Popular Culture: Images of Illness and Well-being

Summer 2001

Instructors: P. Sorin and G. Coonfield
Office hours: Monday through Thursday, 11-Noon (Walker 345) and 1-2pm (Walker 313)

Rationale:
This course addresses the sociocultural force of popular culture through the theme of health. We will consider popular cultural constructions of illness, wellness, fitness and gendered bodies.

Objectives:
* Explore the role of popular culture in shaping common assumptions and practices about health and the body
* Understand and apply theoretical concepts of representation and ideology
* Reflect on the social, cultural, and ethical issues at stake in popular culture

Required texts:
Dani Cavallaro, The Body for Beginners
Jean Kilbourne, Can't Buy My Love

Electronic reserve: www.hu.mtu.edu/~gwcoonfi/popperculture

Requirements
You are required to do the assigned readings for each class session and participate in every class discussion. You must complete all the assignments listed below for a final grade or make arrangements with me to complete missing assignments. Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students; I expect careful documentation of any sources, especially electronic sources. Please attend class; after three absences, your grade will be lowered. Accommodations will be made for particular needs in accord with the following university policy statement:

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (3310).

Graded Assignments:
Quizzes .................. 30%
Presentation .......... 30%
Paper .................... 30%
Participation .......... 10%
Schedule:

5/21 Course Introduction
5/22 Quiz on Holmberg. Discuss: What is popular culture? Recommended: Miller & McHoul
5/23 Representation (Hall video). Turn in notes. Recommended: Hall.
5/24 Read and discuss Cavallaro 6-18; Buff bodies: Discuss representation, fitness, and pop culture
5/28 Memorial Day
5/29 Representations of medicine, the medicalized body, and disability: Read and discuss Cavallaro, 48-61.
5/30 Ideology: Quiz on Hall. Ideology, addiction, and popular culture. Required reading: TBA
5/31 Homework: Fill in matrix with concrete examples

6/4 Breast cancer: illness, wholeness, and pop culture
6/5 Quiz: Kilbourne, chapter 1
6/6 Quiz: Kilbourne, chapter 2 Group presentation
6/7 Quiz: Kilbourne, chapter 5 Group presentation
6/11 Quiz: Kilbourne, chapter 7 Group presentation
6/12 Quiz: Kilbourne, chapter 10 Group presentation
6/13 Read and discuss Kilbourne, chapter 11 Group presentation
6/14 Read and discuss Kilbourne, chapter 13 Group presentation
6/18 Read and discuss Frank, chapter 1 Group presentation
6/19 Quiz: Frank, chapter 2 Group presentation
6/20 Quiz: Frank, chapter 3 Group presentation
6/21 Quiz: Frank, chapter 4 Group presentation First drafts of final paper due
6/25 Workshop
6/26 Quiz: Frank, chapter 5 Group presentation
6/27 Quiz: Frank, chapter 6 Group presentation
6/28 Course conclusion

Presentation Assignment: With a partner, introduce the class to the concepts and arguments in a set of readings. You must show how these concepts and arguments work in a selected form of popular culture (a certain kind of music, movie, television show, advertising, etc.). Presentations must be at least twenty minutes in length and an outline is required when you present.

Paper Assignment: A 5-7 page typed paper on a popular culture topic inspired by class readings, discussions, and presentations. This must be a researched paper with a minimum of five sources, only three of which can be internet sources. Document carefully both in text and at the end of the paper. First drafts are due Monday, 6/21.
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