



CULTURAL STUDIES (LECTURE)

Bachelor in English and American Language, Literature and History
Faculty of Liberal Arts

Course information

Bachelor year 3 12 HOURS
Spring Semester 5 ECTS
Lectures (CM)
Professor: John Dean (PhD, University of London)

Course description

Mass Communications & Popular Culture in Modern America

Entertainment isn't just a joke or a diversion. It's packed with ideas. It entertains ideas. US mass communications and popular culture together are a vital, half-wild, half-tame, communal expression of We, the People of the United States. Together they form America's grassroots' constitution.

This is a rich field of creativity and debate which we will examine by chronologically analyzing case study fruits from this fertile orchard. Each generation of American media has built on previous elements of the artistic industry and then offered something new. How, why and what? Newspapers flowed into movies which flowed into radio which flowed into television which in turn flowed into the almost embarrassing wealth of mass communications and popular culture of our present digital age.

The structural pattern of our work will be the mass media-society relation in American history and civilization from post-WW2 America to the present day. Among the key questions and issues explored will be the magic bullet theory, the law of minimal consequences, popular culture as a civilization's safety valve, the iron triangle relation, the use of anachronism, the subversive and conservative forces at work in this media-society relation, the importance of ownership and gatekeepers, culture as commodity, the use and abuse of truth and social persuasion.