

SYA 4930 – Sociology of Popular Culture (Sect #24663)

Spring 2025 • University of Florida • 3 Credits

Matherly Hall 0016
MWF, Period 6 (12:50pm - 1:40pm)



"Women Having Fun Playing Video Game" by Yan Krukov
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Instructor: **Dr. Evan W. Lauteria** (he/him)
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Undergraduate Teaching Assistant: **Reagan Tobyansen** (she/her)
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Instructor Office Hours
Office Location: Turlington 3361A

Walk-ins: Tuesdays
Time: 11:45am-1:45pm
[no appointment needed]

By Appointment: Wednesdays & Fridays
Time: 2:00pm-3:30pm
<http://calendly.com/evanlauteria/oh15>

Course Description

The “Sociology of Popular Culture” course explores the social dimensions of cultural production and consumption, media regulation, and representation. Core topics include culture industries, status and distinction, fandom, and globalization. We will draw examples from television, film, music, games, food, and social media, and students are invited to incorporate their own popular culture knowledge and fan experiences into class discussions.

Course Readings

There is no textbook for this course. All course readings will be available on Canvas for download under “Files.” Links to additional assigned materials, such as films to watch at home, are provided in the syllabus and/or on the Canvas course site.

Course Structure & Assignments

Students in this class will be assessed across course content based on their performance on the assessments outlined below.

Assignment	Points	Percent	Due Date
Pre-Discussion Worksheets (lowest score dropped)	4 x 40	32%	Variable Mondays [see "Film Discussion Worksheets" below]
In-Class Exams	2 x 75	30%	Friday, March 7 th Friday, April 18 th
Final Project Selection	15	3%	Friday, March 14 th
Final Project Proposal	50	10%	Friday, April 4 th
Final Project Presentation	50	10%	Wednesday, April 23 rd Wednesday, April 30 th * [* 10:00am-12:00pm, Final Exam Time]
Final Project Submission	75	15%	Friday, May 2 nd
Attendance	0	--	[see "Attendance" below for details]
Participation	EC	--	[see "Participation" below for details]
TOTAL	500	100%	

Pre-Discussion Worksheets

In conjunction with completing assigned readings and viewing related media, you will be asked to complete worksheets at home in preparation for five Monday in-class discussions of such material. These worksheets function similarly to essay or paper assignments, requiring critical thought and self-reflection in written responses. Some worksheets may additionally require you to complete a short activity or look up additional information online (with clear guidance). As such, each should take approximately 2 to 4 hours to complete. The lowest score among your five worksheets (including 0's for non-submissions) will be dropped.

Worksheet responses can be handwritten or drafted digitally in Word, GoogleDocs, or a PDF reader, but **students must bring a printed copy to class**. Blank printed copies will be provided in class.

	Film	Deadline (in-class)
Worksheet #1	WALL-E, Consumerism, and Ideology	Monday, January 27 th
Worksheet #2	Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery, Implicit Bias, and Controlling Images	Monday, February 10 th
Worksheet #3	Shirobako, Episodes 1-3, and Production of Culture	Monday, February 24 th
Worksheet #4	Trekkies and Fandom	Monday, March 24 th
Worksheet #5	Generation Like, "Roomerang," and the Economy of Attention	Monday, April 7 th

In-Class Exams

Twice during the semester, you will be assessed on your content knowledge via in-person examinations. These exams cover material addressed in course lecture, readings, films, and worksheets. Additionally, each exam is *non-cumulative*: Exam 1 covers Units 1, 2, and 3; Exam 2 covers Unit 4 and 5. Questions will primarily be multiple choice and matching.

Final Project

The culminating project for this course will ask you to dig deeper into a specific topic or area of interest, relying either on observable sociological data (ethnographic, archival, textual, visual, or quantitative) or some auto-ethnographic experience. There are eight options for this project: four solo assignment options and four group (3-5 people) assignment options. Solo assignments will require a final 1200- to 1700-word paper. Group assignments will require 15- to 30-minute video commentary or recorded video presentation.

Solo Assignments	Group Assignments
Fandom and Fan Community Analysis Paper	Fan Music Video & Commentary
K-Pop Music Video Analysis Paper	Reality TV Audition Tape & Commentary
Pop Culture Club/Event Ethnography Paper	Fandom Interviews & Presentation
Video Game Localization Analysis Paper	Internat'l Exchange Interviews & Presentation

Specific details for each assignment will be available on Canvas. Each option requires...

