ALT 6003 Popular Culture, Informal Learning, and Adult Learning & Teaching

Spring 2010
Thursday, 5:30-8:15
BV 3.318

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Thursday: 3:00-5:00 in MB 2.244
Tuesday: 5:00-5:30 @ the Downtown Campus (room to be announced)
And by Appointment

As a thinker one should speak only of self-education. The education of youth by others is... something unworthy. ~Friedrich Nietzsche, The wanderer and his shadow

ILT MISSION
The mission of the department of ILT is to foster the intellectual and professional growth and integrity of students and faculty through critical reflection and dialogue, civic responsibility, and leadership. This mission will be accomplished by nurturing a community of interdisciplinary learners who:

- Promote excellence in academic and pedagogical knowledge and research
- Engage in reflective practice
- Embody a strong professional identity and can articulate their philosophies and values
- Value diversity and multiple perspectives
- Promote equality and social justice
- Care about their students and their profession
- Advocate for educational change and reform

ILT GOALS
The department of ILT will create a context that nurtures interdisciplinary learners who:

- Acquire and demonstrate content and discipline knowledge
- Demonstrate an awareness and acknowledgement of and engagement in research-based, reflective, culturally responsive practices
- Are producers, disseminators, and critical consumers of research
1. **Course Description**

**ALT 6003 Popular Culture and Informal Learning in Adult Learning and Teaching:** This course focuses on the various forms and locations of adult education, curriculum, pedagogy, and learning that occur outside of formal schooling or other institutional sites. Specifically, over the semester, we will review inquiry and theorizing on the pedagogical aspects of popular culture, including television, movies, sports, designed informal popular sites of education (such as museums, aquariums, zoos, and monuments), market/consumer culture, art and public performance, and cyberspace, among others. We will also focus on popular culture as it is reflected in and affected by political agencies and policy. The course concludes with a brief section on public pedagogy research and methodologies, emphasizing the particular ethical and epistemological issues at stake in applying educational inquiry methods to non-institutional, informal, public sites of learning.

2. **Course Objectives**

In addition to pursuing the ILT goals listed above, this course will explore the role of the adult learner, including, but not limited to, non-traditional, first-generation, and minority college students and community adult education program participants. We will also investigate the roles and responsibilities of the adult education instructor. By the end of the course, participants will:

- Have a greater understanding of the influence of popular cultural products in their daily lives and to critically reflect upon those products as they affect values, beliefs and biases.
- To begin to understand the implications of popular culture consumption on the educational process.
- To gain awareness of conceptual models and frameworks to guide informal learning from popular culture (public pedagogy).
- To understand how systems of inequality shape ideological, cultural, attitudinal, and behavioral responses to race, class, gender and nationalism/ethnocentricity in cultural consumption.
- To develop understandings of how popular culture shapes popular thought and how that impacts the theory and practice of adult education.
- To develop specific skills for educators of adults to respond to the impact of popular culture on adults and to critically examine those impacts in adult instructional settings.
- Have reflected on current issues in the consumption of popular culture.
- Increase their experience analyzing, presenting, and writing at the graduate level.

3. **Required Texts**


4. Course Requirements and Grading

This course will be run as a seminar and will accommodate different modes of teaching and learning, including short lectures, group discussions, individual presentations, small group activities, and videos. Classroom participation is absolutely essential to the success of this class; because of this, please plan to attend EACH class session and come prepared to share and to learn with the class. Your active, engaged, prepared participation and your critical reflection on the readings, as well as the other class materials, make up the very centerpiece of this class. The course will primarily center on readings, discussion, and media analysis; however, students are also expected to contribute substantially to a Facebook group created for this class called “Adults Learning from Popular Culture.” A key outcome of this course is to bring the ongoing, yet invisible, pedagogies that surround us to consciousness, and consequently, to a form in which they can be analyzed, deconstructed, and denuded of their intents and purposes. In addition, you will complete a substantial research project throughout the course that explores or analyzes a particular popular cultural site or activity. This paper is detailed in full in the assignments section of this syllabus.

Evaluation:

- Class participation and preparedness (*reading the assignments and being prepared to discuss them*) including short presentations and leading discussions 30%
- Facebook group contributions 30%
- Final Project 40%

5. General Expectations

Participants are expected to read all assigned materials, submit assignments, and come to class prepared for dialog and depth of discussion. Active participation in class activities is imperative and there are multiple ways for you to participate. In addition to participating in class discussion and/or reporting on your assigned topic, other forms of acceptable participation include, but are not limited to: suggesting outside readings, films or television programs related to course topics, attending relevant activities outside of class, and reporting on those activities in class.

