The course surveys recent sociological studies of cultural production. It analyzes how cultural materials are used to establish and maintain boundaries that differentiate among class and status groups in the contemporary United States and how diverse fields of cultural production such as popular music, film, and sports shape and influence social processes. We will examine the role of race, class and gender in cultural production and recent theories and debates about the relation of culture and society.

**Required Readings:**

Gans, Herbert: *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*
Moore, Ryan: *Sells Like Teen Spirit: Music, Youth Culture, & Social Crisis*
Weber, Brenda: *Makeover TV: Selfhood, Citizenship, and Celebrity*
Phillips, Kendal: *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture*
Jenkins, Henry: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*

Other readings will be available on Blackboard

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance and class participation:** Debate and discussion will be an integral component of the class. All students are required to bring a short one-page response to the weekly assigned readings for Friday’s class session which will be used as the basis for class discussion. Students will be evaluated on your ability to analyze and dissect the issues raised in the course materials. You must turn in a hard copy of your response essay and be present in class to receive full credit.

**Papers and Exam:** There are 2 papers required for this course, each 7-8 pages. The purpose of the paper is to give you an opportunity to expand on the themes raised in the readings. The format and specifics of each paper will be discussed in class. The papers will draw from course readings and discussion. *Each paper is worth 35% of your final grade* There will also be 1 exam that is *worth 20% of your final grade*. Your weekly response essays and participation make up the other 10% of your grade.

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**Week 1) The Study of Popular Culture**
Sept 4: Some Basic Concepts

**Week 2) High Culture vs. Mass Culture**
Week 3) **The Social Meanings of Music**  
*S. Frith, “Pop Music” in *Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, 2010

Week 4) **Culture, Commerce, and Conflict**  

Week 5) **Authenticity and Cultural Authority**  
D. Grazian, “The Production of Popular Music as a Confidence Game: The Case of the Chicago Blues” *Qualitative Sociology*, 2004, 137-158

Week: 6) **The Business of Cultural Production**  

Week 7) **Class and Consumption**  

Oct 22: Fall Break

Week 8) **Television: Programming, Content, and Genre**  
*J. Mittell, “Television Genres as Cultural Categories” in *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (blackboard)

Week 9) **Television and Citizenship**  
Exam: Date TBA

Week 10) **Cinema and Society**  

Week 11) **The Rise of Videogames**
Nov 19: *B. Batchelor, “Gaming the Guitar: Aerosmith, Metallica, the Beatles and the Videogame Revolution” in Rock Brands: Selling Sound in a Media Saturated Culture, ps. 273-290 (electronic copy available on OBIS)

Week 12) **Culture and Collective Action**
Nov 26: H. Jenkins, Convergence Culture, chapters 1-4
*M. Hindman, The Myth of Digital Democracy, chapter 1 (blackboard)

Week 13) **The Uses of Social Media**
Dec 3: H. Jenkins, Convergence Culture, chapters 5-6 and conclusion

Week 14) **Technology, and 21st Century Cultural Change**
Dec 10: J. Burgess and J. Green, “How YouTube Matters” in YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture, ps. 1-14 (blackboard)

**The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus and add supplementary readings at any time.**

**Honor Code:** This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. For details see: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html).

**Use of Technology in the Classroom:**

Access to the Internet can be a valuable aid to the classroom learning environment. Students may use laptops and other devices in order to explore concepts related to course discussions and topics. **Students are discouraged from using technology in ways that distract from the learning community (e.g. Facebook, texting, Tumblr, 4chan etc.) and if found doing so, will be asked to leave the classroom for the day and will not get credit for attendance that class session.** Students are expected to respect the educational environment. In class, all cell phones should be on silent. Unless specifically directed by the instructor, students shall refrain from sending email and instant messages, or from engaging in other activities (internet, engaging in private conversations and so on) that undermine the classroom environment for others.