Course Description: Popular culture permeates our society. In its relatively young intellectual course of academic study, popular culture has exponentially taken off as a vibrant area of study of social life, consumerism, capitalism, cultural formations, and resistance. In this course we will be examining American popular culture in the contemporary moment. Given the shortened span of summer session we are going to jump right in and engage in cultural critique, deconstruction, and analysis as we pick up the tools along the way. At the forefront this course is concerned with the ways that race, sex, and gender shape popular culture, and in turn the way that popular culture formations shape the politics of sex, gender, and race. Thus, we will be looking at these elements dialectically and intersectionally as we examine specific popular culture forms that currently occupy the public sphere.

Blackboard: Students are required to use the course’s Blackboard site for readings, announcements, handouts, and related materials. Selected presentation and lecture slides will be available for downloading after class meetings. If you need technical assistance with your account, please see the staff at the Information Technology Centers at the Knight or Science Libraries.

Course Readings
• All required readings are available through our university course Blackboard site, you will find them under ‘Course Readings’.

Course Requirements
• Attendance and participation is mandatory. (20% of grade) Class lectures and discussion will be critical to your ability to grapple with the readings analytically, it is essential that you are in class, engaged, and ready to participate. Each of you is responsible for any material, announcements, assignments, and/or schedule changes made during class. If you miss a class, you will need to ask another student for notes and reflections about what was covered and transpired. If you are ill or are experiencing a family emergency and have to miss class, please make sure to communicate this with me via email or phone message. Communicating your absence to me does NOT make-up your absence. The only way to make up missed absences is to provide a 2-3 page synopsis of the readings assigned for the day that you missed, but you must okay this with me first. The quality of your synopsis will determine the gradation of the missed
class make-up. Given the nature of the summer session pace it is imperative that you come to class prepared having completed the assigned reading for that day.

- 1 missed class = .5 grade reduction of attendance grade
- 2 missed classes = 1 whole grade reduction
- 3 missed classes = 2 whole grade reductions
- 4 or more missed classes = F attendance grade.

- **Periodic Reading Quizzes** – (20%) Through this session we will have a total of 8 quizzes with approximately 4-5 questions each. Quizzes will be on information taken straight from the readings. I will not ask questions on minute details, but rather larger arguments and major points made by the authors. Quizzes will be multiple choice, administered at the beginning of class, and if you miss a quiz you will receive a zero for that quiz. There will be no make-ups.

- **Midterm Exam** - (30%) Thursday July 2, in class. Conceptual in nature, this exam will ask you to define and explain particular terms, and explain particular arguments and conceptual frameworks discussed up to that point. This will be short analytical questions that require the conceptual grasp of the course readings and materials. (30% of grade)

- **In-Class Final** – (30%). This exam will cover all the material presented from July 6 through July 15. The format will be the same as the midterm, short analytical questions and explaining key terms. The exam will take the entire class time. The exam will cover material from readings and lectures – thus, if you do the readings, go to class and participate, you should do just fine.

- **ES 507 Final Project. If you are a graduate student you will also need to do a final project.** As we know the area of popular culture is immense, and there is no way that we can cover even a substantial portion in the short summer session. Thus, the purpose of this project if for you to examine a particular area, issue, form of popular culture in much greater depth and detail. You can choose any medium of popular culture that interests you, but you must have an analytical question that allows you to deconstruct the elements that shape your popular culture form, and the work it does to those who consume it. You need at least 5 bibliographic academic resources – that are not merely websites (academic articles taken from the internet are fine, but Wikipedia will not count). Papers should be approximately 8-10 pages in length. You must write a proposal due to me by Thursday June 25, that sufficiently explains your topic, research question, and materials to be used. The research paper is due on the last day of class.

**Course Policies**

- **Academic Workload:** This is a 400/500 level course. There will be dense readings for every class meeting (except for exam days). I have high expectations for critical analytical thinking and skills. Thus, I will not be asking you to memorize, but rather you will need to think about the readings and topics analytically so that you can engage in a critical conversation during class time and on your exams.

- **Reasonable Accommodations:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. You must notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for this course.

