English 480/580
Studies in Literature, Culture, and Society
Teen Films and Youth Culture
4 Credits
No prerequisites

Rationale for conversion: The conversion will give students greater opportunity to practice critical thinking and writing and to develop research skills by increasing the length and complexity of analytical writing assignments. A 5-7 page critical essay will be added requiring students to consult at least one outside source as a research for the essay.

The four credit version will:
• add a 5-7 page critical essay incorporating research appropriate to advanced study in film;
• add instruction in research methodology incorporating digital as well as print resources.
The syllabus reflects the revised four credit version.

Course Description

This class offers an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of youth culture. Students should learn a number of parallel critical approaches central to the following disciplines: film and media studies, sociology, and psychology. Also in play is the critical reading of texts on youth culture: films and novels as well as sociological and psychological studies.

Student Learning Outcomes

This is an ambitious course with five parallel academic goals.

1. Film and media studies: The class offers about twenty films focusing on youth culture. Students are encouraged to read these works as re-presentations of lived experience, translations of teen life as it is lived in the U.S.
2. Contemporary literature: JD Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* remains the seminal text in the literary treatment of youth culture; it is also the most misread. We will examine the cultural significance of Salinger’s book as well as more recent works of literature focusing on youth culture.
3. Psychology: This course offers an introduction to adolescent psychology, especially the psycho-social approach popular in the 1960s when youth culture first became a subject of real interest in the psychological community.
4. Sociology: Students will learn to read (and interrogate) so-called empirical data – we will examine studies of teen murder, suicide, drug use, and teen sexuality.
5. The take home final will combine a critical integration of class readings and screenings with independent library research.
Learning outcomes for ENG 480/bac core/Western Culture
1. Describe the origins and evolution of important features of youth culture and teen films in Western culture.
2. Differentiate and describe events, movements, ideas or artistic achievements of youth culture and teen films in western culture.
3. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.
4. Analyze events, movements, ideas or artistic achievements related to teen films in western culture in a broad context.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills about youth culture and teen films, incorporating digital and print sources.

Further learning outcomes for ENG 580
1. Graduate students will be responsible for analyzing and appraise cinematic criticism and film theory as it applies to teen films and youth culture.
2. Graduate papers should demonstrate greater length and complexity, including use of digital sources.

Evaluation of student performance for ENG 480:
-50% comprehensive dossiers
-25% mid-term paper
-25% final presentation

Further evaluation of student performance for ENG 580:
Graduate students will be required to meet with the instructor to develop and extend the midterm paper to a longer paper incorporating critical sources (50%)

ENG 480/Evaluation of student performance:
Students will write comprehensive dossiers on every film screened for class and every reading assignment. Dossiers can be informally written but must be at once comprehensive and critically interesting. Dossiers will account for 50% of the final grade. The 5-7 page midterm paper will count for 25% and the final presentation (which can but need not be an original film) is worth 25%.

Texts:
Xerox packet (containing selected works in adolescent psychology and youth cultural studies)
Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style
Moody, The Ice Storm
Eugenides, The Virgin Suicides

Statement Regarding Disability Access Services:
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

Link to statement of Expectations for Student Conduct
Screenings and weekly topics:

Week one: Teen anomie
- *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955)
- *The Blackboard Jungle* (Brooks, 1955)

Week two: Deviance and delinquency
- *River’s Edge* (Hunter, 1986)

Week three: Deviance and delinquency
- *Paradise Lost* (Berlinger and Sinofsky, 1996)

Week four: Youth and mass culture
- *Monterey Pop* (Pennebaker, 1968)
- *Gimme Shelter* (Maysles brothers, 1970)

Week five: The Apolitics of Punk
- *Decline of Western Civilization* (Spheeris, 1981)

Week six: The Politics of Nostalgia
- *Pretty in Pink* (Deutch, 1986)
- *The Lost Children of Rockdale County* (Goodman and Goodman, 1998)

Week seven: Teen Suicide
- *The Virgin Suicides* (Coppola, 2000)

Week eight: Drugs
- *High School Confidential* (Arnold, 1958)
- *Black Tar Heroin* (Okazaki, 2000)

Week nine: Youth Culture and Race
- *Just Another Girl on the IRT* (Harris, 1992)
- *The Devil’s Playground* (Walker, 2001)

Week ten: Generation X
- *Very Bad Things* (Berg, 1998)
- *Kissing Jessica Stein*, Herman-Wurmfeld, 2001)

Readings and assignments
4/1 Erikson, “Youth: Fidelity and Diversity” (xerox)
4/6 Bettleheim, “The Problem of Generations” (xerox)
4/8 Keniston, “Social Change in America” (xerox)
4/13 Hebdige, “From Culture to Hegemony” (xerox)
4/20 Lewis, “The Struggle for Fun” (xerox)

4/17 **Dossier 1 due by 8AM – to be sent to webmaster or blackboard moderator**

5/4 Moody, *The Ice Storm*

5/11 Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*

5/20 **Dossier 2 due by 8AM – to be sent to webmaster or blackboard moderator**

5/27 Lewis, “The Body’s in the Trunk” (xerox)

6/3 **Final Presentations**