

## **Media, Mapping and Power: Popular Culture in a Geopolitical World Spring 2019**

### Instructors

John Rackey and Darren Purcell

Class Meeting Location: Headington College D127, MW 10:00 - 11:15 AM

Offices: Rackey - Headington College, D108

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### Office Hours:

Appointments as requested, online or in-person.

Rackey: MW 1:30-3PM at Headington College

Purcell: MW, 8:30-10:30 AM at Headington College, W 2:00 – 4:00 PM at SEC.

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### **Course Description:**

Acknowledgement of popular culture's role in the political world by academics is a relatively recent trend. Starting with cultural studies in the 1960s, culture and media became important foci of study. New fields such as film and media studies arose (often rooted in various humanities and their methods). Other disciplines such as geography (in particular, political geography) and political science started to engage popular culture's role in the 1980s and 1990s as part of what was termed the cultural turn. This course combines geography and political science takes on popular culture by examining several genres of popular culture: music, television, stand-up humor and film.

### **Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to provide students with the analytical and interpretive skills necessary to recognize and interpret the political content in products of popular culture. This goal will be achieved by the following objectives:

- 1) through examination of the theoretical linkages between popular culture and world politics/popular geopolitics.
- 2) through the development of a vocabulary to identify, describe, and interpret political and musical ideas.
- 3) through the assessment of various forms of culture in different historical contexts.
- 4) through engagement with primary and secondary sources in the fields of political science, political geography, and forms of popular culture.
- 5) through developing a better understanding of qualitative analysis and the tools used.

## **Syllabus**

(All reading and listening assignments are posted on CANVAS. We reserve the right to change reading and/or listening assignments throughout the semester with advance notice to students).

### **Week 1- Jan. 14th and 16th**

Introduction

Read: Weldes and Rowley (2015) in *Popular Culture and World Politics*. Caso and Hamilton, Eds.  
Duncombe and Bleiker (2015) in *Popular Culture and World Politics*. Caso and Hamilton, Eds

### **Week 2- January 23rd**

The Emotive Effect

Read: Addis, "Music's Power"

Listen: Mahler, Symphony No. 9, adagio

### **Week 3- Jan. 28th and 30th**

What's So Dangerous About Music?

Read: Coté, "Popular Musicians and Their Songs as Threats to National Security"

Listen: The Who, Sex Pistols, Rage Against the Machine

Methods: What is qualitative research and data?

### **Week 4- Feb. 4th and 6th**

Propaganda & Manipulation

Read: "Theresienstadt" on US Holocaust Memorial Museum webpage

Watch: We Want the Light

Method - Texts as data - What is a text?

### **Week 5- Feb. 11th and 13th**

Music and Political Elites

Read: Gorzelany-Mostak, "Keepin' it Real (Respectable) in 2008"

Listen: Frank Sinatra, Stevie Wonder, Katy Perry

Method - How the humanities approach texts

### **Week 6- Feb. 18th and 20th**

Social Movements

Read: Roy, "How Social Movements Do Culture."

Watch: Jimi Hendrix @ Woodstock, Live Aid

Method - Gathering texts, coding, classifying, and setting up analysis.

### **Week 7- February 25th and 27th**

Popular Culture and the Power of Print - *Reader's Digest* and condensing the Cold War.

Read: Sharp, J. (1993) "Publishing American identity: popular geopolitics, myth and The Reader's Digest" *Political Geography*, (12), 6: 491-503

Methods - Present Initial Ideas (literature and question)

### **Week 8- Mar. 4th and 6th**

Political Cartoons and a form of resistance -

Hammett, Daniel (2011) "Resistance, power, and geopolitics in Zimbabwe." *Area*. 43(2): 202-210.

Wuerker, Matt (American Cartoons)

PolandBall

Methods - Borrowing from Rose, Gillian. (2016) *Visual Methodologies*. 4th edition. Sage Publications.  
How to do visual analysis.

### **Week 9- March 11th and 13th**

Comic books

Dittmer, Jason - *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity* (2nd Edition).

Methods - Text visualization and interpretation

### **Week 10- SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 11- March 25 and 27th**

Borat and Geopolitics - Choose one article

Read: Saunders, Robert. "In Defense of *Kazakhstan's War on Sacha Baron Cohen*." *Global Studies in Culture and Power*. 14(3):225-255

Saunders, Robert (2008) Buying into Brand Borat: Kazakhstan's Cautious Embrace of Its Unwanted "Son." *Slavic Review*. 67(1)

Methods: Data visualization with Tableau.

