



CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
SOCI 2705A / DIGH 2705A
WINTER 2022

POPULAR CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Delivery Model: Online (Blended)

Location: Classes via Zoom
Monday/Wednesday 2:35pm–5:25pm (EST)



Instructor: Dr. Phillip Primeau (Phil)

Email: phillipprimeau@cunet.carleton.ca

Office Hours: Individually by Appointment via Zoom
Schedule a meeting here: <https://calendly.com/phillipprimeau>

Course Brightspace Page:
<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/111910>

HOW THIS CLASS WORKS: This course is delivered entirely virtually. The course will unfold through a mix of recorded (asynchronous) and live (synchronous) lectures; course material to read, watch or listen to outside of class time and class discussions. Lectures and discussions will occur via Zoom on Monday & Wednesday starting at 2:35pm (EST). Links to Zoom sessions and online material will be made available through Brightspace. Students are expected to attend live sessions. This material will remain available on Brightspace for the duration of the course, unless otherwise noted. There is a final take-home exam for this course. Students are encouraged to take advantage of office hours by appointment with the course instructor and course teaching assistant. All times listed in Eastern Time (EST).

INSTRUCTOR COMMUNICATION POLICY: Please email your concerns, questions, and considerations. I will respond within 48 business hours Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm (EST). Except for exceptional cases, I will refrain from emailing during the weekend. If after 48 business hours you have not heard back, something, somewhere went wrong. If this happens, please resend your email. If you would like to set up a meeting via Zoom, or a phone call, please schedule a time using this online platform: <https://calendly.com/phillipprimeau>

FORMAT & PARTICIPATION: The structure of this course requires continual participation. The course is organized around lectures, music, videos, podcasts, assigned readings, group discussions, and assignments. Class discussions play an important part in successfully navigating the material for this course. Actively participating in courses on an ongoing weekly basis (especially virtually) can be challenging, but we are a small enough group to be able to have fun, enriching sessions together. Active participation during lectures and discussions is encouraged and expected. This could mean asking questions, offering different perspectives on debates, or contributing personal experiences as valuable learning moments for others. It will not be possible to 'catch up' or 'binge' content near the end of the term. Elements of the course inform and build on each other, which is why ongoing engagement in the course is strongly encouraged. If you feel like you have fallen behind, contact the instructor as soon as possible. During the first class session, we will address how we can develop a supportive learning environment and the expectations around class behaviour, how Zoom will be used in this course and checking emails/Brightspace messages on a regular basis for course updates.

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

TEXTS: All required readings will be available online & on the course's Brightspace page. There is no textbook to purchase. Some material will require remote access to the university's online catalogue.

PODCASTS & VIDEOS: We'll be watching a variety of videos and listening to different podcast episodes and music in and out of class. The links to these will be provided in Brightspace under each appropriate week. The course schedule below also contains some of these links, but make sure to check Brightspace as I will be adding links to material as the term progresses.



COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of various approaches to analyzing digital media and their role in the production and consumption of contemporary cultural forms and practices. Students will reflect upon their use of digital media and the influence they have on their lives and popular culture, more generally. Also listed as DIGH 2705. Prerequisite(s): SOCI 1001 and SOCI 1002, or SOCI 1003 [1.0], or ANTH 1001, or ANTH 1002.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, students will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of different aspects of what we call ‘popular culture’
- Cultivate a critical stance and question conventional notions about popular culture and the producers and consumers of it
- Learn about and be able to critically examine underlying theories related to popular culture
- Become familiar with different ways in which academic research is disseminated to the public
- Distinguish between different types of textual, visual and oral/aural research practices
- Develop and refine written and verbal communication skills

