



FALL 2016

MRTS 4410

YOUTH MEDIA

This course critically examines various youth media and cultures in post-1945 America. We will explore pop culture, subcultures, identities, discourses, practices, representations, and commodification. The course seeks to understand the relationships between youth cultures, mass media, adult mainstream society, and youth media production. We will explore popular teen tropes and narratives and also investigate how young people actually use, value, produce, and find meaning in multiple media in different contexts. Our analysis will always take into consideration the social, cultural, economic, and political implications of these representations and experiences.

PROFESSOR:
DR. JACQUELINE
VICKERY

CLASS MEETS:
TUESDAYS &
THURSDAYS
11:00-12:20

LOCATION:
RTFP 180F

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH TEXAS
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDIA ARTS

Office Hours: Tues. 12:30-
2:30 & by appointment

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ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Reading Quizzes: 5 pts. each * 10 = **50 points**
Film Discussion Questions: 25 pts. each * 4 =
100 points
Youth Media Auto-Ethnography = **50 pts.**

Take-home Midterm Essay = **75 pts.**
Trope or Marketing Analysis = **75 pts.**
Final Paper or Project = **100 pts.**
Participation = **50 pts.**
Total = 500 points

A = 450-500 points; **B** = 400-449 points; **C** = 350-399 points; **D** = 300-349 points;
F = Fewer than 300 points

REQUIRED TEXT

All readings are available on Blackboard.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 22: Media Auto-Ethnography Due
October 4: Take-home Midterm Essay Due
October 20: Final Paper or Project Proposal Due
November 8: Trope or Marketing Analysis Due
November 22: Final Paper or Project Update Due
December 13: Final Paper or Project Due by 12:30 p.m.

WEEKLY TOPICS - TENTATIVE READING & SCREENING SCHEDULE

Part 1: Constructions of Youth & the Birth of American Teen (Media)

Key Questions: Who and what are “teenagers”? Why are media industries interested in targeting youth audiences? What are key characteristics of (Western) youth culture? In what ways are youth discursively constructed in American culture?

Week 1

August 30: Introduction	
September 1: Birth of the American Teenager Topics: consumer culture, post-war America	Read: “They’re Getting Older Younger” –Grace Palladino

Week 2

September 6: Media & Identity Formation Topics: social construction of youth; youth identity; norms	Read: Adolescents’ Uses of Media for Self-Socialization – Jeffery Jensen Arnett
September 8: Moral Panics & Constructions of Youth Discourses of risk, moral panics	Read: “Swing Shift: Bobby Soxers Take the Stage” – Grace Palladino

Week 3

September 13: Music & Youth Culture Watch: clips from <i>American Bandstand</i> ; <i>Total Request Live</i> ; <i>Soul Train</i> ; <i>Video Soul</i>	Read: "They'll be Rockin' on Bandstand, in Philadelphia, PA: Imagining National Youth Culture on <i>American Bandstand</i> " – Matthew F. Delmont
September 15: No Class – Dr. Vickery presenting at a conference	Read: "Dangerous Youth" (pp. 83-98) – Thomas Doherty

Week 4

September 20: Juvenile Delinquency Topics: teenpics, marketing of j.d. films; post-war youth & adult anxiety	Read: "Dangerous Youth" (pp. 99-114) – Thomas Doherty
September 22: Youth At/As Risk Topics: innocence, sex, gender, whiteness *Media Auto-Ethnography Due*	Watch: <i>Thirteen</i> (2003)

Week 5

September 27: Youth At/As Risk Topics: sex, gender, ethnicity, class	
September 29: Youth At/As Risk Topics: sex, violence, masculinity, Otherness *Take-home Essay Distributed*	Watch: <i>Boyz in the Hood</i> (1991)

Part 2: Representations of Teens in Film & TV

Key Questions: What values and whose identities are privileged in mediated representations of youth? Whose are marginalized? How do media tropes shape perspectives of youth? How do different media industries, genres, and time periods address discursive tensions of youth in American media?

