Participatory Culture: Audiences, Viewers and Fans

Class Meeting Times
English 210-01
Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00 – 3:15 pm
LBR-3220 (class will also occasionally meet in a computer lab)

(Optional) Class Movie Time
Tuesdays, 3:30 – 6:00 pm
LBR-3201 (down the hall from our regular classroom)

Instructor Contact Information
Katie Morrissey
Office: LBR-A317
Email: kemorrissey@rit.edu
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:00 – 11:00 am (and by appointment)

Course Description
From audiences sitting in the dark of the theater, to impassioned fans at conventions, there are many ways for us to engage with media. Popular culture inspires our passion, our participation, and sparks public debate. This class explores different historical periods, their dominant media forms, and theories of reception associated with them. Then, we will use this historical perspective to help us ask questions about contemporary media and participatory culture.

This class looks at a variety of film, television, and digital media texts, including: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, The Color Purple, Battlestar Galactica, remix projects, and major media franchises. We’ll also check out different YouTube Channels, “play” a digital documentary together, and look at transformative works projects like Wizard People Dear Reader.

Now, get ready! As we move through the course we will be regularly engaging with different media together. You will be asked to reflect on your own experiences as viewers and think about the ways media texts position and engage you. We will also investigate the historical context of our course texts, how they were marketed, and the debates they instigated.

As we shift media platforms, our modes of analysis and expression will also shift. Our class projects will consist of:

1. A traditional paper which analyzes images.
2. A digital essay project.
3. A group project which analyzes remix videos.
4. A creative and/or critical remix project.
Texts and Materials
Our readings will be uploaded to the MyCourses course site (http://mycourses.rit.edu). You are free to save the articles and read them offline, print your own hard copies, or read them online.

The class will also be using computers to screen digital texts and do our own digital media work. As part of this class you will need access to a computer and the internet. If you do not already have access to video editing software you may also need to pay $30(est) for software. To facilitate these digital projects and screenings, there will be times when we meet in a campus computer lab to work instead of the regular classroom.

Course Expectations and Requirements
Your final grade is calculated in the following way:

- Attendance & Participation (15%)
- Weekly MyCourses Posts (25%)
- Media Projects (50%)
- Remix Analysis (Group Project) (10%)

Attendance & Participation (15%)
Course participation is vital to your success in this class. Your opinions, feedback, and ideas are invaluable to your classmates. We want to hear your voice! Participation is not just about being present in class. Your participation grade takes into account your contributions in class, on MyCourses, and your overall preparation for class discussion. It is important that you come prepared and ready to share your questions, ideas and insights. If you are regularly unprepared and/or miss assignments this will seriously impact your grade. Using technology in class for non-class related reasons will also impact your grade.

Class Attendance Policies
Since this class relies heavily on the active participation and presence of all students, missing more than six classes will result in an automatic failure of the class. That’s the equivalent of missing three weeks of the semester. Extenuating circumstances (a death in the family, serious illness, etc.) are considered on a case-by-case basis. For these exceptional situations, you may be required to provide documentation. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. You don’t need to tell me why you’ve missed class.

If you fall asleep in class, this means you are not present and will be marked as absent for the day. Being regularly late to class will also impact your grade. Two instances of being more than 10 minutes late become one absence.

If you miss a class:
- You are still responsible for turning in your work on time. (Assignments should be posted to MyCourses as usual.)
- You are responsible for speaking with your classmates to collect any documents, notes or news. Copies of all assignments will be posted on MyCourses. You are responsible for looking up this information. I will not recap missed classes over email. However, you are welcome to come to my office hours to review the missed material and/or address any questions you have.
- You are expected to make up missed material on your time and come prepared for the next class.
Weekly Assignments (25%)
Our week is divided into two class sessions: First, we meet to work through the reading (typically, Tuesdays). Next, we meet to discuss the week’s screening, look at it, talk about composition choices, how it engages the viewer, etc. (typically, Thursdays).

