

## (Re)Imagining America: Fantasy and Reality in American Popular Culture

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English 258, Section 002, American Popular Culture

CRN 82556, Fall 2012  
MWF 2:30pm- 3:20pm  
[317 Clarke Hall](#)

Instructor Teresa M. Pershing  
Office: G03 Colson Hall  
Office Hours: 1:30pm- 2:15pm MWF & by appointment  
Mailbox: 120 Colson Hall  
E-mail: [tpershin@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:tpershin@mix.wvu.edu)

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### **COURSE INFORMATION:**

**CHANGE NOTICE:** This syllabus is an outlined plan of the course and I reserve the right to make any changes.

**DESCRIPTION:** English 258 fulfills the GEC requirements for Objective 7, American Culture: Students are expected to develop knowledge critical to the understanding of the issues that shape the culture of the United States.

Throughout English 258 we will explore two genres in particular: fantasy and reality; at times we will step outside of these genres in order to question their boundaries and limits. During the semester we'll ask: How do we depict "the real" America—from reality television and documentaries to sitcoms which portray everyday life? How do we imagine America currently and in the future, including the people and places that "make" America? How does the fantasy genre function in our narration of American places and identities? In what ways do fantasy and reality intersect, and can we clearly differentiate between the two? Throughout the semester the texts and our discussions will probe the relationship(s) between genres, (national) identities, and popular culture. Students will 1) study what is meant by the phrase "pop(ular) culture"; 2) be introduced to a series of critical methodologies to guide them through cultural texts; 3) examine how identities and/or histories impact, appear in, and are erased by popular culture, particularly through the genres of reality and fantasy; 4) practice critical thinking and writing about culture; 5) begin to understand the role of genre in popular culture and its role in forming narratives about the nation and/or the self; and 6) enhance their understanding of American popular culture and the way that it shapes our perceptions and definitions of "American." Students will learn to 1) read the texts of popular culture as forming narratives about American identity and attitudes; 2) develop a research question and thesis about a cultural text, and support that thesis with evidence; and 3) recognize and develop multiple analyses for a single text. Throughout the semester we will explore how popular culture reflects and challenges the ways that we imagine American identities and cultures.

This section of English 258 is not a historical investigation of popular culture, nor is it an introduction to American culture generally. This section is focused on contemporary culture and assumes cursory knowledge of said culture; we will not be investigating the origins or history of American Popular Culture, though we may certainly reference this history as we consider how the past has influenced the present.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Please note that you do not have to purchase *all* of the movies and television episodes. Most (if not all) of the films and television series are available on reserve at the library. You might consider a [Netflix](#) membership or purchasing used copies via the internet. Blockbuster, iTunes and Amazon also offer streaming services (where you can purchase single episodes or "rent" a film for a reduced cost). At times episodes may be available on free viewing services such as YouTube and Hulu.



You must have the required materials on the day they are due. You will have assigned viewings/readings for almost every class period. If you are not using a laptop or eReader, you must bring a hard copy of the reading and/or your viewing notes to class every day. If you are using a laptop or eReader you must bring an electronic copy of the reading to class; you must print and bring your viewing notes. I strongly suggest having a folder and notebook that you bring to class daily. Keep all materials for this course (quizzes, viewing notes, exams, etc.) until the course is over. I also suggest regular use of the Oxford English Dictionary (available through the library database system); you are expected to look up and understand vocabulary that you are unfamiliar with.

#### **Required Primary Texts Available at the WVU Bookstore:**

- Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Windup Girl*. San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2011. Print. ISBN-14: 978-1-59780-158-4
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. Print. ISBN-10: 0439023483
- Spiegelman, Art. *In the Shadow of No Towers*. New York: Pantheon Press, 2004. Print. ISBN-10: 0375423079

#### **Required Primary Texts NOT Available at WVU Bookstore:**

You can acquire these materials in the following ways: purchase at Amazon or iTunes (used or new or using instant video services), rent from Red Box, Netflix, etc., or view at WVU library via Course Reserve. Many of the television episodes are also available free via the internet (hulu.com or fancast.com, for example). If you choose to use Course Reserve, please note that the material must be used in the library and another member of the class could be using the materials.

