INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kathryn Pallister
PHONE: 403-342-3109
EMAIL: kathryn.pallister@rdc.ab.ca (or through the Blackboard course site)
OFFICE: 3113
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 1:50 PM, or by appointment

CLASS TIMES/LOCATION:
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:20 PM, Room 1303

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines a number of forms of mass media and popular culture, ranging from television to film to magazines to consumer culture. We will look at theoretical foundations of the study of culture as well as different ways that scholars have examined popular culture and how it relates to and reflects contemporary society. In addition, we will practice the analysis of specific examples of mass media and popular culture.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR ENTRY:
An analysis of the varieties of mass media such as radio, television, film and books and their effects on popular culture.

CREDIT HOURS: 3  
PRE-REQUISITE: Sociology 260

REQUIRED TEXT:

A number of articles will also be available through Blackboard as part of the required reading. These articles are linked through the RDC Library website, so you will need to access the articles on campus or enter your library card information to access the links off campus.
COURSE CONTENT AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the key theories related to the study of culture and mass media
- Critically understand the role of mass media and culture in society
- Recognize the potential for social change inherent in mass media and popular culture
- Acquire a critical awareness of the ways popular culture and mass media impact people on a personal level

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

You will learn the concepts of this course through class discussions (both during the class period and online), audio-visual aids, group work, and other in-class exercises, as well as through lectures and readings. Notes (text only; no images or clips) will be posted on the Blackboard course site, usually the day before class. In order to maximize your learning in this course, you should read the assigned material before class, and you should come to class prepared to demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings. You may also be asked to bring in your own examples of popular culture from time to time throughout the term. Due to the nature of the course, some classes will involve viewing and discussing material that may have sensitive content (e.g. sexuality, coarse language, violence), so if you have any concerns about this, please discuss them with me outside of class time.

EVALUATION:

You will receive a letter grade in the course, as noted in the “Academic Policies” section of the College calendar or on the College website. Your grade will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Discussion Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Paper #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Percentage to letter grade equivalents will be based on the conversion chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>4 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-95.99</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89.99</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79.99</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66.99</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59.99</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54.99</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

More detail, such as paper assignments and study guides, is available on Blackboard

Blackboard Discussions (10% = 4% discussion moderation; 1% each for 6 total discussion responses) – For ten weeks during the term, four people per week will be assigned the individual job of moderating a discussion on an area or example of popular culture (thus, there will be four separate discussion questions/topics per week). For your discussion, I encourage you to include an image, video or audio, as well as a focused introductory statement and discussion question(s) to which the other students can respond. All students will need to respond to six of the discussions throughout the term; a minimum expectation for your response is a well-developed paragraph of about 8-10 sentences. Each discussion will be available for one week.

Discussions take place weekly between January 15 and April 1

Research Paper #1 (20%) – Write a 1000-1500 word literature review about a topic of your choice in the field of mass media and popular culture, using at least three journal articles or other scholarly work (e.g. a chapter in an edited volume). This essay will involve reading the articles, summarizing key points, critically evaluating the author’s arguments, comparing/contrasting how the different authors approach the subject matter, and drawing your own conclusions about the issues. Your topic should be sufficiently focused that you can find articles that relate to one another, yet broad enough that you can find adequate sources to review. You can choose an area that you’re interested in learning more about (e.g. portrayal of Asian people in film and television, contemporary romance novels with supernatural themes, UFC) or a specific text (Call of Duty, Harry Potter, Cosmopolitan magazine). Use APA or MLA format for documenting and citing sources.

Due Date: February 5, 2014

Analytical Paper #2 (20%) – Write a 1000-1500 word essay, focused on the work of one of the popular culture theorists (or theoretical areas) covered in the course. First, you will need to overview the key ideas/works of the theorist or theory, using primary sources when possible in addition to the course textbook. Then, apply the theoretical ideas to a specific example of popular culture (e.g. a television program, a popular fiction book or series, a film, a song or musical artist). Use APA or MLA format for documenting and citing sources. Please include a copy of your popular culture example or a link, when possible.

Due Date: April 9, 2014

Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Exam (30%) – These exams will consist of short answer questions, based on the lectures and readings from the text and Blackboard. Questions will ask you to define, describe, and list key concepts from the course as well as provide examples or apply the concepts to examples provided. Answers are typically about 1-2 paragraphs long, though point form responses are also acceptable.