There are assignments due for nearly every class. These typically take the form of 1) a quick check-in post (before we discuss the week’s reading) or 2) a reading/screening response post (due before we discuss the week’s screenings). These are due on MyCourses by 10:00am on the day of class.

Weekly Check-In Posts
Check-in posts are quick responses to the readings. In a check-in post, you share your immediate reactions to the readings.

All check-in posts are graded pass/fail. You get credit simply for doing them. By 10:00 am on the relevant days of class, post in the discussion forums and briefly let me know how you’re doing:

- Tell me the one thing you want to review the most. Be as specific as you can. Give me a page number/quote to work with.
- Identify the one piece of the reading you feel you understand best. Be as specific as you can. Give me a page number/quote to work with.
- Feel free to also post a question, discuss a term you had to look up, or share something you find useful. Is there something you needed to look up? Tell us! Someone else if probably wondering too! Is there something you think relates and that we should discuss in class? Link it! All of this info can get added to the discussion forum.

Essentially, this gives me a quick poll of where the class is at overall. It also gives all of you a way to help each other out. I will build our class discussion around your responses, so come to class ready to discuss what you have posted online.

Response Assignments
When in written form, each response assignment is expected to be at least 200 words long. You will typically find yourself writing 2-3 paragraphs. Responses are graded on a scale of 1-10 points.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>9-10 points</td>
<td>Excellent. Goes well beyond minimum requirements (outlined below).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 points</td>
<td>Above average. Goes beyond minimum requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 points</td>
<td>Average. Meets minimum posting requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>Below average. Struggling to meet minimum posting requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 points</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory. Does not meet minimum requirements.</td>
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Responses should fully address the prompt. They also need to work carefully with the week’s readings and any relevant materials. In each response assignment you are expected to 1) cite the readings and work with the authors words, 2) use clear and specific examples from the texts we screen in class to support your claims (i.e. pointing to specific scenes/moments as evidence). If you are looking at an additional text (webpage, game, etc.) you are still expected to cite as well as use clear and specific examples.

However, the response assignments will not always be in written form. These assignments are also an opportunity for skill building and preparing for the digital media projects. Be ready to make screen caps, make video clips, and post/discuss links to various media online. We will go over the processes for these assignments regularly in class and requirements will be clearly stated on every assignment.
In a class that’s all about reception, engagement, and participatory culture, the texts you produce for class will be as important to our studies as the weekly screenings and readings. During this semester you will practice communicating your ideas using different media forms. Overall, you will produce a short reflective essay and three media analysis projects:

1. A traditional academic paper that incorporates and analyzes images.
2. A digital essay project.
3. A group project that deconstructs and analyzes a remix video.
4. A creative and/or critical remix project.

We will spend time in class prepping for and working on these digital assignments. The weekly D2L assignments will help you build your tech skills. I have also made arrangements for the class to have access to computer labs on campus. I will hold drop-in hours at these labs ahead of project deadlines, both to offer you a space to work and help with troubleshooting. Each digital assignment will accommodate different levels of technical skill, from the first-timer to the more tech-savvy.

**Grading and Assessment**

Here is a breakdown of how grades are assigned in this class:

**A:** *Excellent work.* Student goes well beyond minimum assignment requirements. Student pushes themselves and their skills, is conscious of their peers, makes strong and useful contributions to class discussions, and makes significant effort to collaborate with peers. Student’s work is original, inventive and creative. Work uses clear and focused arguments that are accompanied by strong evidence and analysis. Work is well organized, clearly written, and communicates its ideas in effective and compelling ways.

**B:** *Above average work.* Student exceeds minimum assignment requirements. Student pushes themselves and their skills, is conscious of their peers, makes regular contributions to class discussions, and regularly collaborates with their peers. Student’s work has clear and focused arguments that are accompanied by strong evidence and analysis. Work is organized and communicates its ideas effectively ways.

**C:** *Average work.* Student meets minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student’s work is relatively organized and coherent.