1. [March 14th] Completion of the Canvas “Final Project Selection” Survey to verify your choice in project (and group members, if completing a group assignment)
2. [April 4th] A preliminary proposal and explanation of the project in written form (~250-500-words), to receive approval and feedback
3. [April 23rd / 30th] A short (depending on the number of solo vs. group projects) showcase or presentation of the work-in-progress, with guidelines and expectations for each available on Canvas
4. [May 2nd] A submission of the final product—paper or video recording, alongside any original source material (audition tape or music video)

Attendance

Students may miss up to six 50-minute class meetings (equal to two weeks of class) without grade penalty. Further absences will result in a 5-point reduction to a student’s attendance grade, resulting in a negative attendance score included in final calculation of grades. Tardiness is permitted (please come to lecture even if you are late!), but if a student arrives after attendance has been taken, the student will be marked as absent for that day.

In accordance with University Attendance Policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>), students may miss class for “acceptable reasons” without penalty, but appropriate documentation is required. Planned absences must be addressed with the instructor ahead of time; unplanned absences should be address as soon as possible. Acceptable absences will not impact a student’s attendance grade if documentation is provided within an appropriate time frame.

Attendance will be taken in-class in the form of daily questions that can be answered via a smart phone, tablet, or laptop. As such, students either need to bring their own technology to each classroom meeting or arrange for an alternative attendance recording process with the instructor. These questions may address lecture content from the current class or materials assigned for reading, but most can be answered easily as long as you have paid attention in-person for that day of class.

Participation

Students can earn up to 2% extra credit on their final class score for active participation in class. Only students who contribute regularly, who draw from course readings and concepts, and who foster meaningful conversation and inquiry with their peers in class can receive the full 2% bonus; partial participation credit, however, will be provided.

Course Policies

Communication: You may contact me with questions about the course, the site, or assignments and assessments at your leisure. When emailing me, I ask that you mention in the email title or body that you are a student enrolled in SYA 4930 or “Sociology of Popular Culture.” I will endeavor to reply as quickly as possible, usually within 48 hours. Please be aware that I do not typically check my email regularly on weekends. Please use your UFL email account; I cannot guarantee messages sent through the Canvas messaging system or sent from non-UFL email addresses will receive timely responses.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Course Grading Policy: This course’s grading scale for final scores, based on the assignment descriptions provided earlier in this syllabus, is as follows:

A	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	E
100% to 90%	< 90% to 87%	< 87% to 84%	< 84% to 80%	< 80% to 77%	< 77% to 74%	< 74% to 70%	< 70% to 67%	< 67% to 64%	< 64% to 0%

Please note the absence of an “A-” in this class. All scores of 90% or higher are marked as an “A.” Further information on university grades and grading policies at the University of Florida can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Extra Credit: Beyond the extra credit afforded for “participation” (see above for details), I do not generally provide extra credit opportunities during the semester. As such, students should aim to perform well on course assignments and assessments.

Late Assignments: Worksheets and relevant may be submitted up to 4 days (96 hours) late for a maximum score of 85%. Late submissions can only receive a maximum score of 85% and will be graded last among submissions. For example, an assignment submission that earned a 96% but was submitted late would yield a score of 85%. Conversely, a submission that earned a 78% and was submitted late would still result in a score of 78%.

Extensions or exceptions beyond this policy will only be provided in *extreme* extenuating circumstances, usually requiring documentation and/or discussion with the instructor in accordance with University Attendance Policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). Such instances will be handled on a case-by-case basis (that is, just asking for an extension is not a guarantee!).

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students with disabilities who experience barriers to learning should request academic accommodations through the Disability Resource Center. Visit <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/> to begin this process. Part of the process will involve the generation of an accommodation letter; please share this letter with the instructor as early as possible in the semester. You are invited, but not required, to discuss your needs with the instructor, as well.

UF Student Honor and Conduct Code: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment’.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy: As text-generative large-language models (LLMs), colloquially described as “AI” or “artificial intelligence,” become increasingly accessible and integrated into digital life, you may find use in such tools for your own learning. The general policy for this course is...

- Permitted, to improve learning and comprehension: AI may be used to assist in student comprehension, understanding, or clarification of course materials and content (as a study buddy or reference). Additionally, AI can be used to brainstorm, outline, or “jump start” the writing process for worksheets, papers, or presentations.

- Not Permitted, to minimize inaccurate representation of comprehension: AI-generated text should not be used for written assignments or worksheets, nor should AI-generated audio be used for podcast recordings (outside of music, if you should so choose to include some). For these assignments, the final explanation or communication must be from your own verbiage or drawing from experts in the form of quotations and citations.

If you are uncertain if your use of an AI LLM constitutes a violation of the above policy, please speak with the instructor prior to submitting the relevant assignment. In cases where you lack time to do so, err on the side of caution and use your own words/writing.

