COURSE INFORMATION:

Punk-Cyberspace: Contemporary Cultural Criticism
Instructor: Scott Herndon
Office: MC 3.224
Phone: extension 4804
Email: scott.herndon@utdallas.edu
Office Hours: T-R 1-3, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We listen to the radio on the way to work or to the mall, "unwind" with the television, and retrieve sports scores with our cell phones. What we don't think about as we do these everyday tasks are the role they play in defining our culture and indeed our very identity. This class will investigate the intersections between the media and our lives. Specifically we will look at how various media artifacts influence our understanding of race, class, sexual orientation, gender, democracy, politics, etc.

COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase student awareness of their mediated environment. Specifically, students will learn to interpret and analyze various media phenomenon. Students will focus on three prominent critical methods (Narrative, Genre, Media Ecology) applying them to various media artifacts.

2. Build critical writing skills. Students will apply what they learn by writing critical essays, engaging in in-class discussions and debate, as well as other projects designed to help students engage elements of our mediated reality.

3. Build critical thinking & discussion skills. This is a seminar, not a lecture class. Students are expected engage not just the material and the instructor, but also each other.

TEXTS AND READINGS:

Kellner, Douglas. Media Spectacle. Routledge: London. 2003.

Marcus, Griel. Lip Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the 20th Century. Routledge: London. 2003.

In addition to the texts, we will read a number of scholarly articles, as well as make use of the Internet and view several films.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are no tests in this class. Instead, we will focus on discussion, various in-class exercises and a series of written papers to explore various aspects of our mediated/pop-culture. Some writing will be short, blog assignments on a suggested topic, others will be longer analytical papers. These major assignments are described below. The instructor reserves the right to alter assignments or point, if necessary.

1. **Short writings (75 points)** – 500 word essays on a prompt or question discussed in class. There are 5 scheduled writings and up to 3 "pop-writing" assignments. Each short writing assignment is worth 15 points and student will keep their best 5 scores.

2. **Critical Essays (for review/revision)** – Early in the semester, you will select an artifact that will become the basis for ALL of your critical essays. There are three critical essays, each one focusing on your artifact through the lens of four critical methods (Culture Jam, Narrative/Genre, Media Ecology). These essays should be no longer than 8 pages and no shorter than 6. Each of the longer essays will have a final due date for review and revision. More details on the grading of these papers can be found in the Grading Policies section, below.

3. **Final Cultural Criticism (300 points)** – This assignment is the culmination of your previous essays with the addition of an abstract, introduction, and conclusion that tie your research into one cohesive final work of criticism (think of it as a paper about your artifact in three chapters). These additional sections include an abstract, introduction justifying the study of your artifact, discussion of your artifacts cultural and historical relevance and a conclusion that ties your work together and provides closure and suggests further research.

4. **Blogs (100 points)** –Students will keep a blog of their media exposure, thoughts, innovations, musing, etc. Students should have at least one entry per week the course meets. We will throughout the semester return to the journals to facilitate discussion or brainstorm. Please use Blog Spot for this assignment. The instructions for starting your own blog can be found here: https://www.blogger.com/start.

5. **Identizine (75 points)** – Students will construct the front page of their own style magazine. More interesting and fun than it sounds in one sentence.

GRADING POLICIES:

My grading policy is simple. Work is to be completed on time. Assignment due dates are clearly marked in the syllabus but are subject to change based on our pace or other unforeseen events. This class moves very quickly, and we pack a lot into the semester, dalliances will result in you falling behind and will, in all likelihood, adversely impact your chances for success.

Policy for Critical Essays: The goal of the critical essays is to produce a collaborative, multi-disciplinary study of your artifact in three sections. Throughout the semester you will complete your essays by the target dates marked in the syllabus and turn them in for review by the instructor. I'll read your essays, provide comments, ideas, feedback and guidance and return them to you for revision. You will NOT receive a final grade on your essays at this time – the essays are part of a process not the final product. Students will then take the comments and suggestions and integrate them into your final paper due at te end of the semester. Whether or not you take advantage of the target date to receive instructor comments is up to you. However, if you want feedback, you must turn your paper in by the appropriate target date.

Late work will be assessed a 15% penalty for every class meeting that an assignment is late. For example, if you an assignment is due on Tuesday and a student turns it in the Tuesday following the due date they will be assessed a penalty of 30%.

The grading scale will be: 100-90% = A, 89-80 = B and so on…students with less than 50% of the total points in the class will receive a grade of failing for the semester. UTD's incomplete policy will be observed and is explained in detail below.