Week 6

October 4: Teen Horror Films Watch: <i>A Nightmare on Elm Street</i> (1984) *Take-home Midterm Essay Due*	
Oct. 6: Teen Horror Films Guest Lecturer: Shaylynn Lesinski	Read: "The Monstrous Years: Teens, Slasher Films, and the Family" – Pat Gill

Week 7

October 11: Virginty Tropes Topics: fetishization of virginty	Read: "Virginty Loss Narratives in 'Teen Drama' Television Programs" – Maura Kelly
October 13: Rites of Passage Watch: <i>Raising Victor Vargas</i> (2002)	

Week 8

October 18: Coming-of-Age Films Topics: limits of coming-of-age discourse; gender; emerging sexualities	Watch: <i>Pariah</i> (2011)
October 20: Coming-of-Age Films Topics: homosocial friendships; loss of innocence; adult perspectives of youth *Final Paper or Project Proposal Due*	Read: “Girlfriends and Girl Power: Female Adolescence in Contemporary U.S. Cinema” – Mary Celeste Kearney

Week 9

October 25: Cliques & Stereotypes Watch: <i>Not Another Teen Movie</i> (2001)	
October 27: Cliques & Stereotypes Topics: tropes, genre, representations, marketing	Read: “Teen Types and Stereotypes” – Catherine Driscoll

Week 10

November 1 Nostalgia in Teen Media Watch: <i>The Wonder Years</i> (1988-1993) Topics: marketing, reception, tropes	Read: “Tuesday’s Gone: The Nostalgic Teen Film” – Lesley Speed
November 3: History of Teen TV Watch: <i>The Brady Bunch</i> (1969-1974); <i>Happy Days</i> (1974-1984) Topics: shift from family-centered to peer-centered texts; industry strategies	Watch: <i>Saved by the Bell</i> (1989-1993); <i>Fresh Prince of Bel-Air</i> ; <i>Boy Meets World</i> (1993-2000); (episodes T.B.D.)

Week 11

November 8: Emergence of Teen Networks Watch: clips from <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> (1997-2003); <i>Dawson’s Creek</i> (1998-2003); <i>Gilmore Girls</i> (2000-2007); <i>Freaks & Geeks</i> (1999-2000) Topics: production of teen TV - MTV, CW, UPN, WB, ABC Family *Trope or Marketing Analysis Paper Due*	Read: “Teen Television and the WB Television Network” – Valerie Wee
November 10 Postfeminist Teen TV Watch: <i>Veronica Mars</i> (2004-2007) Topics: postfeminism; industry strategies; representation	Read: “‘That Girl of Yours – She’s Pretty Hardboiled, huh?’ Detecting Feminism in <i>Veronica Mars</i> ” – Andrea Braithwaite

Part 3: Meaning Making & Making Media

Key Questions: How do youth make meaning out of media? How does the media industry try to capitalize on youth fandom? How do youth use media to represent their own identities, cultures, and values?

Week 12

November 15: Millennial Branding Watch: scenes from <i>The Fosters</i> (2013-); <i>Jane the Virgin</i> (2014-) Topics: visibility; diversity; reception; industry strategies	Read: "Secrets and Lies: Gender and Generation in the ABC Family Brand" – Caryn Murphy
November 17: Fandom Topics: identity; fan activism; participatory culture	

Week 13

November 22: Reception Watch: <i>Smallville</i> Topics: resistant and reparative readings; industry-audience dynamics	Read: "The Adventures of a Repressed Farm Boy and the Billionaire Who Loves Him: Queer Spectatorship in <i>Smallville</i> Fandom" – Melanie E.S. Kohnen
Final Paper or Project Update Due	
November 24: HAPPY THANKSGIVING! No class	Gobble gobble!

Week 14

November 29: Teens Make Media Watch: CME films produced by youth in foster care Topics: marginalized voices; media literacy	
December 1: Future of Youth Media Topics: industry, audience, representation	

Week 15

December 6: Presentations	
December 8: Presentations	

Week 16: Final

Tuesday, December 13: Final Papers or Projects must be submitted by 12:30 p.m. – <u>No late work accepted!</u>
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POLICIES

Participation

This class is structured in a seminar format, meaning I expect you to contribute your insights, questions, and perspectives on the topics, readings, films, shows, and music. You need to come to class prepared - this means you have already completed the readings/screenings for the day. I expect you to contribute to the discussions at least once a week (more is encouraged). I keep records of your overall participation, which accounts for **10% of your final grade**. This course is only as good as the discussions we have, so do yourself and your classmates a favor and come prepared to participate every day.