**D:** *Below average work.* Student work does not meet or only meets a few of the minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student’s work may struggle with organization and coherency issues.

**F:** *Unsatisfactory work.* Student work does not meet minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student’s work may struggle with significant organization and coherency issues.

**Work Submission Requirements**

Most of your work this semester will be submitted on MyCourses. Feedback will be giving using the TurnItIn commenting/grading features built into MyCourses. Documents uploaded to MyCourses can only be submitted in the following formats: .doc, .docx, .rtf, .pdf. The TurnItIn commenting options on MyCourses do not work well with .odt, .pages, and .wps files. If your word processing software does not automatically save in one of the acceptable file formats, it is your responsibility to convert your work as needed. If you have questions about converting files or using MyCourses, please see me or ask the IT Help Desk.
Email
I will frequently use email to contact the class. Make sure you have access to your rit.edu email address and be careful to regularly check your email, even on the days we do not have class. Missing an email will not excuse you from missed assignments or late work.

You are also welcome to email me with any questions and concerns you have about the class or your work. I generally respond to email quickly and you can expect a response in 24 hours. If you do not receive a response from me in 1-2 days, please email me again. I do receive a lot of email daily. It’s rare, but occasionally someone gets lost in the shuffle or inexplicably stuck in a spam/junk mail filter. Failure to follow-up with me regarding emails or questions asked in class will not excuse you from missed assignments or late work.

Technology in the Classroom
Smartphones and computers can be helpful tools and we will often use them as part of our work in class. Due to this, you are encouraged to bring technology to class. However, it is expected that you will turn off the ringers on your phones and only use these tools for class-related purposes. I reserve the right to ask anyone abusing this policy to put away their devices and/or leave the class.

Course Screenings & Lab Time
As this is a media studies course, most weeks you’ll be screening a film, a television program or a digital media piece to accompany the readings. Course screenings are a part of your weekly assignments and you are responsible for completing all the class screenings in preparation for class.

You should be able to find all of these materials on reserve in the RIT library, at your local public library, or with your preferred media rental source. If, for any reason, you cannot find the screening on your own, you are responsible for contacting me and so that I can help you make arrangements to screen it.

(Optional) Movie Time!
To make things a little easier (and more fun), I’m also offering optional class screenings. This is a time when we can watch the films and TV shows together as a group. The group screenings are held on Tuesdays from 3:30 – 6:00 pm in LBR-3201 (just down the hall from our classroom).

In addition to weekly screenings, we will also be using computers to look at digital texts and produce an array of digital assignments. To facilitate this, there may be times when we meet in a campus computer lab instead of our regular classroom. Projects may be started during lab time, however, many of these will not be finished during class. Instead, you are responsible for completing the work outside of class (either individually or with your group).

Lab time is part of the work we do as a class and your attendance is expected. If you miss these meetings it will be counted as an absence.

Content Warning
During this semester we will be discussing a variety of subjects and looking at materials that may represent beliefs and life experiences that are different than your own. The materials for this course may contain adult material. If you have any reservations, for whatever reason, about watching, reading, or discussing certain types of content, contact me during the first week of class.
RIT Honor Code
As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. The Department of English encourages all students to become familiar with the RIT Honor Code and with RIT’s Academic Integrity Policy.

- RIT Academic Integrity Policy URL: [http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080](http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080)

Student Accommodations
RIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request accommodations such as special seating or testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office. It is located in the Student Alumni Union, Room 1150; the Web site is www.rit.edu/dso. After you receive accommodation approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

Writing Commons Resource Information
The UWP Writing Commons provides free writing instruction for all RIT students at any stage of the writing process. Located on the first floor of the Wallace Center, the Writing Commons is staffed by peer and professional writing consultants with diverse backgrounds and from a variety of academic disciplines. Whether you need help getting started, organizing your thoughts, developing ideas, struggle with grammar and mechanical issues, using sources effectively or properly formatting your citations, we help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, go to: [http://www.rit.edu/WritingCommons](http://www.rit.edu/WritingCommons).