STUDENT CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE:

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

EMAIL USE:

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS:

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the deal will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY:

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days:

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities:

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. (http://www.utdallas.edu/Business Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

What are we doing here?

"I used to be so sure, I used to be so certain, now it's gone"
-The Chameleons

Tuesday, 1-13 – Course Introduction (1)

Topics:
Course Introduction
Review of Syllabus, Class Procedures and Assignments
Assign Media Blog

Thursday, 1-15 – The Role of the Critic / Writing Critical Essays (2)

Topics:
The role of the critic
Writing critical essays, expectations, form, etc.
Artifact selection revisited

Read:
Foss, Sonja. "Doing a Rhetorical Criticism" Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practices. Ed: Sonja Foss. Waveland Press. 1996. 399-477.

Ivie, Robert. "Productive Criticism." Quarterly Journal of Speech. 81 (1995).

Activities:
Assign Narrative Essay
In-class Writing # 1: "Critics Manifesto – What are you doing here?"

Fac 51 – The Hacienda

"Dual Personalities, that point to true realities"
- Joy Division

Tuesday, 1-20 - The Hacienda Must Be Built – Punk Ideology (3)

Topics:
Media Ideology
The Situationist, consumerism, media and culture
Case in Point: From the Sex Pistols to Public Image Ltd – Evolution

Required Reading:
Kellner, Douglas. "Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle." Media Spectacle. Routledge, New York. 2003, 1-33.

Lipstick Traces – Version One, pp 27 – 153.

Debord, Guy. "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Condition of Organization and Action." Situationist International, June 1957.
http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/report.html.

Supplementary Reading:
Vague, Tom. "The Boy Scouts Guide to the Situationist International. 2001.
http://sami.is.free.fr/Oeuvres/boy_scouts_guide_to_the_s_i.html

Debord, Guy. "The Society of the Spectacle." Situationist International, 1967.
http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/16

Thursday 1-22 – More on the Spectacle (4)

Topics:
From the SI to the war on Terror – Cultural Simulations

Required Reading:
Any two (2) Chapters From:
Kellner, Douglas. Media Spectacle. Routledge, New York. 2003

Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations." Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings. Ed. Mark Poster. Stanford University Press. 1998. 166-184.

Lipstick Traces – Version 2, pp 163-345

Due:
Artifact Selection – Posted to Blog

Tuesday, 1-27 Culture Jamming (or, waging communication guerilla warfare) (5)

Topics:
Re-interpreting mediated spectacles

Read:
Dery, Mark. "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs." Open Magazine Pamphlet, 1993.

Eco, Umberto. "Towards a Semiological Guerilla Warfare." Travels in Hyper-reality Trans: William Weaver. Harcourt, New York. 1986, 135-145.

Supplementary Reading:
Vanderford, Audrey. "Speaking Pie to Power." Darkwing, University of Oregon. 2000. http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~audreylv/Pranks/pie.htm.

Activities:
Ad-Busters, Biotic Baking Brigade
Assign Culture Jam

Thursday 1-29 – Culture Jamming Continued (6)

Activities:
Viewing of film: *Culture Jam*

Tuesday 2-3 - Culture Jamming (7)

Due:
Culture Jam Projects/Discussion

Thursday, 2-5 – Culture Jamming (8)

Due:
Culture Jam Projects/Discussion
All Papers Due By Today!

Stories, Genres and Identity

"And now you find you fit this identikit completely"
- Elvis Costello

Tuesday, 2-10 - Storytelling (9)

Topics:
Homo-narrans and the logic of good reasons

Read:
Fisher, Walter. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." Communication Monographs 51 (1984): 1-22.

Rivera, Roberto. "Elves, Wookies and Fanboys: Star Wars and Our Need for Stories." Boundless Webzine. 1999. http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citmla.htm.

Thursday, 2-12 - More than Stories (10)

Topics:
Practicing Narrative Criticism: Election Narratives

Read:
Foss, Sonja. "Narrative Criticism." Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practices. Ed: Sonja Foss. Waveland Press. 1996. 399-477.

Activities:
Analyzing Contemporary Mediated Narratives
Assign Criticism # 2

Tuesday, 2-17 – Story Tellers / Ideology: Michael Moore (11)

Activities:
Viewing of Film: *Fahrenheit 911*

Thursday, 2-19 - Story Tellers / Ideology: Michael Moore (12)

Activities:
Viewing of Film: *Fahrenheit 911*
In-Class Writing # 2: Designing a Thesis

Tuesday, 2-24 – Swiss Cheese & Narrative (13)

Topics:
Perspective by Incongruity
Assign Identizine

Read:
Long, Mark C. "Tending to the Imagination: Perspective and Incongruity in William Carlos Williams and Kenneth Burke." Paper Presented at the Modern Language Association Conference. December, 1997. http://www.cla.purdue.edu/dblakesley/burke/long.html.