- *Avatar*. Dir. James Cameron. Perf. Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2009. DVD. (ASIN: B002VPE1AW)
- *Big Love: The Complete First Season*. Dir. Rodrigo Garcia. Perf. Bill Paxton and Jeanne Tripplehorn. HBO Home Video, 2006. DVD. (ASIN: B000GTLQVW)
- *Captain America: The First Avenger*. Dir. Joe Johnston. Perf. Chris Evans and Hugo Weaving. Paramount, 2011. DVD. (ASIN: B005IZLPKQ)
- *Captain Planet and The Planeteers: Season One*. Dirs. Vincent Davis and Jim Duffy. Perf. David Coburn and LeVar Burton. Shout! Factory, 2011. DVD. (ASIN: B004IB04OE)
- *Catfish*. Dir. Ariel Schulman and Henry Joost. Perf. Nev Schilman and Michigander Abby. Universal, 2011. DVD. (ASIN: B003Q6D1YW)
- *The Dark Knight*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perf. Christian Bale and Heath Ledger. Warner Home Video, 2008. DVD. (ASIN: B001GZ6QC4)
- *Finding Nemo*. Dir. Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich. Perf. Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres. Walt Disney Video, 2003. DVD. (ASIN: B00867GJYK)
- *Food, Inc.* Dir. Robert Kenner. Perf. Eric Schlosser. Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD. (ASIN: B0027BOL4G)
- *The Golden Girls—The Complete First Season*. Dir. Jay Sandrich. Perf. Bea Arthur, Betty White and Rue McClanahan. National Broadcast Company, 2004. DVD. (ASIN: B0002W4SX6)
- *March of the Penguins*. Dir. Luc Jacquet. Warner Home Video, 2005. DVD. (ASIN: B000B15KV0)
- *Super Size Me*. Dir. Morgan Spurlock. Perf. Morgan Spurlock. Samuel Goldwyn Films & Roadside Attractions, 2004. DVD. (ASIN: B0002OXVBO)
- *True Blood: The Complete First Season*. Dir. Alan Ball. Perf. Anna Paquin and Stephen Moyer. HBO Home Video, 2009. (ASIN: B001FB4W0W)
- *The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia*. Dir. Julien Nitzberg. Perf. Jesco White. Tribeca and American Express, 2010. DVD. (ASIN: B003VWC4BW)
- *X-Men*. Dir. Bryan Singer. Perf. Patrick Stewart and High Jackman. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2006. DVD. (ASIN: B000AYELVA)

**In-Class Viewings of Primary Texts:** We will “read” some of our texts in class; these texts are not listed above. If you are not present it is your responsibility to make sure that you watch/read/listen to the materials that you missed.

**Required Secondary Readings:** You are responsible for accessing these materials on your own; see the course schedule for specific locations. Please note that secondary readings *are required, not optional*.

