

Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
SOC 3420: Sociology of Popular Culture

Please check one: New course Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. **Course prefix and number:** SOC 3420
2. **Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces):** Sociology of Popular Culture
3. **Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):**
4. **Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit [e.g., (3-0-3)]:** (3-0-3)
5. **Term(s) to be offered:** Fall Spring Summer On demand
6. **Initial term of offering:** Fall Spring Summer **Year:** 2008
7. **Course description (not to exceed four lines):** This course examines sociological issues in the study of American popular culture such as the production, distribution and reception of popular culture, how culture is influenced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and other systems of stratification, and how these influences are reflected in various mass media outlets.
8. **Registration restrictions:**
 - a. **Identify any equivalent courses** (e.g., cross-listed course, non-honors version of an honors course).
None
 - b. **Prerequisite(s), including required test scores, courses, grades in courses, and technical skills.**
Indicate whether any prerequisite course(s) MAY be taken concurrently with the proposed/revised course. SOC 1838G or permission of the instructor.
 - c. **Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?**
 No one Chair Instructor Advisor Other (Please specify)
 - d. **Co-requisites (course(s) which MUST be taken concurrently with this one):** None
 - e. **Repeat status:** Course may not be repeated.
 Course may be repeated – No Limit
 - f. **Degree, college, major(s), level, or class** to which registration in the course is restricted, if any: None
 - g. **Degree, college, major(s), level, or class** to be excluded from the course, if any:
9. **Special course attributes** [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive] None
10. **Grading methods** (check all that apply): Standard letter C/NC Audit ABC/NC (“Standard letter”—i.e., ABCDF—is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)
11. **Instructional delivery method:** lecture lab lecture/lab combined independent study/research
 internship performance practicum or clinical study abroad other

PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. List the student learning objectives of this course:

Students in this course will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate an ability to apply the basic sociological terms, concepts and theories for analyzing popular culture;
- 2) Display basic knowledge of how popular culture reflects and contributes to social change;
- 3) Develop and demonstrate knowledge of meaning in popular culture and how it can be sociologically problematic; and
- 4) Apply a sociological & organizational approach to analyzing the creation, production, distribution and consumption of popular culture.

a. N/A (not a general education course)

b. N/A (not a graduate level course)

2. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:

	Midterm & Final Exam	Homework Assignments	Classroom Quizzes	Research Project
Identify terms, concepts & theory	X	X	X	X
Knowledge of popular culture & social change	X	X		X
Problems of meaning in popular culture	X			X
Apply Sociological Approach	X	X	X	X

3. Explain how the instructor will determine students' grades for the course:

Grades will be determined by four written homework assignments and quizzes (14.5%), a research project (28.5%), and two multiple-choice/essay exams (57%). Research projects are a very important part of the course and each person will produce a 4-6 page research project that will sociologically analyze some aspect of current or historical American popular culture.

4. N/A (not technology delivered)

5. N/A (not for graduate credit)

6. This course has no writing designation

PART III: OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

*This course is designed for 150 minutes per week across a regular, 15 week semester.

Week 1 PART 1: PRODUCING POPULAR CULTURE

Defining popular culture: What is Art?

Alexander, Chapter 1: (pp. 1-6)

Week 2 Making culture: art worlds & conventions

Alexander, Chapter 5 (pp. 67-88)

Week 3 Making culture: Businesses & Industries

Week 4	Alexander, Chapter 6 (pp. 89-111) Networks and nonprofits
Week 5	Alexander, Chapter 7 (pp. 112-130) Artists
Week 6	Alexander, Chapter 8 (pp. 131-156) Globalization
Week 7	Alexander, Chapter 9 (pp. 157-177) Review and Exam 1
Week 8	PART 2: CONSUMING POPULAR CULTURE Does popular culture reflect society? Reflection Approaches
Week 9	Alexander, Chapter 2 (pp. 21-40) Does popular culture shape society? Shaping Approaches and the Mediated View
Week 10	Alexander, Chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 41- 63) Approaches to the meaning of cultural items: reception studies
Week 11	Alexander, Chapter 10 (pp. 181-204) Approaches to the meaning of cultural items: audience studies
Week 12	Alexander, Chapter 11 (pp. 205- 224) Social Functions of popular culture
Week 13	Alexander, Chapter 12 (pp. 225-248) Interpreting: Icons
Week 14	Alexander, Chapter 13 (pp. 251-277) Art in Society
Week 15	Alexander, Chapter 14 (pp.278-303) Wrap up and review
Week 16	Final Exam

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

1. Explain the department's rationale for developing and proposing the course.

Popular culture is an everyday part of our lives that often goes unnoticed. Through this course, students will be able to systematically examine ways in which culture is produced, distributed and consumed. Hence, this course will tie organizational theories of production and consumption with other sociological theories. Students will be able to critically examine social forces and processes in the production and consumption of culture that affect their everyday lives on personal, academic and professional levels.

- a. (not a general education course)
- b. (not a technology delivered course)

2. Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.

As a 3000 level course, students will need some fundamental background in sociology to participate and succeed in this class. Hence, the prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Sociology (SOC2710).

3. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering. This course has very limited overlap of specific components with any departmental or university course offerings. **CMN 3270 (Communication and Popular Culture)** examines texts normally not thought of as persuasive in an effort to examine how popular culture, as manifested through various forms of discourse, exerts influence on various audiences. **CMN 3710 (Intercultural Communication)** is an overview of culture and communication on regional, national, and international levels. It examines ways in which cultures respond differently to business, education and health care contexts and explores how culture influences perceptions and communication, and provides guidelines for effective intercultural communication. **CMN 4780 (Communication and Culture)** is an overview of key theories, concepts, and approaches to the study of

communication and culture as practiced in communication. It covers the history of the academic study of communication and culture, the application of critical methods, cultural studies and communication, and the study of social relations, power and communication. **EIU 4100G (Folklore, Culture, and Society)** addresses, through a comparative examination of various folk groups and genres, the ways in which folklore contributes to the beliefs, traditions, and behaviors of individuals and societies. **EIU 4104G (World Film: Language and Culture in Film)** examines foreign film as a unique art form that strongly reflects the culture of its country of origin. **EIU 4128G (Politics and Popular Culture)** examines the relationship between politics and popular culture and focuses on how politics and culture interact. Students will examine how various media including music, television, film, and the Internet influence and reflect political behavior and institutions. **ENG 3009G (Myth and Culture)** examines, through comparative analysis of myths from diverse cultural traditions, relationships among mythical, historical, theological, socio-anthropological and scientific ways of understanding. This course offers a unique disciplinary perspective by focusing specifically on the sociological study of popular culture such as the production, distribution and reception of popular culture, how culture is influenced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and other systems of stratification, and how these influences are reflected in various mass media outlets.

4. Impact on Program(s):

- a. This course will count as an approved elective for sociology majors and minors.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned:** This course will initially be assigned to Professor Lovekamp, but it may be assigned to any sociology faculty member(s) who have appropriate knowledge in this area.
2. **Additional costs to students:** None
3. **Text and supplementary materials to be used (Include publication dates):** Alexander, Victoria D. 2003. *Sociology of the Arts: Exploring Fine and Popular Forms*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing. ISBN: 0631230408.

PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

N/A. Not a 1000- or 2000-level course.

PART VII: APPROVALS

Date approved by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology: 9-24-07

Date approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee: 10-19-07

Date approved by CAA: 11-8-07