NOTICE: Students are advised that some of the topics covered in this course deal with sensitive and controversial issues that some students may feel uncomfortable dealing with. For this reason, this course may not be suitable for all students.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES: The course will run in parallel with four courses that have partnered for online teaching: at the University of Ottawa, at Carleton University, and at National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway. A website, *Recipro* (<https://biblio.uottawa.ca/omeka1/recipro/>), will serve as a platform for exchanges, the construction of common documents, and for the display of students' work. Students will be able to showcase their projects on the *Recipro* website and will benefit from institutional support provided through the Shared Online Projects Initiative (SOPI) grant from the [Carleton University](#) Associate Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) and the [University of Ottawa](#) Vice Provost (Academic Affairs) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY: Academic work in the social sciences is oftentimes about the choices we make from positions of privilege. While we must not shy away from the choices we make while engaging in academic work, it is our prerogative to engage in ethical practices that are respectful of the diversity of knowledges and perspectives that makeup our social world. In this course, we will have many opportunities to explore some challenging issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy; we will sometimes make mistakes in our speaking and our listening; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always we will need respect for others. Thus, an additional aim of our course will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes difficult conversations that arise as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions. Additionally, as instructor in this course, it is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds

and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and lectures that are respectful of diversity. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honours your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know!
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback (which will lead to me making a general announcement to the class, if necessary to address your concerns). If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Department Chair and Professor Blair Rutherford is an excellent resource.
- I am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. As a male white settler trained in classical social theory and methods I have had to reconsider some of the things that I was taught (inside and outside formal education). This is a good thing. Going back and re-assessing the materials and knowledges that I use to teach allows me to learn and grow as a more informed researcher. In some instances, it has meant removing materials to make space for a more inclusive and diverse set of voices. In other instances it has meant expanding conversations and paying attention to how I teach certain material. This remains a learning process for me and I may from time to time get it wrong. If something was said in class (by anyone, including me) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option). Likewise, if you appreciated the way certain topics or experiences were discussed let me know.

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols. If you are not located near Carleton, you may use the website <https://native-land.ca/> to identify traditional homelands.



COURSE SCHEDULE

The material assigned for each week should reflect and expand on students' research interests, areas of study, and intellectual curiosity. During the first few weeks of the course, students, along with the instructor, will discuss and through consensus finalize a set of readings for the course. Weekly topics may be suggested to reflect what the group wishes to cover during the term. Relevant videos/podcasts/interviews will be posted to Brightspace throughout the term. Once the schedule is finalized, students will be expected to have read, listened, or watched all assigned material **PRIOR** to weekly lectures and **PRIOR** to class discussions. The quality of discussions will be greatly enhanced if everyone comes prepared.

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING MATERIAL
JULY 4	The Pilot	The syllabus Szeman, I. & O'Brien, S. (2017). Introducing popular culture. In <i>Popular culture: A user's guide</i> . Wiley Blackwell. (Selection).
JULY 6	The One About Unpacking Popular Culture	Williams, R. (1976). 'Culture' and 'Masses'. In <i>Popular Culture: A Reader</i> . Sage, pp. 25-32. Hall, S. (1981). Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'. In <i>Popular Culture: A Reader</i> . Sage, pp. 64-71.
JULY 11	The One About Popular Culture & Technology	Benjamin, W. (1936). 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In <i>Popular Culture: A Reader</i> . Sage, pp. 96-102. Adorno, T. (1975). Culture Industry Reconsidered. In <i>Popular Culture: A Reader</i> . Sage, pp.103-108. Morozov, E. (2013). <i>To Save Everything, Click Here</i> . Public Affairs. (Selection).
JULY 13	The One About Consuming Popular Culture & Popular Culture as Commodity Popular Culture & Me Assignment Due	Veblen, T. (1899/2007) <i>Conspicuous Consumption</i> . In <i>Theory of the Leisure Class</i> . Oxford University Press, pp. 49-69. Marx, K. (1867) <i>The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof</i> . In <i>Popular Culture: A Reader</i> . Sage, pp. 89-95. Gladwell, M. (1997) ' The Coolhunt '. <i>The New Yorker</i> .
JULY 18	The One About Sub-Cultures, Counter-Cultures & Capitalism	Heath, J. & Potter, A. (2004). Introduction & Chapter 4: I Hate Myself and Want to Buy. In <i>The Rebel Sell: Why The Culture Can't be Jammed</i> . Harper Collins. pp.1-9; 98-134. McRobbie, A. (1980). Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Critique. <i>Screen Education</i> , 34, 111-123.
JULY 20	The One About Participatory Culture: Fandoms & Fanfiction	Woo, B. (2014). Pragmatics Of Things: Materiality and Constraint in Fan Practices . <i>Transformative Works and Cultures</i> , 16. Fiske, J. (1992). The Cultural Economy of Fandom. In <i>The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media</i> . Routledge. pp.30-49.