Changes to Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the semester. Changes will only be to the students' benefit, and changes will always be announced well in advance. All changes will be reflected in the syllabus with appropriate notation, and changes will be announced with sufficient advanced notice on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Consumerism and Mass Media

Monday, Jan 13th

[Optional] Storey, John. 2009. Excerpt from "What is Popular Culture?" Pp. 1-15 in *Cultural Theory & Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 5th ed. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Wednesday, Jan 15th

Castleberry, Garret. 2016. "Understanding Stuart Hall's 'Encoding/Decoding' Model through TV's *Breaking Bad*." Pp 84-94 in *Communication Theory and Millennial Popular Culture*, edited by K.G. Roberts. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Friday, Jan 17th

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. Excerpt from "Consumerism versus Consumption." Pp. 25-51 in *Consuming Life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

[Monday, January 20th: No Classes for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day]

Wednesday, Jan 22nd

Althusser, Louis. 1971. Excerpt from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." Pp. 85-126 in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by B. Brewster. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.

[\[https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm\]](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm)

Friday, Jan 24th

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. [1944] 2006. Excerpt from "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." Pp. 41-72 in *Media and Cultural Studies*, Revised Edition, edited by M.G. Durham and D.M. Kellner. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Monday, Jan 27th

[Worksheet #1 Due]

- 📺 Stanton, Andrew, et. al. 2008. *WALL-E*. USA: Pixar Animation Studios & Walt Disney Pictures. [Access Online through Swank Digital Campus](#). (Requires log-in and/or campus Wi-Fi or VPN)

Unit 2: Images, Representation, and Cognition

Wednesday, Jan 29th

- DiMaggio, Paul. 1997. Excerpt from "Culture and Cognition." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23: 263-287.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1996. Excerpt from "Lumping and Splitting: Notes on Social Classification." *Sociological Forum* 11(3): 421-433.

Friday, Jan 31st

- Boutyline, Andrei, and Laura K. Soter. 2021. Excerpt from "Cultural Schemas: What They Are, How to Find Them, and What to Do Once You've Caught One." *American Sociological Review* 86(4): 728-758.

Monday, Feb 3rd

- Jacobs, Susan, and Joseph Quinn. 2022. "Cultural Reproduction of Mental Illness Stigma and Stereotypes." *Social Science & Medicine* 292: 114552.

Wednesday, Feb 5th

- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images." Pp. 69-96 in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Politics, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.

Friday, Feb 7th

- Seidman, Steven. 2013. "From the Polluted Homosexual to the Normal Gay: Changing Patterns of Sexual Regulation in America." Pp. 39-62 in *Thinking Straight: The Power, the Promise, and the Paradox of Heterosexuality*, edited by C. Ingram. New York, NY: Routledge.

Monday, Feb 10th

[Worksheet #2 Due]

- Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. 2020. Summary Pages from "Inequality in 1,300 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBTQ & Disability from 2007 to 2019." Accessed online at https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inequality_1300_popular_films_09-08-2020.pdf

Unit 3: Consumption, Production, and Regulation

Wednesday, Feb 12th

- Bourdieu, Pierre. [1987] 2009. "Distinction and the Aristocracy of Culture." Pp. 498-507 in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 4th Edition, edited by J. Storey. New York, NY: Pearson.

Lamont, Michèle. 1992. "Prologue: Sketching the Landscape: Some Illustrative Vignettes." Pp. xix-xxix in *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Friday, Feb 14th

Chauncey, George. 1994. Excerpt from "Building Gay Enclaves: The Village and Harlem." Pp. 227-268 in *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.

Monday, Feb 17th

Peterson, Richard A., and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore." *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 900-907.
Lizardo, Omar. 2013. "Variety in Cultural Choice and the Activation of Social Ties." *Social Science Research* 42: 321-330.

Wednesday, Feb 19th

Becker, Howard S. 1974. "Art as Collective Action." *American Sociological Review* 39(6): 767-776.
Grindstaff, Laura. 2002. Excerpt from "Talk as Show, a Show of Emotion." Pp. 115-147 in *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of TV Talk Shows*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Friday, Feb 21st

Prior, Nick. 2008. "Putting a Glitch in the Field: Bourdieu, Actor Network Theory and Contemporary Music." *Cultural Sociology* 2(3): 301-319.

Monday, Feb 24th

[Worksheet #3 Due]

🎬 Mizushima, Tsutomu. 2014. *Shirobako*, Episodes 1-3. Japan: P.A. Works. Access Online via Canvas.

Wednesday, Feb 26th

Sternheimer, Karen. 2015. "Pop Culture Crusaders: Constructing Meanings of Deviancy and Delinquency." Pp. 1-22 in *Pop Culture Panics: How Moral Crusaders Construct Meanings of Deviance and Delinquency*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Friday, Feb 28th

Fang, Jun. 2024. "The Culture of Censorship: State Intervention and Complicit Creativity in Global Film Production." *American Sociological Review* 89(3): 488-517.