Participants will be expected to attend all class sessions. Please let me know in advance (if possible) if you will be missing a class. Missing more than one class without reasonable cause will adversely affect the participation grade. Missing 2 sessions will result in either an extra assignment or the loss of one grade level. Accruing 3 or more absences will result in a grade of F.

6. Assignments and Due Dates

a. Read assigned materials prior to each class session
b. Post to Facebook at least twice each week
7. **General Requirements Related to Assignments**
   - All written material should be double spaced and in 12-point font.
   - Please use APA (6th edition) of citation and references in your papers. Correct APA formatting and style will be taken into account when assigning grades.
   - In your assignments, please make every effort to use inclusive language. I realize this is often problematic, since English does not have an inclusive pronoun and avoiding “he/his” can create awkward phrasing sometimes.
   - In the scholarly community, the ability to write well is probably the single most important skill a person can possess. Therefore, honing your academic writing skills is one of the most important tasks you will accomplish in graduate school. Take advantage of the **Tomás Rivera Center Graduate Writing Workshops**! Your fees are paying for them and they have special assistance for graduate students. **Take advantage of their services.** I will expect high quality in your written assignments. After you have used the TRC, I will be happy to review and discuss drafts of your papers, provided you give me enough advance notice.

8. **Classroom Behavior Expectations**

   **Classroom Behavior:** All members of the class are expected to behave with courtesy and respect toward others. Should behavioral disruptions interfere with the business of the classroom and the ability of class members to learn, they may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs in accordance with Section 202 of the UTSA **Student Code of Conduct** (http://www.utsa.edu/OSJA/index.cfm).

   This class is designed to be a safe place for learning and discussion. Any rude or intolerant behavior toward others will not be permitted.

   As a courtesy to the class and to facilitate your own learning, **turn off cell phones before entering the classroom.** **Any laptop use must be directly related to what we are doing in class.** Please make every attempt to be on time and prepared for class in order to minimize disruptions.

9. **University Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

   Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (UT Regent's Rules of Regulation). Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions about this (especially what constitutes plagiarism), please stop by my office and I'd be most happy to discuss it. You can also refer to the UTSA **Student Code of**
Conduct on scholastic dishonesty and disciplinary action. This is available at:
http://www.utsa.edu/OSJA/index.cfm

10. Academic Success and the Tomás Rivera Center

*Academic Success and the Tomás Rivera Center*: The TRC provides an array of services to assist students in achieving learning success. For graduate students, they offer help with graduate level writing, basic quantitative research, library skills, APA citation, and presentation skills. The TRC is located in the University Center 1.01.02 (far west end of the UC). You can reach them via the web (www.utsa.edu/trcss) or by phone (458-4694).

11. Other Student Support Services

UTSA students with documented disabilities have access to an array of support services through the Office of Disability Services (office: MS 2.03.18; phone: 458-4157; web: http://www.utsa.edu/disability/).

### Detailed Descriptions of Assignments

**Class participation and preparedness**  
30%

*Reading the assignments and being prepared to discuss them is central to the success of this class for all of us.* Being engaged in the topic is part of the definition of POPULAR culture. And I can tell when you haven’t read, even though I may not always show it. Don’t insult me or the class by pretending you’ve read. COME PREPARED. You may be asked to come up with short presentations and/or lead discussions without prior warning.

**Facebook contributions**  
30%

For this class, I have set up a group on Facebook (closed to everyone but this class). I will invite everyone to join and expect you to accept the invitation within 3 or 4 days of receiving the invitation. Once you’ve joined, I want you to post relevant material, to comment on the wall, to set up discussion groups, and to post photos, links and videos, etc. that add substantively to the material we are reading and discussing each week. I expect considered engagement with this project and look forward to an ongoing space to continue the discussion and to expand our collective knowledge. Additional materials contributed by the class as you engage with popular culture and informal sites of learning will be a terrific contribution to all of our learning. I want to do this on Facebook rather than Blackboard because Facebook is a site of popular culture knowledge production and dissemination. We will explore and analyze the medium while we are using it.