JULY 25	The One About Sampling & Remix Culture	<p>TED How sampling transformed music, Mark Ronson</p> <p>In Conversation with Run-DMC</p> <p>Fagerjord, A. (2010). After Convergence: YouTube and Remix Culture. In <i>International Handbook of Internet Research</i>. Springer. pp.187–200.</p>
JULY 27	The Popular Culture of International & Humanitarian Aid Research Essay Due	<p>Marshall, D. (2021). Photography and the Challenges of the Digital Age: Four Conversations with Canadian Communications Officers. <i>Journal of Humanitarian Affairs</i>, 3(2), 57–64.</p> <p>Velasco-Pufleau, L. (2018). Critical Reflections on Music and Humanitarian Narratives. <i>Arts & International Affairs</i>, 3(2), 25–32.</p> <p>Chouliaraki, L. (2012). The Theatricality of Humanitarianism: A Critique of Celebrity Advocacy. <i>Communication and Critical/cultural Studies</i>, 9(1), 1–21.</p>
AUGUST 1	No Class	
AUGUST 3	Searching for Feminist Vampires (or, A Good TV Show to Analyze)	<p>Summers, S. (2010). 'Twilight Is So Anti-Feminist That I Want To Cry': Twilight Fans Finding And Defining Feminism On The World Wide Web. <i>Computers and Composition</i>, 27(4), 315–323.</p> <p>Schwab, K. (2015). The Rise of Buffy Studies. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>Lametti, D., Harris, A., Geiling, N. & Matthews-Ramo, N. (2012). Which Pop Culture Property Do Academics Study the Most? <i>Slate</i>.</p> <p>Ford, J. (2015). Mad Men, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and the 'Golden Age' of Television. <i>The Conversation</i>.</p>
AUGUST 8	The Spaces & Places of Popular Culture	<p>Reijnders, S., van Es, N., Bolderman, L., & Waysdorf, A. (Eds.). (2021). Locating Imagination in Popular Culture. Routledge. (Selection).</p> <p>Shyminsky, N. & Kannen, V. (Eds) (2019). <i>The Spaces and Places of Canadian Popular Culture</i>. Canadian Scholars (Selection).</p>
AUGUST 10	The End of Days? Superheroes & Zombies (Re)visited Popular Culture & Narratives of Aid Assignment Due	<p>Martinez, J. (2016). The Walking Dead: Sociological Implications of a Living Dead World. <i>Humanity & Society</i>, pp. 1-3.</p>
AUGUST 15	Season Finale: What's next for Popular Culture in the Digital Age?	<p>Reynolds, S. (2019, December 28). Streaming Has Killed The Mainstream': The Decade That Broke Popular Culture. <i>The Guardian</i>.</p>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & METHODS OF EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENTS	% OF GRADE	DUE DATES
Class Discussion & Participation	20%	Ongoing
Popular Culture & Me	20%	July 13 th
Research Essay	25%	July 27 th
Popular Culture & Narratives of Aid	15%	August 10 th
Final Take-Home Exam	20%	August 25 th

Full details of assignments will be made available on Brightspace

PARTICIPATION (20% of final grade)

Participation will be based on active engagement during class. During virtual sessions, cameras are optional but strongly encouraged as it helps foster community connections. Active participation can take the form of raising questions, contributing thoughts and ideas to discussions, highlighting linkages and common themes, introducing alternative understandings, etc. Both quantity and quality of contributions will be considered.

