

Introduction to Popular Culture: The Ugly Truth

Summer 2012, 6W1
MTWR 10:20am-12:10pm
Ballantine Hall 219

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CMLT C151-4631

Welcome to C151: Introduction to Popular Culture! In this course, we will:

1. Explore the cultural, historical, and intellectual contexts of works of human expression within popular culture
2. Critically evaluate examples of artistic expression from a variety of popular traditions, including: (a) original written texts in various literary forms, (b) works of photography, and (c) dramatic performance (film and television)
3. Incorporate basic methods and concepts of literary and semiotic analysis, such as close reading, explication and comparison, to evaluate and interpret popular works of art or expression
4. Hone your critical thinking skills by comparing texts analytically which feature thematic similarities but come from different linguistic, generic, or cultural traditions through in-class writing exercises, essay assignments, and written exams.

We will accomplish these goals through a consideration of the role of “truth” in popular culture. As a class we will address the following questions: Who decides what is considered “true” in popular media and journalism? What happens to nonfiction texts that do not fit these parameters? How is the truth used and abused in examples of games, parodies, and hoaxes?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

These texts are available at the campus bookstore and online.

1. Art Spiegelman. *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*. Pantheon.
2. James Weldon Johnson. *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Penguin.
3. Rigoberta Menchú. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Verso.
4. Lauren Slater. *Lying: A Metaphorical Memoir*. Penguin.
5. All other texts are available on Oncourse under the “Resources” tab. Please bring a printed copy of your reading to class each day.

REQUIRED FILMS:

These films will be screened in class. If you are absent on one of these days, it is your responsibility to watch the portion of the film that you have missed.

1. *Harlan County U.S.A.* (dir. Barbara Kopple, 1976).
2. *This is Spinal Tap* (dir. Rob Reiner, 1984).

「 COURSE POLICIES 」

PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION:

You are expected to seriously prepare for and participate in class discussions. Your participation grade will reflect both the quantity and quality of your comments in class.

CLASS CONDUCT:

While you are in class I hold you to professional forms of conduct. Being tardy, text messaging, falling asleep, doing homework for another class, or being otherwise disengaged or disruptive is unprofessional and will lower your participation grade.

ATTENDANCE:

You may have 2 unexcused absences without penalty. After that, 3% will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence. Tardiness of more than 15 minutes will be counted as an absence. Absences can be excused in the case of:

- **Illness**, provided I am notified within 24 hours of the class missed and am shown a note from the IU Health Center or other healthcare provider.
- **Major family matters** (such as weddings or funerals). For weddings I require at least 2 weeks notice in advance.
- **Religious observances**, provided I am notified at least 2 weeks in advance.

LATE WORK:

Even if you cannot make it to class, make every effort to get your work in on time. You or someone you trust can drop off hard copies of your assignments in my mailbox (in Ballantine 901, open M-F 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). If you are unable to complete your work on time due to illness or other circumstances, you must contact me in a timely manner if you wish to arrange make-up work or an extension. I reserve the right to refuse late work or an extension if I determine that your reason for missing the deadline is not adequate.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

At IUB, plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and can result in automatic failure of the course (see the Code of Student Conduct for more information:

<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>.) Plagiarism occurs when you represent someone else's work as your own work in the following ways:

- having someone write your paper for you or turning in someone else's work
- purchasing someone else's work and using it as your own
- simply copying and pasting published information into your paper
- deliberately using sources without attributing them.

Our course will teach you ways of integrating the ideas of other writers and documenting the source of those ideas, but please ask if you ever have any questions about plagiarism.

