culture?

- Week 4 (Jan. 27)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine slang and popular. – Lectures 9 and 10
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Danesi, M. (2019). Pop language. In *Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives* (pp. 336-363). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
 - Dumas, B. K., & Lighter, J. (1978). Is slang a word for linguists?. *American speech*, 53(1), 5-17.
 - View lectures
 - Reading Quiz 4
 - Discussion Post 4 Suggested Topic
 - Outline and present the major arguments Danesi proffers regarding the role of slang and popular language. How does slang relate to representations of gender, race, and sexual identity within popular culture? How do subcultures as well as the main culture adopt and transform slang.
 - Trace the etymology of a slang term. When was it first used? How has its meaning changed over time? Use Google's Ngrams to examine its relative popularity over time and present graphs that might indicate when it became most popular (<https://books.google.com/ngrams>).

- Week 5 (Feb. 3)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - How does popular culture spread (pt. 1)? In this section, we'll explore Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory and examine how it might explain the spread of popular culture from centralized sources of information, such as the mass media. – Online Lectures 11 and 12
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Rogers, E. M. (1983). Elements of diffusion. In *Diffusion of Innovations* (pp. 1-37). New York, NY: The Free Press.
 - Xu, W. W., Park, J. Y., Kim, J. Y., & Park, H. W. (2016). Networked cultural diffusion and creation on YouTube: An analysis of YouTube memes. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 60(1), 104-122.
 - View online lectures
 - Reading Quiz 5
 - Milestone Assignment 1 due by end of week
 - Discussion Post 5 Suggested Topic
 - Using the major theoretical components of diffusion of innovations theory, describe and explain the spread of a popular culture fad of your choice. Do some research and identify when the fad began, how it spread, and how its characteristics corresponded with or differed from the characteristics of innovations as defined by diffusion of innovations.
 - Select and critique a classmate's post. Are there aspects that they are leaving out? Do you have additional questions regarding their analysis? Can you provide a solution that they may have overlooked?

- Week 6 (Feb. 10)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - How does popular culture spread (pt. 2)? In this section, we'll examine the two-step flow model of communication, described by Lazarsfeld and colleagues in 1948. We'll take an up-to-date look at the model and examine whether it can explain how messages spread through modern communication settings, such as twitter. – Online Lecture 13 and 14
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Choi, S. (2015). The two-step flow of communication in Twitter-based public forums. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33, 696-711. doi: 10.1177/0894439314556599
 - Kayahara, J., & Wellman, B. (2007). Searching for culture—high and low. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(3), 824-845.
 - View online lectures
 - Discussion Post 6 Suggested Topic
 - Using the major theoretical components of the two-step flow and the paper presented above, what aspects of current forms of communication might be altered from the original postulation of the theory? Is communication today fundamentally different from what Lazarsfeld discussed in his original theory or is it simply a “distinction without a difference”
 - Find a classmate who disagrees with you. Synthesize and expand their argument. How would you argue against yourself using your classmate's post as a springboard?
 - Test 1

- Week 7 (Feb. 17)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - This week's topic builds on the previous two weeks. Here we examine a biological/evolutionary explanations for the spread of information. You may have heard of memes online, but this section explores the very real scientific underpinnings of memes. – Online Lectures 11 and 12
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Atran, S. (2001). The trouble with memes. *Human Nature*, 12(4), 351-381.
 - Mesoudi, A. (2009). How cultural evolutionary theory can inform social psychology and vice versa. *Psychological review*, 116(4), 929-952.
 - Reading Quiz 6
 - View online lectures
 - Discussion Post 7 Suggested Topic
 - Research a popular meme on the website Knowyourmeme.com. What is the origin of the meme? How has it spread? Examine the meme with their Google Trends data, or provide your own Google Trends data.
 - Find a classmates' description of a meme's online evolution. How does the meme's evolution correspond with Rogers' predicted s-curves? Do you see similarities? Are there differences? What might explain the similarities you observe? What might explain the differences?