POPULAR CULTURE & ME (20% of final grade)

Students will prepare a narrative style essay or podcast in which they critically reflect on their own consumption of, and participation in, popular culture using themes and topics covered in the course. Students will discuss two cultural contexts—the digital and material—in relation to how popular culture is consumed and how popular culture is linked to practices of identity formation and identity performance. This assignment is both a personal reflection and critical engagement with course material. This activity will be supported through the [Student as Partners Program \(SaPP\)](#) (3-5 pages).

RESEARCH ESSAY (20% of final grade)

Students will prepare a research essay on a facet of popular culture. Students will be given a list of possible topics/themes that could be explored or are free to develop their own topics (with prior approval from the course instructor). Essays will rely on course material in addition to secondary sources that students locate through their own research practice. A tutorial on locating and working with academic sources will be offered in advance of the due date for the assignment (5–7 pages).

POPULAR CULTURE & NARRATIVES OF AID (20% of final grade)

This assignment introduces students to field of digital humanities. Students will gain the practical skills and knowledge required to prepare a digital exhibit that will be published on [Recipro: The History of International and Humanitarian Aid](#). Students will have the opportunity to work in groups for this assignment. A tutorial focused on working with digital media will be offered to students prior to the due date of the assignment.

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM (20% of final grade)

The take-home exam will be three questions to be answered in short essay format. This assignment will assess students' understanding of course materials and key themes explored throughout the term.

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course		DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at **613-520-6608** or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*).

*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for June examinations (Early Summer) is **May 27** and for August (Late Summer) is **July 29**.

For Religious Obligations

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Pregnancy

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:

www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

What are the Procedures?

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

Assistance for Students:

Academic and Career Development Services: <https://carleton.ca/career/>

Writing Services: <http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/group-support/pass/>

Important Information

- Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
 - Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
 - Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
 - Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university.
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- In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#).
 - Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>
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Important Dates and Deadlines: Spring and Summer 2022

April 28, 2022	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in early and full summer courses.
May 5, 2022	Early summer and full summer classes begin.
May 12, 2022	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for early summer courses.
May 19, 2022	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for full summer courses.
May 20, 2022	Last day to withdraw from early summer and full summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
May 20-June 1, 2022	Fall/winter and winter term deferred final examinations will be held.
May 23, 2022	Statutory holiday. University closed.
May 27, 2022	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodation Forms for June examinations to the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
June 10, 2022	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, for early summer courses before the official examination period (see Examination Regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
June 17, 2022	Last day of early summer classes. (NOTE: full summer classes resume July 4.) Last day for take home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the Examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar. Classes will follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from early summer courses. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
June 18-19, 2022	No classes or examinations take place.
June 20-26, 2022	Final examinations in early summer courses and mid-term examinations in full summer courses may be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

June 26, 2022	All take home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the Examination regulations in the Academic Regulations University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
June 27, 2022	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in late-summer courses.
July 1, 2022	Statutory holiday. University closed.
July 4, 2022	Late summer classes begin. Full summer classes resume.
July 11, 2022	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) for late summer courses.
July 22, 2022	Last day to withdraw from late summer courses with a full fee adjustment.
July 22-24, 2022	Early summer term deferred final examinations to be held.
July 29, 2022	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodation Forms for August examinations to the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
August 1, 2022	Statutory holiday. University closed.
August 9, 2022	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period (see Examination Regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
August 16, 2022	Last day of late summer and full summer classes. Last day for take home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the Examination Regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar. Last day for academic withdrawal from late summer and full summer courses and any other courses that end this term. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
August 17-18, 2022	No classes or examinations take place.
August 19-25, 2022	Final examinations in late summer and full summer courses may be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
August 25, 2022	All take home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the Examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
September 23-25, 2022	Full and late summer term deferred final examinations to be held