### **Week 12- April 1st and 3rd**

Stand Up Comedy - Choose one article.

Read: Santa Anna, Otto (2009) "Did you call in Mexican? The racial politics of Jay Leno immigrants' jokes." *Language in Society*. 38(10):23-45.

Purcell, et al. (2016) Critical geopolitics and the framing of the Arab Spring through late-night humor." *Social Science Quarterly*. 98(2).

Method - Consulting with Instructors on paper during class time or office hours. Mandatory meeting.

**Week 13- April 8th and 10th**

National Image and Place Branding - Choose one article

Nye, Joseph. (1990) "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy*.

Saunders, Robert. *Popular Geopolitics and Nation-Branding in the Post-Soviet Realm*. Chapters 2 and 3 (Select one chapter.)

**Week 14- April 15th and 17th**

Memes

Read: Selection from Shifman, Limor. (2014) *Memes in Digital Culture*. MIT Press.

**Week 15- April 22nd and 24th**

Work Week (instructors are available for consulting)

**Week 16- April 29th and May 1st.**

Presentations

**Finals Week**

No Final: Turn in final papers

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**Textbooks**

No textbook is required, but it is a reading and analysis driven course. All reading materials will be provided either through Canvas or will be easily available through the OU Library's electronic resources.

**Evaluation Scheme**

1000 points maximum. 900 points and over earns an "A", 800-899 earns a "B", 700-799 earns a "C", and so on. **There will be no rounding of grades up or down. We do not engage in grade negotiation.** The course has multiple ways for students to earn points.

**Evaluation Instruments**

*Project Proposal*- 50 pts - One-page outline of your research question and identification of 5 sources to support (some can be class readings). Due March 13th, 2019.

*Final Paper*- 250 pts - Due May 7th, 2018 - Noon.

*Writing Assignments*-100 pts - Total of 500 points- A short response paper that both summarizes and responds to the reading's central arguments. This should be used to help guide your discussion of the reading during class. Due 1 hour before the class period of presentation.

*Final Presentations* - 100 pts

*Discussion Leadership* - 100 pts

### **Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism is strictly prohibited at the University of Oklahoma, because it devalues the degree you are working hard to get. As a member of the OU community it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the rules. For specific definitions on what constitutes cheating, review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html). Please understand that I prosecute these to the fullest upon discovery and will request a grade of "F" for the course in my filings.

### **Religious Observance**

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays, without penalty. Please notify me in advance of any such issues and I will work with you.

### **Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

Students requiring academic accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center for assistance at (405) 325-3852 or TDD: (405) 325-4173. For more information please see the Disability Resource Center website <http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me. Any student with a Disabilities Resources Center registered learning disability should contact me directly to arrange for proper accommodations. We need to be notified by January 28, 2018.

### **Title IX Resources and Reporting Requirement**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, the University offers a variety of resources. To learn more or to report an incident, please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at 405/325-2215 (8 to 5, M-F) or [smo@ou.edu](mailto:smo@ou.edu). Incidents can also be reported confidentially to OU Advocates at 405/615-0013 (phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Also, please be advised that a professor/GA/TA is required to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination to the Sexual Misconduct Office. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to: Bobby J. Mason, University Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Coordinator at 405/325-3546 or [bjm@ou.edu](mailto:bjm@ou.edu). For more information, visit <http://www.ou.edu/eoo.html>.

### **Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact your professor or the Disability Resource Center at 405/325-3852 as soon as possible. Also, see <http://www.ou.edu/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html> for answers to commonly asked questions.

### **Final Exam Preparation Period**

Pre-finals week will be defined as the seven calendar days before the first day of finals. Faculty may cover new course material throughout this week. For specific provisions of the policy please refer to OU's Final Exam Preparation Period policy (<https://apps.hr.ou.edu/FacultyHandbook#4.10>).

**Late Work and Missed Classes**

Late Work is not accepted unless the reason is for an emergency that can be documented, or a reason covered by OU policy. A zero grade will be entered.

Attendance will be taken. Four unexcused absences will lead to grade of “F” Excused absences are of course excepted.

**Technology in the Classroom**

Multiple studies demonstrate that all generations multitask poorly. If you are multitasking and using the technology for something unrelated to the course, you will be asked to leave, no questions asked.