- Week 8 (Feb. 24)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine whether some individuals are more likely to be "tastemakers" than others. What makes a person an expert on a topic? What makes them persuasive to others? Communication researchers have recently expanded upon theories relating to the two-step flow of communication and the diffusion of innovations to suggest that some individuals are "mavens" and "super diffusers." We'll read recent research in this area and ask whether this type of approach might help to explain the origins of popular culture. – Lectures 13 and 14.
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Boster, F. J., Kotowski, M. R., Andrews, K. R., & Serota, K. (2011). Identifying influence: Development and validation of the connectivity, persuasiveness, and maven scales. *Journal of Communication*, 61(1), 178-196.
 - Carpenter, C. J., Boster, F. J., Kotowski, M., & Day, J. P. (2015). Evidence for the validity of a social connectedness scale: Connectors amass bridging social capital online and offline. *Communication Quarterly*, 63(2), 119-134.
 - Reading Quiz 7
 - View lectures
 - Discussion Post 8 Suggested Topic
 - Apply Boster et al.'s conceptualization of "super diffusers" to popular culture. Find one platform of diffusion (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, etc.) where super diffusers are likely to be unimportant for the spread of popular culture. Also find one platform of diffusion where super diffusers are particularly important for the spread of popular culture. Argue—using theoretical concepts—why your choices are justified.
 - Compare your post to another classmates. Identify areas where you agree and areas where you disagree

- Week 9 (Mar. 2)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine the birth and development of rock and roll as a prime example of how marginalized groups and interests can become mainstream. – Online Lectures 15 and 16
 - Assignments
 - Reading
 - Walser, R. (1998) The rock and roll era. In D. Nicholls (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of American Music* (pp. 345-387). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
 - Krause, A. E., & North, A. C. (2017). Pop music lyrics are related to the proportion of female recording artists: Analysis of the United Kingdom weekly top five song lyrics, 1960–2015. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8, 233-242.
 - Reading Quiz 8
 - View online lectures
 - Discussion Post 9 Suggested Topic
 - Based on your reading, analyze and synthesize a history of rock and roll. You might try drawing the history out in a family tree type figure.
 - The historical chapter was written in 1998, so the branches of your family tree from Discussion Post 9 are unfinished. Complete them by examining music trends from the last 21 years.

- Week 10 (Mar. 16)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine what makes a popular song popular. A recent, more up-to-date approach for predicting popularity (see reading for the current week) finds certain elements of a song are predictive of its success. – Online Lectures 17 and 18
 - Assignments
 - Reading
 - Askin, N., & Mauskapf, M. (2017). What makes popular culture popular? Product features and optimal differentiation in music. *American Sociological Review*, 82, 910-944. doi:10.1177/0003122417728662
 - Eden, A., Hoeksema, B., Burgers, C.F. (November, 2015). Mixed and mashed: Novelty as predictor of enjoyment and appreciation of mashups. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV.
 - View lectures
 - Reading Quiz 9
 - Milestone Assignment 2 due
 - Discussion Post 10 Suggested Topic
 - Analyze and synthesize the arguments presented within the article. The authors propose several mechanisms that might explain how a song becomes popular and then test them using data. What are the major perspectives as described by the authors? Why do you think the authors are doing what they are doing? What is their main goal of the paper? (Note: Feel free to use direct quotes to support your claims).
 - The paper presents a scientific study of the features that make certain songs popular. Looking at other students' posts and your own, what is the value of these authors work? How might a communication professional use these data or this more up-to-date approach?