Midterm Exam Date: February 26, 2014
Final Exam: TBA, April 14-21

As discussed in the RDC Final Examinations Policy, the final exam will take place between April 14-21. The exact time, date, and location will be set by the Registrar’s office and will be announced in class and posted in the RDC forum.
GENERAL INFORMATION:

- This course may be eligible for Prior Learning Assessment. Students should refer to the RDC College Calendar for a list of excluded courses.
- Classroom Learning Resources may be available to students in alternate formats.
- Students should be aware that Personal Counseling, Career, Learning and Disability Services are provided by RDC. Inquire about locations at Information Desk. It is the student’s responsibility to discuss any specific learning needs with the appropriate service provider.
- It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the information contained in the Course Outline and to clarify any areas of concern with the instructor.
- Students should refer to the Student Dispute, Appeal and Misconduct Processes Policy and Standard Practice should they have questions or concerns about the Course Outline that cannot be resolved with the instructor.

IMPORTANT DATES AND COURSE POLICIES:

Please note the following important dates and course policies:

- January 13, 2014, is the last day to add/drop this course without having a record of it on your transcript. March 19, 2014, is the last day to withdraw from the course and receive a “WD” on your transcript. You will receive midterm grades on Blackboard by March 3, 2014.
- March 4, 2014 is the RDC Emergency Response Day.
- March 11 is when Nora Young will speak at the Perspectives: Canada in the World event.
- Tests can only be written outside the scheduled times with prior approval or with documentation such as a doctor’s note.
- Written work must be typed or word processed. To receive full credit for any written assignment turned in past the due date, you must present documentation such as a doctor’s note. Written work turned in without documentation will be penalized one letter grade (e.g. from a “B” to a “C”) for each day it is late, with weekends counting as one day late.
- You are expected to present original work for all assignments. As outlined in the “Academic Policies” section of the College calendar, plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the assignment and possible failure of the course. Please refer to the attached statement on plagiarism from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences for further information.
- You will receive written feedback on your coursework when I return it to you, usually within one week after submission. If you would like additional feedback on your performance in class, please make an appointment to see me.

Please think of me as a resource for the course. I will be happy to meet with you outside of class to discuss any assignments as well as your progress in the course.

ANY CHANGES MADE TO THIS COURSE OUTLINE WILL BE MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CLASS.
STUDENT RECOGNITION OF PLAGIARISM*

Definitions
Academic misconduct: Academic misconduct is the giving, taking, or presenting of information or material that unethically or dishonestly aids oneself or another on any work which, under normal circumstances, is to be considered in the determination of a grade or the compilation of academic requirements or the enhancement of that student’s record or academic career.

Plagiarism: The use or close imitation of language, paintings, films, prototypes and ideas of another author and representation of them as one’s own original work. The most common forms of plagiarism are: copying or paraphrasing another author’s work without proper acknowledgement, using the ideas or lines of reasoning of another author’s work without proper acknowledgement, submitting work to which someone else has made substantial improvements to the content, submitting the same work for multiple courses without approval, and submitting some work that in whole or in part is identical to that submitted by another student.

“Submitted work” refers to any oral or written work that a student presents to his/her instructor as part of the course requirements. “Proper acknowledgment” refers to the citation and bibliographical standards (such as MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) used in the course in which the work is submitted.

Standards of Proof
Plagiarism can be judged to have occurred if the instructor has both the material presented by the student and the original source from which this material was taken. Also, plagiarism can be judged to have occurred:

- if the student is incapable of explaining the terminology or ideas in the submitted material.
- if such terminology or ideas cannot be shown to originate in the works contained in the Bibliography, References, or Works Cited page accompanying the submitted material (or, for oral presentations, if the student cannot produce the notes or texts used to prepare his/her material).

Consequences: A student charged with plagiarism can expect to:

- be given a reduced mark or no mark (i.e., a grade of 0 or F) for the plagiarized assignment, or
- be assigned a Final Grade of F, or
- be expelled from the course and assigned a Final Grade of F.

In all of the above cases, the instance of academic dishonesty will be recorded on the student’s academic file.

PROCEDURE:
1. If an instructor discovers or suspects academic misconduct, the instructor provides evidence of the misconduct to the student and takes disciplinary action up to and including the assignment of a failing grade for the work involved in the misconduct.

2. If the instructor feels that the misconduct warrants more serious consequences, the Chair of the program is informed. The decision to remove the student from the course or to assign a failing grade in the course as a consequence of the misconduct may be taken by the Chair upon reviewing the evidence of the misconduct and determination that the violation warrants such action.

3. If the instructor and program Chair feel that the violation requires more significant action such as removal from a program or from the College, the evidence is presented to the Dean of the Division for a decision.

4. In each case, the decision and disciplinary action are communicated to the student in writing and a copy is provided to the Registrar who places it in the student’s file.

*adapted from RDC’s policy on Student Misconduct: Academic and Non-academic.