- Alexander, Susan. “Stylish Hard Bodies: Bounded Masculinity in ‘Men’s Health Magazine’.” *Sociological Perspectives* 46.4 (2003): 535-554. Print.
- Bailey, Courtney. “Supersizing America: Fatness and Post-9/11 Cultural Anxieties.” *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 43.3 (2010): 441-62. Print.
- Berzsenyi, Christyne A. “The Golden Girls Share Signature Stories: Narrative of Aging, Identity, and Communal Desire.” *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture*. 9.2 (Fall 2010). Web.
- Handley, William R. “Belonging(s): Plural Marriage, Gay Marriage and the Subversion of ‘Good Order.’” *Discourse*. 26.3 (Fall 2004): 85-109. Print.
- Harnett, Alison. “Escaping the ‘Evil Avenger’ and the ‘Supercrip’: Images of Disability in Popular Television.” *Irish Communications Review*. 8 (2000): 21-29. Print.
- Kidd, Dustin. “Harry Potter and the Functions of Popular Culture.” *Journal of Popular Culture*. 40.1 (2007): 69-89. Print.
- Kolenic, Anthony J. “Madness in the Making: Creating and Denying Narratives from Virginia Tech to Gotham City.” *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 42.6 (Dec. 2009): 1023-39. Print.
- Mason, Carol. “The Hillbilly Defense: Culturally Mediating U.S. Terror at Home and Abroad.” *NWSA Journal*. 17.3 (Fall 2005): 39-63. Print.
- Petersen, Line Nybro. “Understanding Superpowers in Contemporary Television Fiction.” *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook*.” 6.1 (2008): 91-106. Print.
- “[The Real Price of Freedom](#).” *The Economist*. 20 Sept. 2007. Web.
- Schopp, Andrew. “Cruising the Alternatives: Homoeroticism and the Contemporary Vampire.” *Journal of Popular Culture*. 30.4 (1997): 231-243. Print.
- Serazio, Michael. “Ethos Groceries and Countercultural Appetites: Consuming Memory in Whole Foods’ Brand Utopia.” *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 44.1 (2011): 158-77. Print.
- Storey, John. “What is popular culture?.” *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009. Print.
- Sturgeon, Noel. “Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Environmental Reproductive Justice.” *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*. Eds. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010. 102-33. Print.
- “Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths.” *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004.
- Tidwell, Christy. “‘Fish Are Just Like People, Only Falkier’: Environmental Practice and Theory in *Finding Nemo*.” *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture*. 8.1 (Spring 2009). Web.
- Wagner-Lawlor, Jennifer A. “Advocating Environmentalism: The Voice of Nature in Contemporary Children’s Literature.” *Children’s Literature in Education*. 27.3 (1996): 143-52.
- Westlake, E.J. “Friend Me if You Facebook: Generation Y and Performative Surveillance.” *TDR* 52.4 (2008): 21-40. Print.
- Several other newspaper/magazine articles (listed on course schedule).

**RECOMMENDED PREPARATION:** English 101 and English 102 (or equivalents) are not prerequisites but will better prepare you for success in English 258. I strongly dissuade you from taking this course unless you have completed, or are currently completing, English 102.

**OFFICE HOURS:** My office hours are 1:30pm-2:15pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in G03 Colson Hall. I am also available by appointment. Office hours provide us with an opportunity to talk one-on-one. You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to talk about any questions or comments you have about your progress in the course.



**EMAIL HOURS:** I am happy to talk with you via email as well; I usually respond within 24 hours. You should not expect a response from 8pm to 9am. You should also expect a longer response time over the weekend. I cannot discuss grades via email; if you have questions about your grade please visit my office. You should check your e-mail daily. I will communicate important course information to you via e-mail. You are responsible for checking your e-mail regularly and coming to class informed and prepared.

#### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:** Our classroom is a community, and I expect professional, courteous behavior. This class will discuss a variety of opinions and ideas that you may or may not agree with or find interesting. Respect everyone and come to class curious, not hostile or indifferent. Do not bring your lunch to class; this is a discussion class and having food in the classroom is unacceptable. Treat your classmates as you wish to be treated; for example, try not to interrupt while others are speaking. Failure to observe these policies will result in an **F** in participation for the semester and possible removal from the class session.

**ELECTRONICS POLICY:** You may bring your laptops or e-reader to class in order to view the PDF reading assignments. Electronic devices should remain in your bag unless you make prior arrangements; if you want to use such devices you must read and sign the “Electronics Agreement” at the end of the syllabus and return it to your instructor. All other electronic devices (including cell phones and music devices) should be turned off and/or silenced before coming to class; there is to be absolutely no text messaging during class. Electronic device use of any sort during quizzes and exams will not be tolerated; if you use your cell phone, laptop, eReader or other web-linked device during a quiz or exam you will automatically receive a zero (in addition to any consequence outlined in the Student Conduct Code).

