

CMST 4360: Popular Culture and Mass Media

Thursday 6:00pm – 8:45pm, Arts and Sciences 258, CRN #001-21679

University of Texas – Tyler, Department of Communication

Professor: Erik Gustafson, PhD

Office: CAS 229

Phone: 903-566-7099

Email: egustafson@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: M-Th 9:00am – 12:00pm or by appt.

Course Description: This upper-level course in communication will examine the interplay between popular culture and the mass media. Through theoretical and practical application, we will explore not only the effect of the mass media on popular culture (and vice versa) but we will also look at how these phenomena affect our everyday interactions with others, ourselves, and our environments.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Comprehend historical and theoretical principles of mass communication and popular culture.
- 2) Identify historical and contemporary sources of popular culture.
- 3) Apply communication theories to various topics and phenomena in popular culture.
- 4) Conceptualize, research, and report original work in oral and written formats for both popular press and scholar audiences.

Required Readings:

****All readings will be posted in PDF format via Canvas****

Course Policies & Expectations

Description of Instructional Methods: While there will be lectures interspersed throughout the class, we will primarily be engaging in active learning through discussion, content creation and curation, presentations, and other independent and group activities. The class sessions, and the corresponding assignments, are designed to provide you with both theoretical knowledge and real-world experience.

Communication: Communication: The best way to reach me will be via email. You will receive group updates from me through Canvas – because that is the system that is available to us – *but do not send messages through Canvas messenger*. During the work week (M-F 9:00am – 5:00pm), I will respond to emails within 48 hours. If you do not receive a response from me within this time frame, please send another message. Response times are subject to delay on the weekends and evenings.

Attendance/Participation: Attendance in class is mandatory. We only meet 14 times total over the course of the semester. If you plan to miss more than one course period you should consider dropping the course. That said, you can have one freebie for the course. If we achieve perfect attendance as a class for the semester, I will jump in Harvey Lake.

Late Work & Make-up Assignments: As a rule of thumb, I do not accept late work. Outside of academia, you will be expected to complete your assigned work by the date it is required. Period. This class will mirror that expectation. Of course, I do understand that life happens. If something comes up, please contact *me prior to the assignment deadline* to discuss your options. Late work and make-up assignments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Technology Use: During each class period we will be doing a variety of activities that will require you to use a laptop or tablet (NOT only bring your phone) to research, write, and present on a variety of topics related to popular culture and mass media. Though we will be using our technology regularly, it should be used for purposes related to the course. Egregious use of technology for alternative purposes – (i.e. Netflix, text messaging, doom scrolling, etc.) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Classroom Etiquette: Our discussions and class activities will bring us to some topics that may be controversial, uncomfortable, and/or difficult to discuss. It is my expectation that each of you be cordial and conscientious of your classmates throughout the semester. Any inappropriate and/or malicious behavior towards your classmates will not be tolerated. Disciplinary issues will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

University Policies

UT-Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT-Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and Discipline policy (Links to an external site.) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but 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 examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to: copying from another student's test paper; using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test; failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test; possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test; using, buying, stealing,

transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority; discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination; divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student; substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment; paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program; falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit; taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

The UT-Tyler Writing Center

The Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Appointments: 903.565-5995, writingcenter@uttyler.edu

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application.

The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, #3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated (September 3, 2021). Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract. The Census Date (September 3, 2021) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date).
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade).
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment.
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

Final Exam Policy:

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members are required to maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in lieu of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is

unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average for a student.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to complete all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has not been assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or to NC if the course was originally taken under the CR/NC grading basis.

Grade Appeal Policy:

UT Tyler's Grade Appeal policy requires the completion of a Grade Appeal form for this action to take place. The grade appeal begins with the instructor of your course. If you do not agree with the decision of the instructor, you may then move your appeal to the department chair/school director for that course. If you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the chair/director, you may move the appeal to the Dean of the College offering that course who has the final decision. Grade appeals must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade. The Grade Appeal form is found on the Registrar's Form Library.

Withdrawing from Class:

Students you are allowed to withdraw ([Links to an external site.](#)) (drop) from this course through the University's Withdrawal Portal ([Links to an external site.](#)). Texas law prohibits students who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Make sure to consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress as well as the financial implications.

We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and financial aid for additional guidance.

CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule ([Links to an external site.](#)). CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs ([Links to an external site.](#)) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities:

This course follows the practices related to approved absences as noted by the Student Manual of Operating Procedures (Sec. 1 -501 ([Links to an external site.](#))).

Absence for Religious Holidays:

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious holiday are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of the semester.

FERPA:

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy 5.2.3 (Links to an external site.). The course instructor will follow all requirements in protecting your confidential information.

Military Affiliated Students:

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with me if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make me aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. I am willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. Campus resources for military affiliated students are in the Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC (Links to an external site.)) The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu, or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

UT Tyler Resources for Students:

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Brief Description of Assignments

Reading Preparation (300 points – 10 x 30pts/ea): In order to be successful in this course it will be integral to come to class prepared for discussion and engagement. As such, you will need to complete a reading preparation document prior to each class meeting. The preparation document will include discussion, questions, quotations, and short summaries. Your reading preparation document will only be graded if you are in attendance during the corresponding class session.

Class Blog (300 pts): Throughout the course, we will create a public blog about popular culture and the mass media. As a class, in small groups, and individually you will write and edit articles, practice web design, manage social media presence, etc. for the blog. Detailed description in assignment sheet.

Exams (200 points – 2 x100pts/ea): In order to ascertain comprehension, you will take two exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be open-book, untimed, and take-home format.

Term Project (200pts): You will complete a final project that represents a substantial intervention in the study of popular culture and the mass media. Detailed description in assignment sheet.

Point Breakdown

A = 900 – 1000

B = 800 – 899

C = 700 – 799

D = 600 – 699

F = 599 and below

CMST 4360 (Spring 2024) Syllabus Contract

I have read the syllabus for CMST 4360 and agree to the terms for required coursework and acceptable behavior (submit this document ONLY to Canvas).

Name:

Year in School:

Major/Minor:

Hometown:

Professional Headshot:

What are your career interests?

What are your hobbies, interests, etc. outside of school and work?

What are some ways you see popular culture playing a role in your life? What about the mass media?

Who are the top 3 people who inspire you (this can be personally or professionally) and why?

Lastly, if you feel comfortable doing so, please list any time commitments (work, extra-curriculars, family, etc.) you have – or expect to have – outside of CMST 4360 this Spring. (This section is entirely optional and exists just so that, if you wish, I am aware of your general schedule and can attempt to accommodate you accordingly).

Content Preferences

For this course, you will have a considerable amount of input as to what phenomena we study and discuss. While I cannot guarantee that everyone's preferences will be installed in the curriculum, you have the following content areas to consider:

- Race, Class, and Gender
- Religion and Spirituality
- Utopia, Dystopia, and Visions of the Future
- Fashion, Tattoos, and Body Modification/Representation
- Food, Booze, and Travel
- The Indominable Taylor Swift
- Planes, Trains, and Automobiles
- Health and Fitness
- Work and Play; Leisure and Labor
- TV, Film, and Streaming Services
- Politics, Law, and Governance
- Journalism and Informed Citizenry
- Poetry and Literature
- Celebrity and Influence(rs)
- Sports, Fandom, and New Media
- Music, Music, Music

With these content areas in mind, please answer the following questions:

1. Which of the content modules (listed below) are you *most* interested in? Please list your top 7 choices in order of interest.

2. Which of content modules (listed below) are you *least* interested in? Please list your bottom 5 choices in order of disinterest.

3. Are there any additional topics/categories that are not listed here that you are interested in studying?