Finally...
Remember that this syllabus and the course calendar are subject to some change over the course of the semester. Always defer to the most recent version of the syllabus and course calendar. These are kept current on our MyCourses site.

Whew! Did you read all that? If so, now you’re ready to get started! 😊
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week &amp; Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| **Week 1: 1/27 - 1/29**  
Getting Started  
Mass Culture | **Tuesday, 1/27**  
Introduction to the class.  
**Thursday, 1/29**  
Excerpt from John Storey’s “The Frankfurt School,” *Cultural Theory & Popular Culture.*  
*Post:* Check-In Post Due 10am.  
*In class:* Discuss/work through Adorno as a group. |
| **Week 2: 2/3 – 2/5**  
Gazing at Bodies (p1) | **Tuesday, 2/3**  
Excerpts from John Storey’s “Psychoanalysis,” *Cultural Theory & Popular Culture.*  
*Post:* Check-In Post Due 10am.  
*In class:* Discuss/work through Mulvey as a group.  
**Thursday, 2/5**  
*Watch:* *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953, 91min)  
*Post:* Response Assignment Due 10am.  
*In class:* Discuss film and readings. |
| **Week 3: 2/10-2/12**  
Gazing at Bodies (p2) | **Tuesday, 2/10**  
Alexander Doty, "There's Something Queer Here," *The Gender & Media Reader.*  
*Post:* Check-In Post Due 10am.  
*In class:* Discuss/work through Neale & Doty as a group.  
**Thursday, 2/12**  
*Watch:* *Drive* (2011, 100 min)  
*Post:* Response Assignment Due 10am  
*In class:* Discuss film and readings. |
| **Week 4: 2/17 – 2/19**  
Being Starstruck | **Tuesday, 2/17**  
Excerpt from Richard Dyer’s *Stars.*  
*Post:* Check-In Post Due 10am.  
*In class:* Discuss/work through readings as a group.  
**Thursday, 2/19**  
*Watch:* *Hard Days Night* (1964, 87min)  
*Post:* Response Assignment Due 10am  
*In class:* Discuss film and readings. |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5: 2/24 – 2/26</strong>&lt;br&gt;Audiences, plural</td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 2/24</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: Jackie Bobo, &quot;The Color Purple: Black Women as Cultural Readers,&quot; <em>Audience Studies Reader.</em>&lt;br&gt;Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.&lt;br&gt;In class: Discuss/work through Bobo as a group.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Thursday, 2/26</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Watch:</em> The Color Purple (1985, 154min)&lt;br&gt;<em>Post:</em> Response Assignment Due 10am&lt;br&gt;<em>In class:</em> Discuss film and readings.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6: 3/3 – 3/5</strong>&lt;br&gt;TV as a Cultural Forum</td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 3/3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: Horace Newcomb &amp; Paul Hirsch, &quot;Television as a Cultural Forum,&quot; <em>Television: The Critical View.</em>&lt;br&gt;Jason Mittell, &quot;Exchanging Audiences,&quot; <em>TV &amp; American Culture.</em>&lt;br&gt;Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.&lt;br&gt;In class: Discuss/work through readings as a group.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Thursday, 3/5</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Watch:</em> Television screenings TBD.&lt;br&gt;<em>Post:</em> Response Assignment Due 10am&lt;br&gt;<em>In class:</em> Discuss screenings and readings.</td>
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<td><strong>PROJECT ONE DUE SATURDAY, 3/7 AT 11:59PM IN DROPBOX.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 7: 3/10 – 3/12</strong>&lt;br&gt;TV Today</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8: 3/17 – 3/23</strong>&lt;br&gt;Film &amp; the Internet</td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 3/17</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: J.P. Telotte, &quot;The Blair Witch Project Project,&quot; <em>Film Quarterly</em> (v54i3).&lt;br&gt;Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.&lt;br&gt;In class: Discuss/work through readings as a group.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Thursday, 3/23</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Watch:</em> The Blair Witch Project (1999, 81min) look at Blair Witch website.&lt;br&gt;<em>Post:</em> Response Assignment Due 10am&lt;br&gt;<em>In class:</em> Discuss screenings and readings.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9: 3/24 – 3/26</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Week &amp; Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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| **Week 10: 3/31– 4/2**  
*Cult TV* | **Tuesday, 3/31**  
Read: Matt Hills, "Cult TV," *Television Studies Reader*.  
Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.  
In class: Discuss/work through readings as a group.  