**Final Project**  
40%

As national educational policies, economic imperatives, and institutional pressures to expand the relevance of research grow, more and more scholars and professional practitioners find themselves increasingly unprepared to reach out to wider audiences. To be sure researchers have been and still are at times simply unwilling to put a lot of effort into making their research
accessible to non-academics, and tenure and promotion policies tend to be archaic and
unsupportive of researchers who want to present their research to the “common” public. But (I
hope) it is more often the case that even though researchers are willing to climb down from their
ivory tower, they find themselves unable to write for the broader public or are daunted by the
notion of finding new processes for reaching different audiences with their research findings.

So for this project, each student will identify a site of public pedagogical activity related to
popular culture and critically explore and analyze some aspect of this site’s educational content
(e.g. its outcomes, its function in the social order, etc.). You will research this site, take notes,
and type up an annotated bibliography of your sources. Then you will design and perform/create
your findings in the popular medium of your choice. First you must research some aspect of
popular culture that really interests you with the goal of exploring its pedagogical potential for
either supporting systems of inequality and unjust policies or resisting them. We will be reading
about a variety of popular sites of public pedagogy. Consider your talents, strengths and abilities
and create an educational “performance” or written/drawn form and present it to the class.
Possible choices include: a dramatic play, a song, a poetic presentation, an art exhibit, a short
story reading or an autoethnographical performance piece. Other options are to create a website
or to draw a graphic novel or comic (or some other pedagogical graphic work). You can make a
film, do a stand up comedy spot, make a quilt, and so on. There are countless possibilities. These
projects should be as professionally done as possible.

Ph.D. Students
In addition to the assignment for M.A. students above, Ph.D. students will also turn their findings
into a final paper that will be submitted for review in three phases: a short proposal in week 7, a
rough draft in week 12, and a comprehensive draft in the final week of class. The final product of
this work should take the form of an article suitable for publication. That is, the organization,
format, and content of the paper should be similar to those found in scholarly journals. For this
paper, each student will identify a site of public pedagogical activity related to popular culture
and explore some aspect of this site’s educational content (e.g. its outcomes, its function in the
social order, the ways in which it is like/unlike schools and schooling, etc.). Alternatively,
students might explore further methodological issues centered on the public pedagogy of popular
culture research, or they might describe the ways in which schools and schooling might benefit
from attention to the more pervasive educational movement of the greater culture. I strongly
recommend that learners use an empirical approach to this assignment, collecting observational,
documentary, and other public domain data (i.e. not requiring IRB approval) to support and
supplement their assertions. Theoretical and methodological pieces are acceptable, but analysis
of actual data will help bring course concepts to life and aid in getting work ready for
publication.

For PART 1 of the Assignment: On week 7, students will submit a 1-2 page proposal detailing
ideas for your final paper.

For PART 2 of the Assignment: On week 12, students will come to class with a rough draft of
their work for peer review and feedback. This rough draft should be as close to final as possible
to ensure a comprehensive review.
For PART 3 of the Assignment: Students will submit the final paper, along with any questions regarding potential publication of the paper (e.g. Journal, editorial concerns).

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The class schedule is organized with topics and readings for each week. It is expected that early in the course, we will follow a pre-defined (i.e. instructor defined) schedule for the readings and topics. Within this course, we will address learning, popular culture, and critical analysis as an autobiographical/analytical process, rather than a static set of expectations and plans. Accordingly, additional objectives for the course will, I hope, emerge phenomenologically through the improvisational process of experiencing the course, critically examining the popular cultural products we each consume, and contemplating the space between the known and yet-unknown that produces learning. This syllabus is expected to be an evolving document, especially in response to students’ input, personas, and wants/needs. As the course progresses and our interests and points of view become known, we can negotiate the scheduling of particular readings and discussions. The intention is to allow some flexibility in scheduling readings, discussions and assignments. Therefore, this schedule may change significantly during the semester. Please keep up with changes and, if you miss a class, check with a classmate about assignments for the following week.