Attendance

I take attendance every day. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Instead, you get **2 “free” absences** a semester – no questions asked, so you don’t need to tell me about it or explain (i.e. if you are sick, need a mental health day, are out of town, had to work late, or just overslept, etc. it doesn’t matter, just take it). Use your absences wisely and plan around your personal circumstances and schedule. You will **lose 20 points from your final grade** for every additional absence. If you encounter extenuating circumstances that prevent you from attending class, come talk to me ASAP.

Out of Class Screenings

In lieu of readings, you will occasionally need to watch a film or television show on your own time. You may access them via the Media Library on campus. As a courtesy to your other classmates, please don’t check out the material longer than you need it. I also encourage you to organize a screening with your classmates if you are checking it out from the library. However, most of the films/shows are also available on Netflix, Amazon Prime, and/or Hulu. If you have subscriptions to those services I ask that you leave the library copy available for classmates who really need it. Additionally, I will host an optional screening on campus for each of the films/TV shows; the dates and locations will be announced at least 1 week in advance and you must sign up to attend.

Late Assignments

You will lose a full letter grade on the assignment for every day the assignment is late. Assignments more than 3 days late will NOT be accepted; this means you will receive an automatic “0” for the assignment (e.g. if an assignment is due Thursday, you have until 12:30 on Sunday to still turn it in before it becomes a “0”). A low grade on an assignment is a lot easier to recover from than a zero – so even if it’s late, I strongly encourage you to still turn it in.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, don’t do it. If I catch you plagiarizing or cheating on any part of any assignment – this includes misusing on or material from websites, videos, music, papers, blogs, images, discussion questions, etc. – I will report you to the Office of Academic Integrity and **you will receive an automatic “0” on the assignment with no opportunity to make it up**. A zero on an assignment could mean you fail the course, just don’t do it, it’s really not worth it. If it is determined this is not your first academic integrity offense, you will automatically fail the course. For a full definition of academic dishonesty and the repercussions, read the UNT policy here: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Extra Credit Opportunity

Choose a contemporary film adaptation of a YA novel. In a 6-8 page paper, analyze either a) the construction or representation of youth in both the film and book OR b) industry strategies for marketing both the film and book. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: in what ways does the film and book challenge or reinforce understandings of youth? How were the film and book marketed similarly/differently? To whom was each marketed? How was each received? Do adults and teens interpret the themes or messages differently? How do you know? The paper should be an

original analysis of the construction of youth OR an industry analysis of marketing based on in-depth research. The paper can earn you *up to 25 bonus points* on your overall course grade.

No extra credit opportunities will be offered on an individual basis, so do not ask. If you are struggling with the course materials, then come see me for additional guidance and resources. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to salvage your grade.

Bring Your Own Device

I do not mind the use of technology during lectures and discussions so long as you use it responsibly and you do not distract me, your peers, or yourself. Technology can and should enhance the learning environment, thus I trust that you will only use it responsibly in my class. If your use of technology distracts you, your peers, or the instructor you will lose the privilege to use it for the rest of the semester.

Campus Carry

Starting August 1, 2016, students, faculty and staff members who have a concealed carry license may carry a handgun on UNT property, including classrooms. This law was passed by the Texas Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott. UNT President Neal Smatresk is charged with setting the policy for the university and has decided, based on advice from a task force, classrooms are permissible places for concealed carry. The campus carry policy and further information are listed here: <https://campuscarry.unt.edu/>

Campus policy stipulates that the person carrying a handgun must hold a License to Carry issued by the state of Texas. The weapon also must be concealed. **If you see a handgun in this classroom, the person carrying it is violating the law. You should report this violation to the instructor, who will contact police. You also may call the police yourself.**