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Deadlines are non-negotiable after you’ve missed them. If you ever have a problem with understanding an assignment or meeting a deadline, or if you are going to miss class on the day of a deadline, talk to me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline and we may be able to negotiate an extension and/or arrange for submission of the assignment. If you miss a deadline for “major assignments” such as exams or PCPs your final course grade will be reduced by 3% for every day the assignment is late

I will not accept late homework; this includes assignments *other than* the “major assignments” (see above). In the case of absence, you must turn in the homework assignment prior to the class meeting time or it will not be accepted. Because I know things happen—PRT, printers breaking, etc.—I will count major assignments (NOT homework) as on time if you put it in my mailbox by 4:00 pm the day it is due.

#### **STANDARD OF WORK (BASED ON THE MLA GUIDE):**

- All work, *including daily assignments*, must be typed using MLA guidelines: 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.
- All assignments must use the appropriate heading: name, course title, instructor’s name, assignment name, date.
- Assignments longer than one (1) page must be stapled or clipped together.

- Include page numbers and your last name (in the header) on all assignments longer than one page.
- Carefully edit and proofread all texts to eliminate problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Use spell-check and read your documents aloud so you can hear your errors.
- Do not fiddle with the physical appearance of an assignment in an attempt to achieve the illusion of length. This assumes that I cannot tell the difference between quantity and quality. A paper that is shorter than the assigned length but presented honestly will earn far more respect.



- Documents that do not meet these and other assignment-specific requirements will be dropped as much as one full letter grade. Pay attention to these details for handing in your final drafts. Superficial errors do not signify poor thinking; but they can indicate, for some readers, a lack of precision and nonchalance toward the task. You'll have to plan your writing process to make time for proofreading—printing a just-written paper 10 minutes before class time will not yield terrific results.
- I suggest that you purchase a writing handbook (such as *Easy Writer*) to aid your writing. These texts offer guidelines and activities to help you with mechanics. The Writing Center is another resource available to you—to help you to brush up on your understanding of basic skills, but also to support you in all aspects of the writing process.

**WVU WRITING CENTER** is located in G02 Colson Hall. Call 304-293-5788 to schedule an appointment or stop by to see if a tutor is available.

Web address: [http://english.wvu.edu/centers\\_and\\_projects/wcenter/writing\\_center\\_home](http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter/writing_center_home)

**E-MAIL:** Assignments are not accepted via e-mail unless the assignment calls for e-mail submission or you make prior arrangements. In cases where assignments require e-mail or eCampus submission, students must meet deadlines. Excuses about e-mail or computer failure are unacceptable; set delivery notification on the e-mail if you are concerned. Make sure you attach your document in .doc or .rtf format; if I cannot open the document, it is late. All assignments must be sent to [tpershin@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:tpershin@mix.wvu.edu).

When communicating via email (at school, at work, etc.) it is important to practice professional, courteous writing. Do so by honoring the conventions of the genre. Emails (in all communication other than that with a casual correspondent) should have an address (i.e. hello, dear, etc. and the addressee's name) and a signature (i.e. thank you, regards, etc. and your name), and be written using full sentences and proper grammar (*not* text-speak). Communicating with your professor via email is professional correspondence; please treat it as such.

**PLAGIARISM/CHEATING:** Academic dishonesty is wholly unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly. Plagiarism is defined as “material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or part, from the work of others...including (but not limited to) another individual’s academic composition” (*WIP* xxi). Cheating refers to “doing academic work for another student, or providing one’s own work for another student to copy and submit as his or her own” (*WIP* xxi). You cannot use work from other courses in this course; you fail to meet the requirements of this individual course by doing so. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will result in failure of the assignment and/or the course. Plagiarism cases will *always* be filed with the university. If you have questions about plagiarism/cheating or are confused by MLA please visit my office.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE:** I am committed to a classroom that strives to use inclusive language, minimize assumptions, emphasize respect of difference, honor privacy, and employ topics that allow but do not require exploration of gender, sex, sexuality, race, nationality, ability, class and so on. These topics make

for productive, thoughtful, but sometimes tough discussions. If for any reason you find yourself feeling uncomfortable, feel free to come and speak with me. I will do my best to ensure that this classroom is a space where everyone feels comfortable and respected. Finally, if you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact me in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Some of the course materials may contain content that is disturbing to some viewers. But, alas, this is popular culture and I could not (nor did I wish to) censor our course materials. If you feel offended (so much so that you cannot critically respond to the work) come and talk to me. I maintain an open door policy regarding such issues. My only request is that we participate in honest inquiry and respectful, informed debate.

