



Instructor

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Office Hours: MCOM 710
M 11a-1p, W 11a-12p or by appt

Class

Room: MCOM 053

This class will meet
MWF, 10a-10:50a

Note:

If I am on my computer, email is being checked regularly. It is best to email me via my TTU email. **Blackboard** email is not forwarded to my TTU account. I try to answer all emails within 24 hours, *except on Sundays, when I try to stay off technology.*

Course Description

The TTU Bulletin describes this course as a course that, “historically examines the social influence of U.S. popular culture from the 1960s to today, paying particular attention to the meanings communicated and the ideologies conveyed.” This course provides a historical examination of the social influence of U.S. popular culture from the 1960s to the present day. It focuses on the impact of various technologies on cultural and societal movements. Students will explore how media and technology—ranging from television and film to the internet and social media—have shaped and communicated ideologies, influenced public opinion, and catalyzed significant cultural shifts. The course covers key cultural phenomena, including the rise of digital activism, the evolution of intersectionality, globalization, and the role of technology in shaping identity and community in contemporary society.

Required and Recommended Texts

Technopoly by Neil Postman
The Shallows by Nicholas Carr
Other readings as posted on Blackboard

Recommended Texts: The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt, *available on Amazon, etc.*

Outcome and Learning Objectives

1. Teach students to critically assess the role that popular culture has played in shaping various ideas, values, and beliefs within and across US society at particular historical junctures
2. Teach students to think reflexively about the symbolic and material resources that popular culture affords diverse subcultures and social groups for managing their individual and collective identities and investments
3. Teach students to evaluate how popular culture may function in ways that both affirm and challenge hegemonic ideology and relations of power.

To facilitate these goals, the course equips students with an array of critical perspectives for “interpreting” popular culture. Special attention is paid to the inherently rhetorical character of popular culture, critically examining cultural movements through theoretical lenses such as media effects. We will also pay particular attention to cultural movements in American history and the role in which these struggles had and continue to have over meanings, customs, relationships, identity formation and ideologies.

Assessments

Introduction Assignment: In this brief assignment, you will turn in a short fact sheet to me about yourself, which I will provide to you on the first Friday of class. This is an easy assignment to complete and will allow your instructor to get to know you better! **This will be due first thing on Monday when class begins.**

Readings and Videos: Each week will involve readings and/or videos designed to introduce you to various aspects of popular culture from the 1960s to today in the United States. Please read/watch the provided materials carefully as they will benefit you when it comes to your discussion board and writing assignments, as well as during in class discussions with your peers.

Some readings will come from your required text books while others, such as source texts or excerpts from other texts, will be posted on blackboard, along with links to any videos you may be asked to view.

All readings will be posted in blackboard in each weekly module, whether they are from the textbooks or outside readings.

Online Discussion Forums: Forums will occur each week throughout the term, and are designed to foster conversation around key theories, cases, and concepts. **Most forums will have a specific assignment prompt that requires a response. Research or other preparation will be necessary to complete most discussion forum prompts.** Specific assignment prompts, expectations for discussion forum participation, and point values will be posted on Blackboard in the same module in which the forum is due. **In brief, students will be required to write their own post, and reply to at least two other students' posts. Posts must be succinct but scholarly and substantive.**

Your initial post will be worth 25 points. The final 5 points will come from your responses to peers.

All initial discussion board posts will be due at 11:59p Thursday evenings. This ensures you are prepared the following Friday to discuss the topics in class. All responses to your classmates will be due the following Saturday at 11:59p.

Film Reflection Assignment: In this short, reflective assignment, you will watch a film that focuses on the counterculture movement of the 1960s. You will have the choice between three films: *Jesus Revolution* (2023) directed by Jon Erwin and Brent McCorkle, *The Summer of Love* (2017) directed by Lydney Saville or *1968: A Year of War, Turmoil, and Beyond* (2018) directed by Lydney Saville. I encourage you to get together with each other to watch the film you've chosen, pop some popcorn, and discuss what you learned about the time period while watching the film. The first film is a historical narrative while the final two are documentaries.

After watching your chosen film, you will write a short reflective essay. In your essay, you will analyze the film's portrayal of the counterculture movement, reflect on the key themes and events discussed, and connect what you learned to the broader cultural shifts we've explored in class.

If you do not have access to one of these three films, please email me as soon as possible to get access to alternate options.

This paper should be 2-3 pages, Times New Roman font, double spaced. You may choose between MLA or APA formatting, but all papers must have a citations or references page, formatted correctly for your chosen style. Due February 9, 2025, at 11:59pm

Midterm Paper: For your midterm paper, **you will explore the impact of social media platforms on American culture.** You will choose a social media platform from the list below. You will analyze its history, its popularity in pop culture, its platform affordances, and briefly explain its positive and negative impacts on American culture. Consider questions such as “How has the platform facilitated new forms of communication, community building, or cultural exchange?” or “How has the platform contributed to challenges such as misinformation, polarization, cancel culture, or lack of privacy?”

