



FA 49Y.01 POPULAR CULTURE, FILM AND MEDIA

SUMMER 2016

Bogaziçi University

Department of Western Languages and Literatures

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Assessment Method:

Class participation, attendance and two response papers 45%

Term paper 55%

Course Description: This course is designed to analyze the basic patterns and pillars of popular culture as they are used and revealed in certain film and media examples from the USA and Turkey and beyond to present to masses the basic institutions of popular culture. In method, it is essentially a film-reading course.

Course Content: The meaning of “popular”, a brief history of popular culture, its main pillars and basic elements, characteristic features, paradigms, replication myth and the influence of myths like creation myths, themes and patterns. Readings of films from USA, Turkey, England, TV shows and programs, music, and art, namely; sculpture, architecture; their language and style and presentations, their artistic and political and ideological interpretations.

WEEK 1: WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

Screening and Discussion: Film clips and music videos, celebrities, smartphone and tablet apps, social media 'phenomenon's...

Readings: Storey, John. 'What is popular culture?' in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Longman, 2008).

Fishwick, Marshall W. 'Introduction' to *Seven Pillars of Popular Culture* *Seven Pillars of Popular Culture* (Westport: GreenwoodPress, 1985).

WEEK 2: PARADOXES OF REALITY MEDIA

Screening and Discussion: *The Truman Show* (1998), *Tootsie* (1982)

Readings: Bishop, Ronald. 'Good Afternoon, Good Evening, and Good Night: The Truman Show as Media Criticism' *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 2000 24: 6.

WEEK 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PARALLAX VIEW

Screening and Discussion: *Black Mirror* (2011-), Facebook, Twitter, Apps, websites etc.

Readings: Will be announced.

WEEK 4: IDEOLOGY

Screening and Discussion: *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012)

Readings: Žižek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. (MIT Press, 1992).

WEEK 5: THE MONOMYTH

Screening and Discussion: *Star Wars* (1977-2015), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), *The Matrix* (1999-2003), *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-03), *Harry Potter* (2001-11), *Interstellar* (2014)

Readings: Fishwick, Marshall W. *Pillars of Popular Culture*, Ch. 3 "Heros", Ch. 6 "Eikons"

WEEK 6: THE MYTHS OF INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITY, FAMILY AND THE DREAM OF SUCCESS

Screening and Discussion: *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), *Fargo* (2014), *Requiem for a Dream* (1998), *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), *Jerry Maguire* (1996), *American Beauty* (1999)

Readings: Grist, Leighton. 'Drugs, the family and recent American cinema' in ed. Manning, Paul *Drugs and Popular Culture* (Routledge, 2013), pp. 117-133.

Levinson, Julie. 'Top of the World: Cultural Narratives, Myths, and Movies' in *The American Success Myth on Film*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Optional: Pierson, David P., ed. *Breaking Bad: Critical Essays on the Contexts, Politics, Style, and Reception of the Television Series* (Lexington Books, 2013).

Hausmann, Vincent. 'Envisioning the (W)hole World "Behind Things": Denying Otherness in American Beauty' *Camera Obscura*, 55 (Volume 19, Number 1), 2004, pp. 112-149.

Due: Response paper #1 (750 words)

WEEK 7: TERROR AS A SYMPTOM

Screening and Discussion: *Mr. Robot* (2015-), *Fight Club* (1999), Wikileaks, Anonymous, RedHack, Fuat Avni

Readings: Petersen, Per Serritslev. "9/11 and the 'Problem of Imagination': Fight Club and Glamorama as Terrorist Pretexts." *Orbis Litterarum* 60.2 (2005): 133-144.

WEEK 8-9: POPULAR YESİLÇAM CINEMA: FAME, FAITH, AND FAMILY

Screening and Discussion: *Kırık Plak / Broken Disc* (1959), *Aile Şerefi / The Honor of the Family* (1978), *Neşeli Günler / Happy Days* (1975)

Readings: Will be announced.

Due: Response paper #2 (750 words)

WEEK 10: THEOS, LOGOS & ETHNOS

Screening and Discussion: *Se7en* (1995), *D@bbe* (2006-15), *The Da Vinci Code* (1996), *Fahrenheit 451* (1966)

Readings: Fishwick, Marshall W. *Pillars of Popular Culture*, Ch. 4 "Theos", Ch. 5 "Logos"

Gormley, Paul. "Trashing Whiteness: Pulp fiction, se7en, strange days, and articulating affect." *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 6.1 (2001): 155-171.

WEEK 11-12: THE APOCALYPTIC SUBLIME

Screening and Discussion: *Donnie Darko* (2001), *The Walking Dead* (2010-), *True Blood* (2008-14), *The Birds* (1963), *Signs* (2001), *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Independence Day* (1996)

Readings: Jeong, Seung-hoon. 'The Apocalyptic Sublime Hollywood Disaster Films and Donnie Darko' in ed. Todd A. Comer, Lloyd Isaac Vayo *Terror and the Cinematic Sublime: Essays on Violence and the Unpresentable* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013), pp. 72-87

WEEK 13: WRAP UP AND FINALS