**DISABILITY AND ACCOMMODATION:** If you have a disability that could affect your progress in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services ([www.wvu.edu/~socjust/disability/](http://www.wvu.edu/~socjust/disability/)). ODS can be contacted at G30 Mountainlair, by phone at (304)293-6700 voice/TDD (304)293-7740, or email at [access2@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:access2@mail.wvu.edu). We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on ODS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester's beginning of your learning needs.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**ATTENDANCE:** If you are enrolled in this class, your regular attendance is assumed. You should arrive a few minutes ahead of time and be prepared to begin at 2:30. Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence, as will being more than 15 minutes late to class. You are allowed **up to three absences (one full week) for the semester** without penalty. A fourth absence will compromise your grade by one full letter. Each additional absence will lower your final grade by an additional letter grade. There are no excused absences (this includes illness, family issues, transportation challenges, athletics, extra-curricular activities, weather, etc.). If you accumulate seven or more absences (two-plus full weeks of class), you will **automatically fail** the course. Plan for the unexpected and use your absences wisely! If you miss class, you miss important, necessary material; obtain notes, handouts, and information from a classmate. Students who are registered for the course but do not attend during the first two weeks of the semester will automatically receive an F in the course. Students who wish to withdrawal from the course must do so on their own using the STAR system.



**PARTICIPATION (10%):** Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, bringing all necessary materials, actively taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent on a daily basis. It also includes doing the reading and writing for each class. Just showing up is not participating.

**A:** You are prepared for every class period and contribute to class discussion every (or almost every) day; this includes bringing the course readings on a daily basis. You have insightful and relevant contributions and go “above and beyond” an average engagement with the day’s readings. You respond to your peers comments and questions and help facilitate dialogue in the classroom.

**B:** You are prepared for every class period and contribute to most class discussions; you usually have the course readings. Comments are relevant and insightful and demonstrate a careful reading of the texts assigned. You respond to other’s comments on a regular basis.

**C:** You are typically prepared for class and contribute to class discussion approximately half of the time; you bring the course readings about half of the time. Sometimes your contributions are off-topic or prevent dialogue from moving forward. During group work, you take on a quiet role.

**D:** You rarely comment or add insight to class discussion; you rarely bring the course readings. You do not display your preparedness for class, which is reflected by class discussion and/or low quiz

scores. You may show little interest in the material and are off task during class (reading non-relevant material, sending text messages, sleeping, etc...).

**F:** You arrive late to class, are unprepared for class discussion, distract others, intentionally offend others, and/or fail to follow the classroom policies and procedures, and/or you have missed 6 or more classes.

**QUIZZES (10%):** Unscheduled quizzes should be expected throughout the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up and will not be administered if you arrive after the quiz has been administered; missed quizzes will be recorded as a zero. Quizzes ensure that you are reading the required material, help you gauge your reading practices, and help you prepare for exams. If you read/view carefully, you should pass the quiz. If you find that you are having trouble with this aspect of the course, despite reading/viewing the assigned materials, come talk to me. We can go over strategies for preparing for quizzes, reading critically, and retaining what you read.

**VIEWING NOTES (10%):** Since many of the texts we'll discuss in class will be viewed outside of the classroom it is necessary that students take viewing notes in order to be prepared for a detailed class discussion. Viewing notes *must* include a working thesis statement about the text and be at least two pages long. A thesis statement makes an *original* claim about the text, is debatable, expresses one main idea, and asserts your conclusion about a subject. Thesis statements are important because they allow us to test our ideas, better organize and develop arguments, and practice making claims about primary texts

