XIDS 2100-AB1 Syllabus
Fall 2014
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Student-Professor E-mail Correspondence: You are welcome to e-mail me with questions, but please do not abuse this privilege (i.e. re-sending thesis statements multiple times with changes made according to my suggestions). At a certain point, this becomes excessive collaboration. Likewise, do not send e-mails asking questions that I have covered in class or that you can find on your own (due dates, course policies, etc.). Should you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what work you missed (by consulting the online syllabus/handouts) and to get the notes from a classmate.

UWG Email Policy: University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

I also ask that you observe standard grammar and punctuation rules when e-mailing me or any other professor. DO NOT send e-mails that are in “text speak.” This is not an appropriate form of communication outside the realm of sending an actual text.

*Note: All student-professor e-mail correspondence must take place via your my.westga.edu account. If you need to reach me outside of class and/or office hours, e-mail is the most efficient way to do so. Also, please be aware that I cannot communicate with your parents; should you have concerns about your progress in the course or any other issues that arise, you should address them with me personally.

Course Description: This course will explore how media forms and mediations of perspective shape audiences' understanding of events in modern American culture. Students will examine the defining characteristics of different media forms (i.e. television, photojournalism, short and long fiction and non-fiction works, popular music) and will examine how the construction and projection of textual, aural and visual images shape meaning and influence broader discussions of events. The course will proceed through a series of units: the examination of a particular media event, exploration of texts that examine the mechanisms of media and a discussion of a particular historical phenomenon from several mediated perspectives (i.e. a work of non-fiction, a graphic novel, a film). This trajectory will enable students to understand the relationship between
form and content and will allow students to become more intellectually engaged participants in contemporary cultural debates.

Section Description: This section focuses on media forms and audience perspectives with specific emphasis on issues of identity, fame, and the nature of celebrity in America. Our three primary texts will be

- A variety of music and music videos as well as selected photographs, advertisements, and television programs, all of which we will interpret as “texts” that work to create, construct, deconstruct the culture of celebrity in America
- The novel The Hunger Games, which we will examine in its entirety while paying close attention to nature of celebrity in a post-apocalyptic America
- The film The Truman Show, which we will examine in its entirety while paying close attention to the staged nature of reality television and celebrity in America

In addition to these primary texts of analysis, we will read and analyze brief essays (available as hyperlinks below in the assignment portion of this syllabus), as well as any other media suggested by either students or myself during class discussions.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics that define and differentiate literary, filmic and visual texts.
- Students will be able to apply this understanding to analyze the relationship between form and meaning.
- Students will be able to explain how diverse modes of humanistic and artistic endeavor contribute to an understanding of the media in America.
- Students will be able to produce written work that synthesizes evidence effectively in organized, specific, and focused paragraphs to support analytical claims.
- Students will demonstrate the ability in informal and formal writing contexts to express ideas using concise and rhetorically appropriate academic English.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to produce a thesis-driven essay that analyzes text in relation to larger “real world” questions of social, cultural, or thematic significance.

As a writing-intensive XIDS class, the writing exercises will foster both individual exploration of ideas, analytical critical questions, cultural or historical contexts, and ultimately thesis-driven argument. Writing assignments will build on each other and will engage students in discussion of the characteristics of visual media, written text and the construction of performances.
Attendance:
Since this class meets so few times, each absence is like missing a week of a normal class. Students should be in attendance for every class period, especially since this is an Accelerated class. No assignments can be submitted late or made up, so even one absence will also affect participation and reading journal grades. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences. Failure to attend all classes may result in a failing grade for the course.

Assignments:
(1) Reading Journal: students respond individually in writing to daily reading assignments (print, filmic, and visual), demonstrating
- expressive writing (personal response), and
- analytical questioning (for example, have students use their perception of "pressure points" or parts of the text that they found confusing in order to ask critical questions and then, importantly, return to the text for deeper investigation of how to answer that question).
***Both of these will help students move from response towards analysis. Journals will be used daily and help prompt class discussion.