**Required statement:** This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.
### Course Outline

**NOTE:** This list WILL probably CHANGE as the class progresses and additional readings will be added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to topic and classmates</td>
<td>None in anticipation of 1st class meeting</td>
<td>Get to know your classmates!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1/19 | 2    | Brief Overview of Research on Education and Popular Culture  
• *HPP* Chapter 1  
• ***PCEMAE* Chapter 1 (Tisdell) |                                                                                                |
| 1/26 | 3    | The question of who holds the power—who is really the instructor in the public pedagogy of popular culture? | • *Culture Conglomerates* Chs 1,3 & 6  
• Guerilla Girls                                                | Film: *Outfoxed*                                              |
| 2/2  | 4    | Public Pedagogy of Cyberspace               | • *HPP* Chs. 20,21,22,23 & 24                                                                  | Watch the two short videos on Blackboard Social Networking & Facebook & Blogs, Toby Miller  
Film: *Beyond Good & Evil*                                     |
| 2/9  | 5    | Representations of “School” in Pop Culture  | • *BTM* Ch 6  
• Buffy, Jarvis AERC Paper  
• *Education in Pop Culture* Chs 6,7,8  
• *HPP* Chs 4 & 7  
• *Pop Culture & Critical Pedagogy* Ch. 2  
• Images of fictional cc students  
• Buffy goes to college, Daspit  
• Listen to Pink Floyd’s “The Wall” |                                                                                                |
| 2/16 | 6    | Representations of Gender & Sexuality in Pop Culture | • *Action Chicks,* Ch. 6  
• *Feminisms & Pedagogies* Ch. 10                                                                 | Film: *Generation M*                                         |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Film</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Representations of Class &amp; Work in Pop Culture</td>
<td>● <em>BTM</em> Chs. 1, 8, 10 &amp; 11 &lt;br&gt;● Armstrong, Learning about Work</td>
<td><em>Class Dismissed Final Project Proposal Due</em></td>
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<td>3/2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Representations of Race &amp; Ethnicities in Pop Culture</td>
<td>● <em>Pretend We’re Dead</em>, Ch. 3 &lt;br&gt;● <em>HPP</em> Chs. 5 &amp; 6 &lt;br&gt;● <em>BTM</em> Ch 7 &lt;br&gt;● Armstrong, Managing Diversity</td>
<td><em>Dreamworlds 3</em></td>
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<td>3/9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consumption in Popular Culture</td>
<td>● <em>Cultural Citizenship</em>, Ch. 3 &lt;br&gt;● Matheson, Food is Never Just. . . &lt;br&gt;● <em>Feminisms &amp; Pedagogies</em>, Ch. 5 &lt;br&gt;● <em>PCEMAE</em> Ch. 8 &lt;br&gt;● <em>HPP</em> Chs. 28 &amp; 29</td>
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<td>3/16</td>
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<td>SPRING BREAK!</td>
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<td>3/23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Research and Dissemination on/using Pop Culture, Informal Learning &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>● <em>HPP</em> Chs. 5,7,11 &amp; 12 &lt;br&gt;● Armstrong, Stand up comedy</td>
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<td>3/30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>PEDAGOGIES OF RESISTANCE in Pop Culture</td>
<td>● <em>Pretend We’re Dead</em>, Ch. 5 &lt;br&gt;● <em>BTM</em>, Ch. 3 &lt;br&gt;● <em>HPP</em> Chs. 15, 16, 42, 43, 46 &amp; 51 &lt;br&gt;● Dennis, Boy who would be queen &lt;br&gt;● Bracken, Sandlin &amp; Wright, Guerrilla Girls and Raging Grannies &lt;br&gt;● Wright &amp; Sandlin, You are what you are</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
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| 4/6  | 12   | The Politics of/in/thru Popular Culture | ● *Entertaining the Citizen*, Ch. 3  
● *Cultural Citizenship*, Ch. 2  
● *HPP* Chs 13, 34, 50  
● *PCEMAE* Chs. 2 & 5 | Film: *Militainment, Inc.* or *War Made Easy*  
Final Project Draft or Outline Due |
● Smidt (2004), Sinister storytellers  
● Bruna (2004) *Addicted to Democracy: South Park*  
● More to be announced | Final Project Presentations |
| 4/20 | 14   | Popular/Public Culture as Radical Pedagogy | ● *Pop Culture & Critical Pedagogy*, Ch. 7  
● *HPP* Chs. 58,62,63 & 64 | Final Project Presentations |
| 4/27 | 15   | Pedagogies, possibilities, prophecies, and pending peril: Responding to and resisting the power of popular culture conglomerates | ● *Globalization & American Pop Culture* Ch. 5  
● *PCEMAE* Chs. 2 & 4 | Final Project Presentations |
| 5/4  | 16   | FINAL PROJECT DUE (Hard copy form) | NONE |