that may be used later in written arguments. An example thesis statement might be, "'Youth' is portrayed in *American Beauty* as shallow and materialistic via Angela; such a portrayal of youth demonstrates the downfall of American culture in the hands of future generations." Viewing notes should show evidence of careful, attentive viewing. Viewing notes without a thesis statement can receive no higher than a "D." Your viewing notes should engage with the ideas of the course (unit theme, course theme, etc.), record important moments in the assignment, and/or note your critical thoughts and/or questions about the viewing. Ultimately, the format of your viewing notes is entirely up to you; make them useful for class discussion. Do not feel as though you need to record every nitty, gritty detail; your grade is reflective of the quality of content, not quantity. Viewing notes will be collected on twelve occasions according to the schedule of work (see below); only ten of those submissions will count toward the student's



final grade.

**POP CULTURE PAPERS (PCPs) (25%):** Writing is a necessity of academia and every profession. One's ability to 1) communicate his/her ideas clearly and articulately, 2) thoroughly support his/her argument with evidence, and 3) embrace revision as a beneficial and necessary step in the writing process in English 258 will help her/him prepare for her/his future profession. Throughout the semester, you must complete 3, 1.5-2 page (double spaced) PCPs. These short papers should critically and analytically engage with texts based on the prompt provided. You should *not* summarize what you read/viewed or give your emotional response to the text (in other words, you should not discuss whether or not you liked the text). Make sure you support your thoughts with evidence (quotes) from the text(s) that you are discussing. Please use proper MLA citation and follow the standard of work outlined below.

Unfortunately, we don't have time to go over all of the nitty-gritty aspects of writing, so I expect you to look to the writing guides (available on eCampus) and office hours for help. Consult these resources often for PCPs and exam essays. You will hand in a check sheet each time that you hand in a PCP. This check sheet is available on our eCampus page. The length of this assignment requires that you pay particular attention to paragraph structure including thesis, transitions between ideas, integration of support, etc.

**PCPs with 5 or more spelling and/or grammar errors will automatically receive a C.**

**MIDTERM EXAM (20%) AND FINAL EXAM (25%):** A large portion of the exams will be completed in-class. They may also have a take-home portion.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

A+ → 100-98      B+ → 89-88      C+ → 79-78      D+ → 69-68      F → less than 60  
 A → 97-94      B → 87-84      C → 77-74      D → 67-64  
 A - → 93-90      B - → 83-80      C - → 73-70      D - → 63-60

**\*PLEASE NOTE\*:** The best way to be successful in this course is to do the readings, participate and attend class regularly, and complete *all* of the course assignments. **Failure to complete the essays and exams will result in failure of the course.** Additionally, do not rely on former viewings of the films or episodes; always (re-)view the material to prepare for the class period!

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**NOTE:** All readings/viewings are due on the date listed. When a television series is assigned, the season and episode is abbreviated and the episode title is provided; for example, 1.9 indicates that you should view season 1, episode 9. Each reading assignment is followed by the source where you can locate the reading. You are responsible for locating, accessing, and printing each reading. **Bring all assigned readings to class.**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>REQUIRED READING/VIEWING AND ASSIGNMENTS</u>
M, Aug. 20:	Introduction to course; syllabus review. Discuss library databases.
W, Aug. 22:	Storey, "What is popular culture?" ( <a href="#">eCampus</a> ) and "Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths" ( <a href="#">eCampus</a> ). Come up with your own definitions of "fantasy" and "reality."
F, Aug. 24 (last day to add/drop):	Kidd, "Harry Potter and the Functions of Popular Culture" ( <a href="#">eCampus</a> )

**UNIT 1: BIG BROTHER: AMERICAN SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY**

M, Aug. 27:	Peterson, "Understanding Superpowers in Contemporary Television" ( <a href="#">Film and Television Literature Index</a> ) Introduction to the unit (discuss panopticon)
W, Aug. 29:	<i>The Dark Knight</i>
F, Aug. 31:	Kolenic, "Madness in the Making: Creating and Denying Narratives from Virginia Tech to Gotham City" ( <a href="#">Sport Discus</a> )
M, Sept. 3:	<b>Labor day; no class</b>
W, Sept. 5:	<i>Catfish</i> ; <b>Viewing Notes #1</b>
F, Sept. 7:	" <a href="#">How Privacy Vanishes Online</a> ," <i>New York Times</i> and Westlake, "Friend Me if You Facebook..." ( <a href="#">JSTOR</a> )
M, Sept. 10:	<i>In the Shadow of No Towers</i> and " <a href="#">The Real Price of Freedom</a> ," <i>The Economist</i>