- Week 11 (Mar. 23)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine what makes a movie popular and whether scientific approaches can explain how something becomes popular. Toward this goal we'll look at a classic paper on the topic. – Lectures 19 and 20
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Litman, B. R. (1983). Predicting success of theatrical movies: An empirical study. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 16(4), 159-175.
 - Lewis, R. J., Grizzard, M. N., Choi, J. A., & Wang, P. L. (2019). Are enjoyment and appreciation both yardsticks of popularity?. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 31(2), 55-64.
 - Reading Quiz 10
 - View online lectures
 - Discussion Post 11 Suggested Topic
 - Analyze and synthesize the arguments presented within the article as well as the evidence. How are these arguments similar to or different from the more up-to-date version you read last week? (Note: Feel free to use direct quotes to support your claims). Have we made any progress from using data driven approach? Do we seem to understand it better?
 - Address another student's post. How do their arguments differ from yours? Do they see value where you do not or do they see no value where you see some?

- Week 12 (Mar. 30)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine how individuals select media. By understanding how individuals select the components of popular culture (i.e., popular messages), we might begin to understand why the previous approaches are only marginally successful. – Lectures 21 and 22
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Rubin, A. M. (2009). Uses and gratifications: An evolving perspective on media effects. In R. L. Nabi & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects* (pp. 147-160). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
 - Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2006). Mood management: Theory, evidence, and advancements. In D. Zillmann & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *Psychology of entertainment* (pp. 239-254). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
 - View online lectures
 - Discussion Post 12 Suggested Topic
 - Outline the major assumptions of uses and gratifications and mood management theory. How do these assumptions relate to the predictors used in the papers from Weeks 10 and 11? Are Askin & Mauskapf (2017) and Litman (1983) using similar concepts from U&G? Or, is there little overlap between how we choose and what makes something popular?
 - Synthesize your post and another students post in a manner that expands upon both. That is, don't argue over who is right but rather try to incorporate their observations into yours.
 - Test 2

- Week 13 (Apr. 6)
 - Topics and Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll begin to examine representations within media entertainment. How does popular media content reflect society and what elements of society are excluded? – Lectures 23 and 24
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Smith, S. L., Choueiti, M., Pieper, K., Gillig, T., Lee, C., & DeLuca, D. (2016). Inequality in 700 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race, & LGBT Status from 2007 to 2014. Retrieved from <https://celluloidjunkies.com/podfiles/asib-2.pdf>
 - Schug, J., Alt, N. P., Lu, P. S., Gosin, M., & Fay, J. L. (2017). Gendered race in mass media: Invisibility of Asian men and Black women in popular magazines. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 6(3), 222-236.
 - View online lectures
 - Reading Quiz 11
 - Discussion Post 13 Suggested Topic
 - Summarize the key findings from Smith et al.'s report. Do these patterns concern you? Explain why or why not.
 - Watch Dr. Smith's TED Talk (https://www.ted.com/talks/stacy_smith_the_data_behind_hollywood_s_sexism?language=en) on her findings and the erasure of women in Hollywood. How do you view her findings now that you have seen her present them? Has your opinion changed (e.g., become stronger, become weaker, reversed)?

- Week 14 (Apr. 13)
 - Topics and Online Lectures
 - In this unit, we'll examine what having taste means. Taste is an element of the self but it is also a message. Our tastes communicate to others what we are like. We'll explore how people conceptualize taste broadly and whether there are objective definitions of "good taste" and "bad taste." – Lectures 27 and 28
 - Assignments
 - Readings
 - Excerpts from Gans, H. J. (1974). The evaluation of taste cultures and publics (pp. 119-160). *Popular culture and high culture: An analysis and evaluation of taste*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
 - View online lectures
 - Reading Quiz 12
 - Discussion Post 15 Suggested Topic
 - Define your taste using the theoretical framework described by Gans. Gans was writing in a very different communication environment. Do his ideas about the differentiation of high and popular taste hold up? How would you classify and categorize your tastes as they relate to his theoretical description?
 - Critique a classmate's post. Find areas where you might categorize their tastes differently. Do you think some of their "low brow/popular" tastes are in fact high-brow? Is the distinction useful?

- Week 15 (Apr. 20)
 - Term Paper Due by Wed (Apr. 22)