「 ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION 」**ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments and homework are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Please upload your essays to 'Assignments 2' on Oncourse. Reading quizzes will be completed at home prior to the class for which they are due. You will access the quiz through the 'Tests and Surveys' function on Oncourse and will have 15 minutes to complete it. There are 13 quizzes scheduled throughout the semester; the lowest 3 will be dropped in the final grade calculations.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Attendance and Participation	100 points
Reading Quizzes (10 x 20 points each)	200 points
Essay #1 (4-5 pages)	200 points

Essay #2 (4-5 pages)	200 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	200 points

Total	1000 points
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GRADING:

The final grade distribution is as follows:

1000-930 points (A)	899-870 points (B+)	799-770 points (C+)	699-600 (D)
929-900 points (A-)	869-830 points (B)	769-730 points (C)	599 and below (F)
	829-800 points (B-)	729-700 points (C-)	

Please keep in the mind that at Indiana University, an “A” indicates exemplary work and means you have mastered the concepts of the assignment. A “B” indicates very good work in which you have not only met all of the assignment requirements, but you have also met them at a level above expectations. A “C” indicates that you have sufficiently completed the assignment. A “D” indicates that you have failed to execute some portion of the assignment properly and need help with the assignment. And an “F” indicates that you either did not understand or did not follow through with the assignment.

「RESOURCES」

WRITING TUTORIAL SERVICES:

I highly encourage you to seek out additional readers for your writing at Writing Tutorial Services (WTS) in the Wells Library Information Commons. The tutors there can provide you with valuable feedback at any stage of your writing process.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Disability Services and The Adaptive Technologies divisions of the Office of Student Affairs can arrange for assistance, auxiliary aids, or related services if you think a temporary or permanent disability will prevent you from being a full participant in the class. Contact them at <http://www.dsa.indiana.edu> or 855-7578 with any individual concerns. Students with special needs must be registered with Disability Services before classroom accommodations can be provided.

「COURSE SCHEDULE」

You will be expected to complete all readings prior the class in which they are discussed. Please bring a printed copy of your text for each day. I reserve the right to make changes to assignments and due dates. I will announce any changes in class and on Oncourse. (RQ = Reading Quiz).

T May 8	Introduction to the semester
	<u>Part I Documenting the Truth: Ethics and Aesthetics</u>
W May 9	R. Thomas Berner, “Ch. 2: James Agee” (Oncourse); John D’Agata and Jim Fingal, excerpt from <i>The Lifespan of a Fact</i> (Oncourse)

R	May 10	R. Thomas Berner, "Ch. 3: John Hersey," "Ch. 5: Gabriel García Márquez" and "Ch. 18: Qian Gang" (Oncourse); RQ 1
M	May 14	Bill Nichols, "The Fact of Realism and the Fiction of Objectivity" (Oncourse); RQ 2
T	May 15	In-class screening: <i>Harlan County U.S.A</i>
W	May 16	Thomas Doherty, "Art Spiegelman's <i>Maus</i> " (Oncourse); Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> , Ch. 1-2; RQ 3
R	May 17	Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> , Ch. 3-4; RQ 4
M	May 21	Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> , Ch. 5-6; Essay #1 due

Part II Contested Texts

T	May 22	Johnson, <i>Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> , Ch. 1-6; RQ 5
W	May 23	Johnson, <i>Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> , Ch. 7-11; RQ 6
R	May 24	Midterm Exam
M	May 28	<i>Memorial Day – Class does not meet</i>
T	May 29	Roberto Avant-Mier and Marouf Hasian, "Communicating Truth" (Oncourse); Menchú, <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> , Ch. 1-10; RQ 7
W	May 30	Menchú, <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> , Ch. 16-19
R	May 31	Menchú, <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> , Ch. 28-34; RQ 8

Part III The Uses and Abuses of "Reality"

M	June 4	Slater, <i>Lying</i> , Part I and II; RQ 9
T	June 5	Slater, <i>Lying</i> , Part III
W	June 6	Slater, <i>Lying</i> , Part IV; Elizabeth Donaldson, "Lauren Slater's <i>Lying</i> " (Oncourse); RQ 10
R	June 7	Craig Hight and Jane Roscoe, excerpt from <i>Faking It</i> (Oncourse); RQ 11
M	June 11	Aaron McKain, "Not Necessarily Not the News" (Oncourse); RQ 12
T	June 12	Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette, "Introduction" to <i>Reality TV</i> (Oncourse); RQ 13
W	June 13	Final Exam Review, Essay #2 due
R	June 14	Final Exam