(2) Visual image analysis: a brief writing assignment, paragraph length at least, based on an observation, description, and analysis of a visual: a print ad or photograph or drawing/painting. This assignment fosters intellectual curiosity and analytical questioning through a medium they know well and instills confidence in “analysis” before they move on to academic writing about written texts.

(3) One short essay (2 pages) explicating an image from a course text and its function in the text as a whole. This assignment builds upon the skills learned from the visual image analysis, transfers it to a written text and moves the writer toward understanding how to build a thesis from critical analysis.

(4) Longer text and context essay (4-5 pages): An essay moving from a text itself to consider contexts: social, cultural, or thematic issues that the text raises in connection to the “real world” of individual experience.

(5) Final creative project: students will develop a creative project at the end of the semester on a topic of their choosing that is related to the course content. Students will develop a presentation related to this project at the end of the semester.
Evaluation:

- **Course Participation** (attendance, group workshops, quizzes, daily work, in-class writing, creative project progress) 15%
- **Reading Journal** 20%
- **Writing Assignment #1** 10%
- **Writing Assignment #2** 15%
- **Writing Assignment #3** 25%
- **Final Creative Project** 15%

Additional Expectations and Policies:

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given.

**Credit Hour Policy:** The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

**University of West Georgia Honor Code:** At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing. The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not
limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG. Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages or actions.

A complete list University-Wide Policies and Procedures can be found at http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Reading and Assignment Schedule

August

Week One

M 25 Intro to course basics: syllabus, major assignments, course theme: meaning of media in American culture

T 26 “Cult of Personality”; diagnostic exercise: response to visual image

W 27 What is media (past and present)?; George Michael and Freedom; ad analysis; grammar exercise. (Read before class: 3 Ied Monster; Thesis Construction; "What We Are to Advertisers"

R 28 Continue discussion; Jay-Z and Eminem. (Read before class: Awesome Action Verbs)

September

Week Two

M 1 Labor Day!!! No Class!!!

T 2 Finish discussion; begin drafting Writing Assignment 1; XIDS 2100 Paragraph Prompt

W 3 thesis and paragraph exercises in class

R 4 Writing Workshop in class; bring two copies of your draft with you to class
Week Three

M  8  **Writing Assignment 1 due at beginning of class**; introduction to *The Truman Show*

T  9  analyze movie poster and trailer; introduction to film analysis; grammar focus on commas. *(Read before class: "The Hollywood Sign")*

W 10  Begin discussion of *The Truman Show*; *(Read before class: Cases of 'Truman Show' Delusions)*

R 11  continue discussion

Week Four

M 15  continue discussion; Discuss Writing Assignment 2; thesis and paragraph exercises in class

T 16  finish discussion; Essay construction: five kinds of introductions; *(Read before class: Writing an Introduction)*

W 17  thesis and body paragraph workshop in class; bring two copies of your outline with you to class

T 18  rough draft workshop in class; bring two copies of your draft with you to class

Week Five

M 22  **Writing Assignment 2 due at beginning of class**; *The Hunger Games*: context; themes; culture

T 23  begin discussion of *The Hunger Games*; *(Read pages 1–130 before class)*

W 24  continue discussion

R 25  continue discussion; *(Read pages 132 – 374 *the end*before class)*

Week Six

M 29  finish discussion; Discuss Writing Assignment 3
T  30 thesis workshop in class; **bring two copies of your outline with you to class**

October

W  1 body paragraph workshop in class; **bring two copies of your outline with you to class**

R  2 rough drafting and editing workshops of Writing Assignment 3; proofreading exercises; writing a conclusion

Week Seven

M  6 **Writing Assignment 3 due at beginning of class**

T  7 Discuss Final Creative Project Guidelines

W  8 Work on creative projects

R  9 No Class – use time to work on Creative Project

Week Eight

M 13 Discuss the process of revision

T 14 Last XIDS 2100 writing workshop day

W 15 Optional Hunger Games Revisions due

R 16 Creative Project presentations; last day of XIDS 2100