

050:259

Popular Culture

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What is popular culture? What makes it popular? Why do we love it so much? Why do we hate it so much? How do various different forms of popular culture shape how we view the world around us and how we participate in that world? What does it mean that popular culture plays such a large role in our lives? What power does it hold over us? What power does it give us?

In this course, we will think about these questions in order to learn how to interpret American popular culture more thoughtfully and critically. Using a series of essays as models, we will consider a wide variety of popular media forms, including film, television, advertising, music, and digital culture. Throughout the course, we will apply these models to contemporary American popular culture in a variety of ways, including class discussion, analytical papers, and postings to a class blog. Our ultimate goal is to become more insightful critics, consumers, and producers of popular culture.