

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2019-2020 C LIT: 228 – B1 Literature, Popular Culture and the Visual Arts
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Dr. Mimi Okabe
Office: Old Arts Building 437-C
E-mail: tokabe@ualberta.ca
Personal Website: mimiokabe.com
Course Website: eClass

Time: M, W, F 11:00 am - 11:50 am
Place: Tory Building 1 5
Office Hours: Mondays 1:00 pm - 3 pm,
or by appointment

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: None

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Why study pop culture? We should study pop culture because of its influential role in the construction of our identities and our sense of place within the world. It is a window to an understanding of our past and its relationship to the present and foreseeable future. This course is designed to introduce cultural theories and texts that will encourage you to consider the relationship between history, culture and politics by examining a selection of genres (i.e., detective fiction, romance, horror, science fiction) in the past and present through a comparative lens. With a focus on adaptations of popular “literary” texts from the West and from Japan, this course thematically explores how our ideas about class, gender, identity,

nation and race are embedded in various mass cultural products, including but not limited to anime, comics, films, literature, manga, and social media. In other words, we will explore how these cultural “texts” reflect and respond to wider sociopolitical issues that are defined and re-defined at different historical intervals. As part of this course, students are encouraged to venture to the *Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes*, a special exhibition held at the Telus World of Science before February 17th 2020. Students can also look forward to guest speakers such as The Wisteria Lodgers: Edmonton’s Sherlockian Society, and curate a pop culture exhibition at the end of the course.

This course also utilizes Instagram as an experimental learning tool. It will require students to create a new Instagram account, or use an existing one, and post relevant content to the class Instagram page @PopCulture228. For details, see explanatory notes on assignments.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key concepts related to cultural theory, as well as representative characteristics and tropes related to popular genres.
- Critically articulate the ideological function of popular genres and their modes of representation.
- Analyze how popular “texts” reinforce and subvert hegemonic norms and values of their specific sociohistorical contexts, with emphasis on topics of nation, identity, race, gender and class.
- Apply a critical analysis of pop culture in the summative assignment.

Course Format:

The objectives of this course will be learned from a combination of formal lectures, guest presentations, assigned readings and audiovisual materials.

Texts:

Required texts

(Other versions are OK)

- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *A Study in Scarlet*. E-book, Project Gutenberg, 2008.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride & Prejudice*. E-book, Project Gutenberg, 2008.
- Gōshō, Aoyama. *Cased Closed*. Viz Media, 2004.

** All other short stories and critical readings are available on eClass. **

Recommend texts

John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*
John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: January 6, 2020

Add/Delete Date: January 17, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: February 5, 2020

Winter Term Reading Week: February 18-21, 2020

Withdrawal Date: April 1, 2020

Last Day of Class: April 8, 2020

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): Please consult the following site:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations> (Exams)

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

1. Instagram Posts 15% (3 x 5% each)
2. Class Preparation and Discussion 25%
3. Pair-presentation 10% (See eClass for presentation schedule)
4. “Pop” quizzes 10% (5 x 2% each)
5. Summative Assignment 40%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Instagram Posts 15% (3 x 5% each)

Think about the ways in which pop culture impacts your daily life. This Instagram page will be used to compile images related to definitions of popular culture studied in the course and enable students with a platform to reflect on and demonstrate their understanding of key concepts in critical and creative ways. Some of these images may be featured in the exhibition.

Instagram posts: Students will either create a new Instagram account or use an existing one and make a minimum contribution of three relevant posts, tagging them to the class Instagram page (@PopCulture228) throughout the semester. Each post must include the following things:

- An image of a cultural artefact (this is broadly defined, but the picture itself must be one that you took. No portraits or photos of people in public spaces where they are unaware of the photo(s) being taken. No unwilling participants).
- The images cannot be a repost. They must not contain graphic and sensitive content.

- You can include as many hashtags as you like.
- **The caption of each post must contain 3 things:** 1) a short description of the image; 2) a sentence explaining your inspiration behind the post; 3) a short explanation of relevance of the image to either the course content or to the topic of popular culture.