I encourage you to choose a platform you have not used regularly or one you have not heard of to expose yourself to new platforms and ideas.

Perform outside research on the platform, how it was founded, and its use by adults and adolescents. Good resources include peer reviewed journals, Pew Research Center, and reputable news sources.

- **Length:** 2-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.
- **Sources:** Incorporate at least three academic sources, including course readings. You may also include reputable news articles or media examples to support your analysis.
- **Citations:** Use APA or MLA citation style consistently throughout the paper.
- **Due Date:** Friday, March 14, 2025 at 11:59p

Social Media Platform Options:

Six Degrees	YouTube	Snapchat	TikTok
Friendster	X, formerly Twitter	Pinterest	Reddit
MySpace	Tumblr	Vine	Discord
Facebook	Instagram	Twitch	4Chan

Music Reflection Assignment: In this assignment, you will explore the impact of music on pop culture by focusing on a musician or band that has influenced society from the 1960s to today. **You will listen to at least 5 songs from your chosen artist's album, listed below (it is best to listen to the album in sum),** and perform outside research on the artist and what was happening during that time period in culture.

This reflective essay should analyze how the chosen artist's music reflects, shapes, or responds to cultural trends and social issues. Discuss the artist's influence on pop culture with examples from their music, public persona, and/or social impact. Additionally, reflect on what you liked and didn't like about what you listened to. You can choose any artist from the list below. *Try to choose an artist you have not heard of or rarely listen to to expose yourself to new ideas and genres.*

This paper should be 2-3 pages, Times New Roman font, double spaced. You may choose between MLA or APA formatting, but all papers must have a citations or references page, formatted correctly for your chosen style. Due April 12, 2025 at 11:59pm CST

Artists/Albums You May Choose From:

The Beatles - Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club	Bob Dylan - Slow Train Coming	Aretha Franklin - I Never Loved a Man the Way I Loved You	John Coltrane - A Love Supreme
Queen - A Night at the Opera	Fleetwood Mac - Rumors	Stevie Wonder - Songs in the Key of Life	NSYNC - No Strings Attached
Taylor Swift - 1989 (Taylor's Version)	Beyonce - Lemonade	The Beach Boys - Pet Sounds	Lauryn Hill - The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
Nirvana - Nevermind	Prince - Purple Rain	Michael Jackson - Thriller	Green Day - American Idiot
Fall Out Boy - Under the Cork Tree	NWA - Straight Outta Compton	Johnny Cash - At Folsom Prison	Jimmy Buffett - Changes in Attitudes, Changes in Latitudes
Dolly Parton - Coat of Many Colors	Bruce Springsteen - Born to Run	Madonna - Like a Prayer	Metallica - The Black Album

Final Paper: For your final paper, **you will select a specific cultural shift or movement from the 1960s to today and analyze its development, influence, and legacy in U.S. society.**

Drawing on course readings and concepts, you will explore how technology and media have shaped, supported, or challenged the cultural shift you have chosen. **Your analysis should integrate insights from course readings, class discussions, and independent research** to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural movement and its impact on modern society.

- **Length:** 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.
- **Sources:** Incorporate at least four academic sources, including course readings. You may also include reputable news articles or media examples to support your analysis.

- **Citations:** Use APA or MLA citation style consistently throughout the paper.
- **Due Date:** Tuesday, May 12, 2025, by 10a.

Grading

Assignment	Points
Attendance & Participation	50 points
Introduction assignment	10 points
Midterm Paper	150 points
Final Paper	250 points
Two Short Reflection Papers	180 points - 90 points each
Discussion Boards	360 points total (30 points each)
Optional Extra Credit	15 points
Total	1000 points + 15 points extra credit

Grading Scale:

A = 900 - 1000 points	C = 799 - 700 points	F = 599 points or below
B = 899 - 800 points	D = 699 - 600 points	

Governing Policies

For updated language about TTU Required Syllabi policies on: ADA, Academic Integrity, Religious Holy Day Statement, and Statement of Accommodation for Pregnant Students, please see: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/RequiredSyllabusStatements.php>

Other recommended policies: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/RecommendedSyllabusStatements.php>

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence: Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other [Title IX violations](#) are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the *Office for Student Rights & Resolution*, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://>

www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/ (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Attendance: Attendance is **mandatory**. By coming to class, you will get a better understanding of the concepts we are exploring, by having hands-on experience and discussions about them. However, I understand that we are all busy with work and that sometimes life happens. **For this reason, you have a total of 3 unexcused absences for this semester.** Excused absences can be added to these 3 unexcused absences.