Levasseur, David G. "Edifying Arguments and Perspective by Incongruity: The Perplexing Argumentation Method of Kenneth Burke." Argumentation and Advocacy. 29:4 (1993).

Thursday, 2-26 – The Tragic Frame of Gender (14)

Topics:
Gender Norms & Media Reality

Read:
Mistry, Reena. "Madonna and Gender Trouble." Theory UK Online. 2000. http://www.theory.org.uk/madonna.htm.

Activities:
Masculine and Feminine in Pop Entertainment

Tuesday, 3-3 – Dreamworlds (15)

Activities:
Viewing of Film: *Dreamworlds*

Thursday, 3-5 — Dreamworlds (16)

Activities:
Discuss Film
In-class writing #3: Reaction to *Dreamworlds*

Tuesday, 3-10- Identizines (17)

Due:
Identizines Due / Discussion

Thursday, 3-12 – Identizines (18)

Due:
Identizines Due / Discussion

Tuesday, 3-17 – Spring Break

Thursday, 3-19 – Spring Break

Tuesday, 3-24 Introduction to Genre (19)

Topics:
Genre, the good the bad and the misplaced
Basics of generic criticism

Read:
Foss, Sonja. "Generic Criticism" Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practices. Ed: Sonja Foss. Waveland Press. 1996. 483-531.

McDowell, Matt. "What Choice? Subculture Films, Naturalization, and the Post-Modern Condition." Washington State University. No date given. http://www.creighton.edu/~spoko/subculture/index.html.

Thursday, 3-26 – Genre Continued – Oh the Horror! (20)

Topics:
Interpreting Genre – The Modern Horror Film

Read:
Reading TBD – Waiting on the ILL!

Tuesday, 3-31 – Genre & Horror (21)

Topics:
Viewing of Scream

Thursday, 4-2 - Genre & Horror (22)

Topics:
Viewing of Scream

Activities:
In Class Writing #4: Scream Thesis

Tuesday, 4-7 – The Spectacle, Race and Reality TV (23)

Topics:
(Re) interpreting Genre – TV Reality and the allure of spectacle

Read:
Freeland, Cynthia. "Ordinary Horror on Reality TV." Narrative Across Media. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan. University of Nebraska Press. 2004. 244-276.

Activities:
Viewing of 'Cops' / Discussion

Thursday, 4-9 – Writing Workshop (24)

Topics:
Bring Papers, Outlines, etc to class

Media, Space, Being

Tuesday, 4-14 – Media Spaces (25)

Topics:
What is Media Ecology?

Read:
Strate, Lance. "Studying Media as Media: McLuhan and the Media Ecology Approach." Media Tropes. Volume 1 (2008).

Activities:
Mapping the Ecology of Media

Due:
Criticism # 2

Thursday, 4-16 – Virtual Environments – Cell Phone (26)

Topics:
Digital environments

Read:
Embodiment

Strate, Lance. "The Cell Phone as Environment." Explorations in Media Ecology. 2:1 (2003).

Tuesday, 4-21– Virtual Environments – Second Life (27)

Topics:
Digital environments
How Second Life will Change *Your* Life

Read:
Biocca, Frank. "The Cyborg's Dilemma: Progressive Embodiment in Virtual Environments." Jounral of Computer-Mediated Communication. 3:2 (1997).

Aarseth, Espen. "Quest Games as Post-Narrative Discourse." Narrative Across Media. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan. University of Nebraska Press. 2004. 361-376.

Thursday, 4-23 – Writers Workshop # 2 (28)

Topics:
Bring Papers, outlines, etc of paper # 3 to class

Tuesday, 4-28 – McLuhan's Wake (29)

Topics:
Viewing of Film: McLuhan's Wake

Thursday, I want it Now – 4-30 (30)

Topics:
Immediacy and Culture

Read:
Virilio, Paul. "Speed and Information: Cyberspace Alarm!" CT Theory Net. August 27, 1995. http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=72.

Activities:
In-class Writing # 5: Wrapping it Up

Due:
Media Ecology Criticism

FINAL PAPERS DUE NO LATER THAN MAY, 15