Tentative deadlines for each post:

- 1) Friday January 31, 2020
- 2) Monday February 17, 2020
- 3) Friday March 6, 2020

Note: This page will be monitored by the instructor. For students who do not have access to social media, or for personal reasons do not use social media, they may submit a hardcopy version of the assignment. Please see the instructor for details.

****Additional information and forms will be provided in class. ****

Class Preparation and Discussion 25%

It is mandatory for students to attend lectures, in-class screenings and group tutoring sessions, which will be led by Maryam Rana from the Centre For Writers. Students are expected to come prepared to take an active role in class, ask questions and contribute to class discussions every session. Class activities will be offered every week and students' participation in the forms of pair/group discussions and individual/group written reports will be evaluated throughout the course. Students will sign up for group tutoring sessions before the end of January 2020.

Pair-Presentation 10%

Students will work in groups of three to produce a twelve-minute presentation on a popular culture text or theory that is not listed on the course reading list. Topics might include ads, ASMR, celebrities, cosplay, dance, fan communities, fashion, food media, k-pop, magazines, podcasts, pop music, radio, reality TV, video games and so on. Other animation, films and TV series not listed on the reading list are also fair game. Students will sign up for a presentation topic by the end of the first week of class. **Presentations will be delivered throughout the semester.** Additional information and a rubric will be available on eClass.

“Pop” quizzes 10% (5x 2% each)

Throughout the course, students will write a total of 5 quizzes based on key terms, concepts and definitions from lectures and readings. The quizzes will be assigned randomly throughout the semester.

Summative Assignment 40%

This assignment has two parts: a proposal and either a creative project or traditional essay.

1. Proposal 10%

Students are expected to submit a written proposal of approximately 250-300 words in length based on a title from the reading list (posted on eClass). Students will conduct a close reading of the selected text in relation to a topics or themes introduced in the

course and produce either a creative project or write a traditional essay. Students who want to pursue an original topic MUST consult with the instructor and get their topic approved prior to the deadline. The proposal must state the objectives of the proposed topic, include a detailed outline of the proposed project or essay and a rough timeline of your internal deadlines. **Due Date: Monday March 2, 2020**

2a. Creative Project (12%) + Reflection (18%)

The creative project must be accompanied with a 4-5-page (double-spaced) critical reflection that explains the significance of the final product in relation to proposed topic. Refer to

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html> on how to use MLA format. The

creative work itself can be presented in the form of a comic, a short story, a painting, a cellphone game, card games, a fashion item and so on. It can focus on a character, a major theme, a concept or idea that the student finds interesting. **Due Friday March 27, 2020.**

2b. Traditional Essay (25%) + Poster (5%)

The traditional essay must be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, not including the Works Cited page. It must have a strong thesis and a clear argument that develops the proposed topic in logical, coherent and insightful ways. The essay should include up to three secondary sources. Refer to

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html> on how to use MLA format. By mid-

February, students will receive specific guidelines and topics for the paper. The essay must be accompanied with a poster/visual that can be displayed at the exhibition. **Due Friday March 27, 2020**

Exhibition: For now, the last week-and-a-half of class will be dedicated to the exhibition where you will showcase your work in collaboration with MLCS 199: Superhero in Comics and Beyond. Location: TBA. Further details about the exhibition will be provided in class.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from

the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your

instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, regular attendance of the class lectures is very important as it constitutes 10% of your total grade. An absence without a valid excuse (family emergency, health, or personal) will result in a total loss of the participation segment of the day missed. Emergencies are unpredictable, but **please consult with me at your earliest convenience** if you know that you will miss a class(es) for any of the reasons listed above.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse will be granted for late assignments, the student will be penalized at 5% per day (including weekends), unless you requested an extension for a valid reason. Extensions will not be granted after the due date. After the period of 7 days (from the due date) no assignments will be accepted.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82

Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

Copyright: Mimi Okabe, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta 2019-2020