This course discusses topics in the history of European and North American popular culture over roughly the last century. It treats popular culture broadly, focusing on the production, distribution, and consumption of commercially viable cultural products in relation to social, economic, and political history. Its main goal is to consider popular culture's role in the formation of collective and personal identities rooted in historically specific notions of self, class, gender, generation, ethnicity, region, subculture, and nation. Although the course discusses a range of activities, it places particular emphasis on popular literature, cinema, and rock music.

There are no exams. Aside from regular class participation (which includes designated discussion leaders for each reading), assignments consist of two essays of approximately 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages each as well as one take-home final, which is a research paper of 15-20 pages or a project of comparable scope. I will distribute questions for the first two writing assignments. Students will be expected to give brief in-class presentations of their final paper/project during the last three course sessions. The two short papers account for about thirty percent of the total grade, the long paper for about fifty percent, and participation and in-class presentations twenty percent. This course is a seminar devoted to critical debate and all students must keep up with the reading in order to make the class a success. All required reading and much of the recommended reading will be on reserve at the College Library.

Required Reading:

--Peter Fisher, *Fantasy and Politics: Visions of the Future in the Weimar Republic* (Wisconsin)
--John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (Unwin Human)
--Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of German Film* (Princeton)
--George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minnesota)
Sept. 8     Introduction

1. Popular Culture in Contemporary Society

Sept. 15: Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, 1-42, 95-132, 199-217
  Video: Madonna, "Material Girl"


Sept. 29: Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light*, 17-36, 45-115, 233-244

Recommended:
  --Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of this Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (Routledge, 1992) E 169.04 G757
  --Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke, 1991)

2. Popular Culture in Contemporary History: Three Case Studies

A. Popular Literature in Weimar Germany

Oct. 6: Fisher, *Fantasy and Politics*, 3-156

  *First essay due in class*

Recommended:
  DD 232 .B43 1987
--Gary D. Stark and Bede Karl Lackner, eds., *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany* (Texas, 1982) DD 66 E7 1982
B. Film in Weimar Germany

Oct. 20: Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 3-128
Oct. 27: Film: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1920)
Nov. 3: Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 131-272

Recommended:
--for background reading: Berghahn, Gay, Laqueur, Peukert, Stark & Lackner, and Willett, as cited in 2.A.

--*New German Critique*, Special Issue: "Siegfried Kracauer," 54 (Fall 1991)
--*New German Critique*, Special Issue: "Weimar Film Theory," 40 (Winter 1987)
--*New German Critique*, Special Issue: "Weimar Mass Culture," 51 (Fall 1990)

C. From Dada to British Punk Rock

Nov. 10: Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 1-152
   Video: excerpts from "The Punk Rock Movie" (1988)
Nov. 17: Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 163-322
   Second essay due in class
Nov. 24: Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 323-447

Recommended:
--Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms, Pop Music and Popular Culture* (St. Martin's, 1985) ML 3492 C52 1985
--Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light*
3. Student Presentations

Dec. 1: In-class Presentations
Dec. 8: In-class Presentations
Dec. 15: In-class Presentations

TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE IN HUMANITIES 4120, W, DEC. 23, 10AM