**UNIT 2: THE GREEN PARTY: ECO-AWARENESS IN THE U.S.A.**

W, Sept. 12:	Introduction to unit; in class viewing/reading
F, Sept. 14:	<i>March of the Penguins</i> ; <b>Viewing Notes #2</b>
M, Sept. 17:	Sturgeon, "Penguin Family Values" ( <a href="#">eCampus</a> )
W, Sept. 19:	<i>Finding Nemo</i> ; <b>Viewing Notes #3</b>
F, Sept. 21:	Tidwell, "Fish Are Just Like People, Only Flakier" ( <a href="#">Web</a> )
M, Sept. 24:	<i>Captain Planet</i> 1.1 and 1.2, "A Hero for Earth" and "Rain of Terror"; <b>Viewing Notes #4</b>
W, Sept. 26:	Wagner-Lawlor, "Advocating Environmentalism" ( <a href="#">Education Research Complete</a> ) and unit wrap-up

**PCP #1:** Consider how popular culture portrays *and* values one of the following: 1) safety and security or 2) the planet Earth. You will select a text that is not part of ENGL 258 that addresses one of these ideas in some way; be sure that the text you select is an example of American popular culture. You may find it productive to narrow the scope of your argument—rather than trying to discuss the entire “green movement” select a particular facet like global warming, biodiversity, etc. You will need to view the text you select (an episode of a show, a film, a commercial, etc.) in order to complete a close reading; do not discuss the generalities of the text or summarize the plot and/or your reaction. Your analysis should present a thesis-driven argument about how the text portrays and values 1) safety and security or 2) our planet. Here’s an example thesis statement for this assignment: “*The March of the Penguins* begs viewers to embrace practices that support environmental sustainability by illustrating the importance of a stable environment in the lives of the penguins.” Your PCP needs to include a thesis; each paragraph must include a clear topic sentence that relates to your thesis, example(s) from the text of your choice that support your topic sentence, analysis of those examples, and a transition to the next paragraph.

F, Sept. 28: Optional mid-term review

M, Oct. 1: Mid-term exam

**UNIT 3: COMMODITY NATION: BUYING & SELLING BODIES AND FOOD**

W, Oct. 3: Introduction to unit and Twitchell, “Two Cheers for Materialism” ([eCampus](#))

F, Oct. 5 (mid-semester): *Super Size Me*; **Viewing Notes #5**

M, Oct. 8: Bailey, “Supersizing America...” ([Academic Search Complete](#))

W, Oct. 10: *Food, Inc.* ; **Viewing Notes #6**

F, Oct. 12: Serazio, “Ethos Groceries and Countercultural Appetites: Consuming Memory in Whole Foods’ Brand Utopia” ([Academic Search Complete](#))

M, Oct. 15: *Captain America: The First Avenger*; **Viewing Notes #7**. Begin reading *The Windup Girl*.

W, Oct. 17: Alexander, “Stylish Hard Bodies: Bounded Masculinity...” ([Academic Search Complete](#)) Continue reading *The Windup Girl*.

F, Oct. 19: **No class.** Continue reading *The Windup Girl*.

M, Oct. 22: **No class.** Finish reading *The Windup Girl*.

W, Oct. 24: *The Windup Girl* (all)

**PCP #2:** Using one or two of the concepts and/or methodologies we’ve discussed in Units 1, 2, and/or 3 analyze *The Windup Girl*. Your PCP should 1) explain how the concept/methodology can be applied to *The Windup Girl*, 2) provide at least two specific examples from the text, and 3) analyze those examples using the concept/methodology. Your PCP needs to include a thesis and each paragraph must include a clear topic sentence that relates to your thesis, example(s) from *The Windup Girl* to support your topic sentence, analysis of those examples, and a transition to the next paragraph.