Unit 4: Fandom and Fan Studies

Monday, Mar 3rd

Jenkins, Henry. 1988. "Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5(2): 85-107.

Monday, Mar 5th

Sunder, Madhavi. 2012. "Everyone's a Superhero." Pp. 105-125 in *From Goods to a Good Life: Intellectual Property and Global Justice*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

[Friday, March 7th: In-Class Exam #1]

Monday, Mar 10th

Fiske, John. 1992. "The Cultural Economy of Fandom." Pp. 30-49 in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, edited by L.A. Lewis. New York, NY: Routledge.

Turk, Tisha. 2014. "Fan Work: Labor, Worth, and Participation in Fandom's Gift Economy." *Transformative Works and Cultures* 15.

Wednesday, Mar 12th

Harrington, C. Lee, and Denise Bielby. 2010. "A Life Course Perspective on Fandom." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13(5): 429-450.

Friday, Mar 14th

Jenkins, Bryan. 2020. "Marginalization within Nerd Culture: Racism and Sexism within Cosplay." *Popular Culture Studies Journal* 8(1): 157-174.

[March 15th-22nd: Spring Break]

Monday, Mar 24th

[Worksheet #4 Due]

📺 Nygard, Roger. 1997. *Trekkies*. United States: Paramount Classics. Access Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tslLzNjvYn0>.

Unit 5: Social Media and the Economy of Attention

Wednesday, Mar 26th

Gamson, Josh. 2011. "The Unwatched Life is Not Worth Living: The Elevation of the Ordinary in Celebrity Culture." *PMLA* 26(4): 1061-1069.

Grindstaff, Laura. 2012. "Reality TV and the Production of 'Ordinary Celebrity': Notes from the Field." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 56: 22-40.

Friday, Mar 28th

van Krieken, Robert. 2021. "Economy of Attention and Attention Capital." In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, edited by George Ritzer. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Bucher, Taina. 2012. "Want to be on the Top? Algorithmic Power and the Threat of Invisibility on Facebook." *New Media & Society* 14(7): 1164-1180.

Monday, Mar 31st

Dame-Griff, Avery. 2023. "Always On: Information, Circulation, and the World Wide Web." Pp. 115-145 in *The Two Revolutions: A History of the Transgender Internet*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Wednesday, Apr 2nd

No readings; bring smartphone, tablet, or laptop for in-class activity.

Note: Attendance today is necessary to complete Worksheet #5. Plan accordingly.

[Friday, April 4th: No Class; Project Proposal Due by 11:59pm]

Monday, Apr 7th

[Worksheet #5 due]

Goodman, Barak. 2014. "Generation Like." *Frontline*, Season 2014, Episode 7. Boston, MA: PBS Video & WGBH Boston. Access Online at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/generation-like/>.

Unit 6: Globalization

Wednesday, Apr 9th

Crane, Diana. 2002. Excerpt from "Culture and Globalization: Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends." Pp. 1-25 in *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization*, edited by D. Crane, N. Kawashima, and K. Kawasaki. New York, NY: Routledge.

Friday, Apr 11th

Carlson, Rebecca, and Jonathan Corliss. 2011. "Imagined Commodities: Video Game Localization and Mythologies of Cultural Difference." *Games and Culture* 6(1): 61-82.

Monday, Apr 14th

Grazian, David. 2010. "Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture." Pp. 191-200 in *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, edited by J. Hall, L. Grindstaff, and M. Lo. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lipsitz, George. 2007. Excerpt from "Salsa: The Hidden History of Colonialism." Pp. 211-237 in *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Wednesday, Apr 16th

Iwabuchi, Koichi. 2002. Excerpt from "Trans/nationalism: Discourses on Japan in the Global Cultural Flow." Pp. 51-84 in *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sche. 2024. "What is 'Cool Japan'? — Japan's Cultural Policy and Economy." *Medium*, March 24. Access online at <https://medium.com/@sche0365/what-is-cool-japan-japans-cultural-policy-and-economy-06806ebfdc9e>

[Friday, April 18th: In-Class Exam #2]

Monday, Apr 21st

Yoon, Kyong. 2017. "Postcolonial Production and Consumption of Global K-pop." Pp. 109-125 in *The Korean Wave: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by D. Jin and T-J Yoon. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Wednesday, Apr 23rd

No readings; Final Project Presentations

Wednesday, Apr 30th [Final Exam Day, 10:00am-12:00pm]

No readings; Final Project Presentations