

SCRN2200: Popular Culture and Society

Newcastle City Precinct
Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description	This course introduces students to various scholarly frameworks, theories and perspectives on popular culture. Students are encouraged to analyse the complexities of popular culture and its social and cultural function. Popular culture offers a way of examining societal attitudes, values and ideologies across time and geography. It also plays a powerful role in shaping societal attitudes, values and ideologies. Popular Culture and Society explores how gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and other socially codified markers of identity are represented in popular culture and how popular culture potentially impacts audiences. In this course students will explore the many competing theories, methods, concepts and frameworks that surround, explain and situate popular culture, examine popular culture examples and case studies, and discuss critical issues such as ethics, politics and histories.
Academic Progress Requirements	Nil
Requisites	This course replaces FMCS2200. If you have successfully completed FMCS2200 you cannot enrol in this course.
Assumed Knowledge	80 units at 1000 level
Contact Hours	Newcastle City Precinct Seminar Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s)
Unit Weighting	10
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Newcastle City Precinct Dr Rebecca Beirne Rebecca.Beirne@newcastle.edu.au (02) 4921 5081 Consultation: by appointment – see Canvas website.
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences NU Space, Level 4 409 Hunter Street Newcastle HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	This course focuses on the relationship between popular culture and society. Topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postfeminist and post-racial culture• Fans, fandoms and audiences• Affective capitalism and consumerism• Reality TV• Celebrity, politics and power dynamics• Intersections between race, gender and class• Representing queerness
Course Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe the relationship between popular culture and society.2. Illustrate the significance of concepts such as gender, class, race and ideology to popular culture.3. Construct a critical argument regarding the issues surrounding popular culture at an intermediate level.4. Combine scholarship with original analysis in a popular culture case study.
Course Materials	Required Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- All required reading is available online via the Library Course Readings page.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Readings	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	Why study popular culture?	Adorno, T and Horkheimer, M (1944) 'The culture industries: Enlightenment as mass deception' in <i>The Dialectic of Enlightenment</i> . New York: Social Studies Association. Up to page 131 only	
2	4 Mar	Celebrity and power	Dyer, Richard (2004) 'Introduction' in <i>Heavenly bodies: Film Stars and Society</i> . London: Routledge, pp. 1-16.	
3	11 Mar	Politics and popular culture	Street, J (2004) 'Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation'. <i>British Journal of International Politics</i> Vol. 6, pp. 435-452.	Quiz due Friday 15 March by 11:59pm
4	18 Mar	Audiences	Radway, Janice (1991) 'The Act of Reading the Romance: Escape and Instruction', <i>Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature</i> . U of North Carolina P.	
5	25 Mar	Online culture	Shifman, Limor (2013) 'Memes: reconciling with a conceptual troublemaker'. <i>Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication</i> Vol. 18, pp. 362-377.	
6	1 Apr	Convergence culture	Couldry, N (2011) 'More Sociology, More Culture, More Politics: Or, a modest proposal for 'convergence' studies' <i>Cultural Studies</i> , Vol. 25 Issue 4/5, pp. 487-501.	Quiz due Friday 5 April by 11:59pm
7	8 Apr	Postfeminist culture	Gill, Rosalind (2007). <i>Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility</i> . <i>European Journal of Cultural Studies</i> , Vol. 10 Issue 2, pp.147-166.	
Mid-Semester Recess				
Mid-Semester Recess				
8	29 Apr	Postracial culture	Nilsen, S., & Turner, S. E. (Eds.). (2014). "Introduction" <i>The colorblind screen: Television in post-racial America</i> . NYU Press, pp. 1-14.	Podcast due Friday 3 May by 11:59pm
9	6 May	Representing queerness	Reed, J (2007) 'The Three phases of Ellen: From Queer to Gay to Postgay' <i>Queer Popular Culture</i> , Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 9-26.	Quiz due Friday 10 May by 11:59pm
10	13 May	Reality TV	Turner, Graeme (2006) 'The mass production of celebrity:	

			"Celetoid", reality TV and the "demotic turn". International Journal of Cultural Studies Vol. 9 Issue 2, pp. 153-165.	
11	20 May	Visuality	Tim Highfield & Tama Leaver (2016) Instagrammatics and digital methods: studying visual social media, from selfies and GIFs to memes and emoji, Communication Research and Practice, Vol. 2 Issue 1, pp. 47-62	
12	27 May	Affect	Graefer, A (2016) 'The work of humour in affective capitalism: A case study of celebrity gossip blogs'. Ephemera, Vol. 16 Issue 4 pp.143-162.	
13	3 Jun	No course materials – Rebecca will be available for consultations		Essay due Friday 7 June by 11:59pm
Examination Period				
Examination Period				

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Essay	Friday 7 June (week 13) by 11:59pm	Individual	40%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Podcast	Friday 3 May (week 8) by 11:59pm	Individual	30%	1, 2, 4
3	Online Quiz	Friday 15 March (week 3) by 11:59pm Friday 5 April (week 6) by 11:59pm Friday 10 May (week 9) by 11:59pm	Individual	30% (3x10%)	1, 2

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Essay

Assessment Type

Essay

Purpose

To assess understanding of key course concepts, the ability to construct a critical argument, and apply original analysis while drawing on scholarship.

Description

This essay will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the theories and concepts explored over the duration of the course, as well as your ability to synthesise relevant research in making informed, critical arguments.

Weighting

40%

Length

2000 words (plus reference list)

Due Date

Friday 7 June (week 13) by 11:59pm

Submission Method

Online in Canvas course website

Assessment Criteria

Please see Canvas website

Return Method

Online in Canvas course website

Feedback Provided

Online - Three weeks after the due date. Feedback will take the form of both rubric and written feedback.

Assessment 2 - Podcast

Assessment Type	Project
Purpose	To assess the student's understanding of the course content from modules 1 and 2.
Description	This podcast provides an opportunity to apply the theories and concepts explored in modules 1 and 2. You will need to construct an informed opinion and argument about a popular culture object based on the course materials and individual research.
Weighting	30%
Length	8 minutes (plus reference list)
Due Date	Friday 3 May (week 8) by 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online in Canvas course website
Assessment Criteria	Please see Canvas website
Return Method	Online in Canvas course website
Feedback Provided	Online - Three weeks after due date. Feedback will take the form of both rubric and written feedback.

Assessment 3 - Online Quiz

Assessment Type	Quiz
Purpose	To assess knowledge of course materials and key concepts.
Description	You will have one week to access and complete each quiz before they are due. Answer all ten multiple choice questions in 60 minutes. You cannot exit and re-enter the quiz - it must be completed in one sitting. The quiz will automatically submit your answers at end of 60 minutes or at due date.
Weighting	30%
Length	60 minutes to complete 10 multiple-choice questions
Due Date	Friday 15 March (week 3) by 11:59pm Friday 5 April (week 6) by 11:59pm Friday 10 May (week 9) by 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online in Canvas course website
Assessment Criteria	Correct answer to multiple choice questions
Return Method	Online in Canvas course website
Feedback Provided	In Class - The class directly following the final due date for the quiz. in-class group feedback will be given on three occasions during semester.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods	Communication methods used in this course include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision
Course Evaluation	Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.
Oral Interviews (Vivas)	As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the Oral Examination (viva) Procedure . In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the Student Conduct Rule .
Academic Misconduct	All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35 .
Adverse Circumstances	The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;3. you are requesting a change of placement; or4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement. Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236
Important Policy Information	The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

© 2024 The University of Newcastle, Australia