F, Oct. 26 (last day to drop a course): *The Windup Girl* (all) and transition to Unit 4

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**Unit 4: American Outliers?: Identity in Popular Culture**

M, Oct. 29: *Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia*; **Viewing Notes #8**

W, Oct. 31: Mason, “The Hillbilly Defense...” ([Academic Search Complete](#))

F, Nov. 2: *XMen*; **Viewing Notes #9**

M, Nov. 5: Harnett, “Escaping the Evil Avenger and the Supercrip” ([eCampus](#))

W, Nov. 7: *The Golden Girls*, 1.1 and 1.2, “The Engagement” and “Guess Who’s Coming to the Wedding?”; **Viewing Notes #10**

F, Nov. 9: Berzsnyi, “The Golden Girls Share Signature Stories...” ([Web](#))

M, Nov. 12: *True Blood* 1.1, “Strange Love”; **Viewing Notes #11**

W, Nov. 14: Schopp, “Cruising the Alternatives...” ([Academic Search Complete](#))

F, Nov. 16: **No Class**; begin reading *The Hunger Games*.

Nov. 17- Nov. 25: **Thanksgiving Break; No Class.** Continue reading *The Hunger Games*! Begin drafting your PCP.

M, Nov. 26: *Big Love*, 1.1, “Pilot.” **Viewing Notes #12.** Continue reading *The Hunger Games*.

W, Nov. 28: Handley, “Belonging(s): Plural Marriage, Gay Marriage...” ([Literature Resource Center](#)). Finish reading *The Hunger Games*.

**Unit 5: A New Future? No Future?**

F, Nov. 30: *The Hunger Games* (all)

**PCP #3:** Using one or two of the concepts and/or methodologies we’ve discussed throughout the semester, turn a critical eye toward *The Hunger Games*. Your PCP should 1) explain how the concept/methodology can be applied to *The Hunger Games*, 2) provide at least two examples from the text, and 3) analyze those examples using the concept/methodology. Your PCP needs to include a thesis and each paragraph must include a clear topic sentence that relates to your thesis, example(s) from *The Hunger Games* to support your topic sentence, analysis of those examples, and a transition to the next paragraph.

M, Dec. 3: *The Hunger Games*

W, Dec. 5: *Avatar*

F, Dec. 7: Optional final review

Dec. 10-14: Finals week (Final: Mon., Dec. 10: 8-10am; subject to revision); final pick-up date T.B.D.

## eReader and Laptop Agreement

This document serves as an agreement between the instructor, Teresa M. Pershing, and me, the student, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name here). In order to use my eReader or laptop in English 258 I agree to the outlined terms below:

1. I must stay on task during class sessions; viewing materials which are not directly related to class discussion will reduce my participation grade to a zero for the day and/or I will be asked to leave the class session, thereby earning an absence for the semester.
2. Additionally, the first time that I use my eReader or laptop for anything other than reviewing the assigned materials for the day, I understand that I can no longer bring or use my eReader or laptop in English 258.
3. I understand that using my eReader or laptop to access and view materials outside of class discussion (including Facebook, email, etc.) distract me from the topic of discussion and distract my peers. I understand that I am a member of this classroom community and as a community member it is my responsibility to aid in creating an environment that is conducive to everyone's learning; viewing off-topic materials does not contribute to such an environment.
4. I agree that I will avoid using my laptop or eReader when it is unnecessary (during in-class viewings, for example).
5. Even though I will be using an eReader or laptop I will still take notes while reading (on the device or otherwise) in order to engage in active reading and be better prepared for class discussion.
6. My eReader or laptop will be stored away during exams and quizzes.
7. Finally, I understand that if I violate this agreement laptops and eReaders may be prohibited from the classroom for all students.

I understand and agree to the above outlined terms; it is my responsibility to use my eReader or laptop wisely and in accordance with the above agreement in English 258. If I have any questions I will speak to my instructor.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_