**Thursday, 4/2 – CLASS WILL MOVE ONLINE TODAY.**  
Watch: *Doctor Who* (various episodes)  
Post: Online discussion assignment. See assignment handout for full details. |
| **Week 11: 4/7 – 4/9**  
*From Cult TV to Participatory TV* | **Tuesday, 4/7**  
Read: Derek Johnson, "Inviting Audiences In," *New Review of Film & TV Studies* (v5i1).  
Henry Jenkins, "Interactive Audiences," *New Media Book*. (Excerpt.)  
Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.  
In class: Discuss/work through readings as a group.  

**Thursday, 4/9**  
Watch: Screenings TBD (Possibly: *Battlestar Galactica: The Resistance*.)  
Post: Project two outline due at 10am. (No regular post today.)  
In class: Discuss screenings and readings.  

**PROJECT TWO OUTLINE DUE INSTEAD OF REGULAR THURSDAY POST.** |
| **Week 12: 4/14 – 4/16**  
*Spectator Positions Online* | **Tuesday, 4/14**  
Read: Michele White, "Making Computer & Internet Spectators," *The Body & the Screen*.  
Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.  
In class: Play things! Think about spectatorship & the computer!  
Class will meet in computer lab today.  

**Thursday, 4/16**  
Watch: Complete any screenings you didn’t get to in the lab. Revisit the ones you want to discuss further.  
Post: Response Assignment Due 10am  
In class: Discuss screenings and readings.  

**PROJECT TWO DUE SATURDAY, 4/18 AT 11:59PM in DROPBOX.** |
| **Week 13: 4/21 – 4/23**  
*Remix Culture* | **Tuesday, 4/21**  
Post: Check-In Post Due 10am.  
In class: Discuss/work through readings as a group. Look at remix examples, etc. Assign groups for remix analysis project.  

**Thursday, 4/23**  
Post: Response Assignment Due 10am  
In class: Discuss screenings and readings. |
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 14: 4/28 – 4/30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fandom 2.0</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post:</strong></td>
<td>Check-In Post Due 10am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In class:</strong></td>
<td>Discuss/work through readings as a group. Look at remix examples, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, 4/30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Post:</strong> Response Assignment Due 10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In class:</strong></td>
<td>Discuss screenings and readings.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP PROJECTS DUE SATURDAY, 5/2 AT 11:59PM in DROPBOX.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 15: 5/5 – 5/7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Global Media Viewing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 5/5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Henry Jenkins, &quot;Pop Cosmopolitanism,&quot; <em>Fans, Bloggers &amp; Gamers</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post:</strong></td>
<td>Check-In Post Due 10am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In class:</strong></td>
<td>Discuss/work through readings as a group.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, 5/7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Watch:</strong> Global TV screenings TBD.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post:</strong></td>
<td>Project three proposal due at 10am.</td>
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<td><strong>In class:</strong></td>
<td>Discuss Jenkins, global media. Do project 3 troubleshooting.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT THREE PROPOSAL DUE INSTEAD OF REGULAR THURSDAY POST.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 16: 5/12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wrapping Up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 5/12</strong></td>
<td><strong>In class:</strong> Troubleshoot project 3 as needed. Share/Discuss group projects in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finals Week</strong></td>
<td><strong>PROJECT THREE &amp; EXTRA CREDIT WORK DUE WEDNESDAY, 5/20 AT 11:59PM in DROPBOX.</strong></td>
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*Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Always defer to the current version on MyCourses.*