

This class explores major themes and problems in American popular culture. We will give special attention to the problem of values, broadly defined, in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century United States. Contest over values—moral, aesthetic, political, social—in the realm of popular culture has been and continues to be a central feature of American cultural and intellectual life. Using theoretical and historical readings, as well as plentiful primary sources, we will try to make sense of this problem of values as we build a critical context for examining the production, consumption, and varied meanings of American popular culture.