Paper due dates: All assignments are due when listed on the syllabus. Late work is **not** accepted beyond 48 hours, except in the case of documented sickness or major life events. After the due date, an assignment will be accepted within 24 hours for an automatic deduction of one (1) letter grade. Within 48 hours, there will be an automatic deduction of two (2) letter grades. Beyond the 48 hour mark, you will forfeit the opportunity to receive a grade and will be given a 0 for the assignment. **Contact me as soon as possible if you think you will turn in an assignment late due to unforeseen circumstances.** It is much easier to offer grace when you notify me early of a problem/situation.

You will not be given any extensions for your final exam unless there are extenuating circumstances such as sickness or a death in the family.

ChatGPT/AI (Not an official TTU policy, but policy for class): You are permitted to use ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist you in gathering information and brainstorming ideas but **you may not copy and paste information directly from the AI tool and present it as your own.** You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query and for assuring that it does not contain misinformation or unethical content and that it does not violate intellectual property laws. **As a general rule of thumb, it is not recommended you utilize AI at all in this class to do any writing for you (or use it for more than data and information gathering) as it is proven to provide inaccurate information and therefore inhibits your learning.** However, your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited appropriately for academic integrity. You are expected to include a disclosure statement at the end of your assignment describing which AI tool you used and how you used it. For example, “ChatGPT was used to draft about 15 percent of this paper and to provide revision assistance. AI-produced content was edited for accuracy and style.”

Note: The information provided in this syllabus constitutes a list of basic class policies and a tentative course schedule. I reserve the right to modify this information when deemed necessary for any reason. You will be notified through an announcement via Blackboard and/or email if changes occur.

Course Schedule

WEEK	TOPIC	COURSE WORK	DUE DATE
1: 1/13 - 1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to class • What is culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday 1/18, 11:59 CST
2: 1/20 (NO CLASS) - 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/20 NO CLASS - MLK DAY • Introduction to Theory • Technology as culture - activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 1 - initial post • Discussion Forum 1 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 1/23, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 1/25, 11:59 CST
3: 1/27 - 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early countercultural movements • The Hippie Movement • Wrapping up the counterculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 2 - initial post • Discussion Forum 2 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 1/30, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 2/1, 11:59 CST
4: 2/3 - 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War and Terrorism • The Early Internet • Paper Discussion Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 3 - initial post • Discussion Forum 3 - responses • FILM REFLECTION DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 2/6, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 2/8, 11:59 CST • Sunday, 2/9, 11:59 CST
5: 2/10 - 2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search Engines/Web 1.0 • Web 2.0, part 1 • Web 2.0, part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 4 - initial post • Discussion Forum 4 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 2/13, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 2/15, 11:59 CST
6: 2/17 - 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media and Media Effects • Web 3.0/4.0 (AI, etc) • Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 5 - initial post • Discussion Forum 5 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 2/20, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 2/22, 11:59 CST
7: 2/24 - 3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube • Meta (FB and IG) • Twitter, TikTok 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 6 - initial post • Discussion Forum 6 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 2/27, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 3/1, 11:59 CST

WEEK	TOPIC	COURSE WORK	DUE DATE
8: 3/3 - 3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tumblr: Digital Activism • Intersectionality and feminism, online counterculture • Virality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 7 - initial post • Discussion Forum 7 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 3/6, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 3/8, 11:59 CST
9: 3/10 - 3/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity, Relationships (dating apps) • Parasociality • Social Media and globalization - activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIDTERM PAPER DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 3/14, 11:59 CST
10: 3/17-3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK 		
11: 3/24 - 3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication theories • The development of celebrity/celebrity worship • Fandom - Tumblr, Twitter wars, Reddit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 8 - initial post • Discussion Forum 8 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 3/27, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 3/29, 11:59 CST
12: 3/31 - 4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics and pop culture • The origins of the post-modern left and religious right • Religious revivals and cultural impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 9 - initial post • Discussion Forum 9 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 4/3, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 4/5, 11:59 CST
13: 4/7 - 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution of American music • Music and the music industry's effect on pop culture, parts 1 & 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 10 - initial post • Discussion Forum 10 - responses • MUSIC REFLECTION DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 4/10, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 4/12, 11:59 CST

WEEK	TOPIC	COURSE WORK	DUE DATE
14: 4/14 - 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race and gender in pop culture - The Bechdel Test and Queer bating • Pop culture and media representation • Scheduled 10 min final paper meetings - see blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 11 - initial post • Discussion Forum 11 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 4/17, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 4/19, 11:59 CST
15: 4/21 - 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/21 - NO CLASS • Scheduled 10 min final paper meetings - see Blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No discussion due 	
16: 4/28 - 5/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancel Culture • The Bright Side • Bonus Points Trivia Game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forum 12 - initial post • Discussion Forum 12 - responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 5/1, 11:59pm CST • Saturday 5/3, 11:59 CST
Finals Week: 5/5 - 5/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finals Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FINAL PAPER DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 5/12, 10a CST