- **Electronic Etiquette:** Laptops, palm pilots, cell phones, etc… are not allowed in class. If you have a disability established through the UO Disability Services and need a laptop
as part of your accommodations, please let me know. If you must use a laptop in class to take notes, you must sit within the first two rows of the classroom.

- **Email Etiquette:** Email has become a space of casual conversation and conversational safety. Yet, please email me utilizing respect and formality that you would use in a conversation with me as your professor.

- **Academic Integrity:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. This also applies to material taken from websites, or internet documents. For the consequences of academic dishonesty refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding the requirements, please consult with me before you complete any requirement of the course. For more information on University policy regarding academic integrity, see the following website: [http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm](http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm).

- Nevertheless, I encourage you to study together, discussing the course materials outside of class. After all, it is the dynamic tension between intellectual community and individuality that makes higher education possible and enjoyable.

- **Classroom Climate Statement:** It is my belief that we must create a climate in this course where everyone can speak about race and ethnicity. We don’t have to agree with each other or “convert” others to our way of thinking. We do, however, have to respect that others may have opinions and experiences that are significantly different from our own and which may even trouble us deeply. To promote a positive learning environment, we must engage in respectful communication practices, where it is perfectly okay to disagree, but must not attack each other in the process of challenging our ideas.

### Course Schedule

- Please note that I reserve the right to change this schedule as necessary. Any changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for being aware of any changes whether or not you attend class.

#### Week 1 – Establishing a Framework

**Monday, June 22 – What is Popular Culture?**
Introductions, course expectations, ground rules.

**Tuesday, June 23 – Popular Culture, Cultural Studies, and Cultural Critique**
- Raymond Williams, “‘Culture’ and ‘Masses’” from *Popular Culture, a Reader*, 2005.

**Wednesday, June 24 – Ideology, Race, and Popular Culture**

*Quiz 1*
Thursday, June 25 – Popular Culture and the Politics of Representation
*Quiz 2

Week 2

Monday, June 29 – The Politics of Rap, Hip Hop as Resistance and Consumerism
Video: Hip Hop Beyond Beats and Rhymes
*Quiz 3

Tuesday, June 30 — Hip Hop Debates: Commercialism vs. Resistance
- Tricia Rose, “Mutual Denials in the Hip Hop Wars” from Hip Hop Wars, 2008
*Quiz 4

Wednesday, July 1 – Women, Race, Sexuality, and Empowerment
- Imani Perry, "It's My Thang and I'll Swing It the Way That I Feel! Sexuality and Black Women Rappers," Gender, Race and Class in Media.
- Beverley Skeggs, “Two Minute Brother: Contestation through Gender, ‘Race' and Sexuality,” from Innovation in Social Sciences Research; 1993,
Video: Dreamworlds 3: Desire, Sex, and Power in Music Video

Thursday, July 2 – In Class Midterm – On everything covered through July 1.

Week 3

Monday, July 6 – Asian/American Sexuality: Representations and Resistance
Video Clips: The Notorious C.H.O. – Tela Taquila
*Quiz 5

Tuesday, July 7 – Gender, Race, and Performance – Latina Cultural Politics
**Wednesday, July 8 – Latino/a Popular Culture, Resistance, and Community**

**Thursday, July 9 – Stereotypes and Challenging Stereotypes: Native American Constructions in Film**
  *Quiz 6
  [http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/IndigenousBib.html#journals](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/IndigenousBib.html#journals)*

**Week 4**
**Monday, July 13 – Reality[?] T.V. Race and Queer Politics & Portraying the Extreme**
  *Quiz 7*

**Tuesday, July 14 – Race, Gender, and Class in America’s Next Top Model**
- Sut Jhally, “Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture,” from *Gender, Race and Class in Media*.
  *Quiz 8*

**Wednesday, July 15 – Cyber-technology, Sexuality, and Virtual Sex**
- Shannon McRae, “Coming Apart at the Seams: Sex, Text and the Virtual Body”

**Thursday, July 16 – Final Exam and review**
Final Exams Due 4:00 pm Friday July 17 in Hendricks 311.