

Media outlaws

Comm 5231

office hours (253 Ford):

TuTh 10-11:15a, W 10-11:30a, and by appointment

Spring 2013

Prof. Gil Rodman

rodman@umn.edu

612.626.7721

Course description and objectives

This is a course about media subversives: people working outside of mainstream media institutions who nonetheless find creative and provocative ways to use the media for cultural, political, and/or economic critique and resistance. Over the course of the semester, we will examine a range of “alternative” media phenomena, including:

- computer hackers
- copyright pirates
- digital filesharing
- digital sampling
- mashup artists
- media pranksters
- “Occupy” protests
- open source software
- performance artists
- punk rockers
- pornography
- slash fan fiction

Our goal will not be simply to romanticize these “outlaws” as latter day Robin Hoods, nor will we merely condemn them as criminals or troublemakers. Instead, we will study how and why such figures struggle against the global “media monopoly” so that we might come to a richer understanding of (a) the nature of the media’s considerable political and cultural power, and (b) the ways that ordinary people can engage with powerful cultural institutions as active participants, innovative creators, and powerful critics.

Bear in mind that few (if any) of the questions we’ll address this semester have easy answers. Soundbite approaches to these issues (e.g., “can’t we get rid of copyright law completely?” or “people should just do the right thing”) will not serve you well at all, and a crucial part of your task this semester will be to think critically and complexly about issues of media, culture, politics, and resistance.

Readings

The following required books are available at the University Bookstore in Coffman Union.

- Stephen Duncombe (ed.), *The Cultural Resistance Reader*
- Laura Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*
- Kembrew McLeod, *Freedom of Expression*
- Negativland, *Fair Use*
- The Yes Men, *The Yes Men*

Other required readings will be made available via the course Moodle site. [Please note that there is an earlier edition of the McLeod book. If you choose to acquire your books from an alternate source, make sure to get the paperback edition published by the University of Minnesota Press.]

Students who choose to pursue a Senior Project in addition to the required course work are strongly encouraged to use the following recommended book (also available at the University Bookstore in Coffman Union) as a helpful guide for how to conceive, plan, research, and write their final papers:

- Wayne C. Booth *et al.*, *The Craft of Research* [third edition]

Moodle

If you are on the official course roster, you should already have access to the course’s Moodle site. Simply point your web browser to the U’s main Moodle page (<http://moodle2.umn.edu>), log in using your University X.500 ID, and select the “COMM5231_001S13” link from the “My Courses” menu in the “Navigation” box.

We will use Moodle for several things this semester:

- a course blog where you will contribute posts and comments about the course material
- access to our required non-book readings
- a repository for various media examples relevant to our required readings
- occasional business-related announcements about the course

More information on using Moodle can be found at <http://www.oit.umn.edu/moodle/student-guides/index.htm>

Graduate students

If you are a graduate student, the basic rules outlined in this syllabus vary slightly for you:

- Unless we make an explicit mutual agreement to the contrary, you are required to attend all regular class meetings, do all the assigned readings, and make weekly contributions to the course blog.
- We will hold extra meetings roughly every 3-4 weeks (places, dates, and times to be determined) for the discussion of additional graduate-level readings (also to be determined). You are required to do these extra readings and to attend and participate in these extra sessions.
- You are not required to submit Critical Essays or Student-Provided Readings. Instead, you must research and write a final paper that (a) fits the course theme, (b) is at least 6250 words long and (c) is suitable for submission to a scholarly conference and/or journal. You must meet with me no later than 21 Feb to discuss your proposed paper topic, submit a formal topic proposal no later than 28 Feb, and submit a final version of your paper by 10:00 am on 18 May. You are not required to submit “verification pages” or to meet any of the other intermediate deadlines associated with the Senior Project.
- As a graduate student, you are presumably motivated to be in this class because you have a genuine interest in the subject matter, rather than because you need to fulfill distributional requirements of some sort, or to pad out your schedule with “empty” credit hours. As such, I’m willing to assume that grades are not a terribly meaningful incentive for you. If anything, grades may be counterproductive, since they encourage you to focus on numbers (e.g., how do I turn an 89 into a 90?), rather than on the substantive issues at the core of the course. With this in mind, you should assume that successfully completing the graduate-level requirements for this course will earn you an A as a final grade. That said, in cases where people are clearly slacking off, I reserve the right to go deeper into the alphabet when I submit final grades.

Undergraduates who truly believe that they can handle the extra work (and higher expectations) of the graduate-level requirements are welcome to meet with me to discuss the possibility of completing the course in such a fashion. If this describes you, that meeting must happen no later than 31 Jan.

Grades

This course follows the University’s published standards for A-F grading:

- A: “achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements”
- B: “achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements”
- C: “achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect”
- D: “achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements”
- F: “signifies that the work was . . . completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit.”

You can earn points toward your final course grade as follows:

- 1 point for every class period that you attend that is not a PINO day (see “Attendance/participation” below)
- 1 point for every course week that you make gradeworthy contributions to the course blog
- 2 points for every gradeworthy Student-Provided Reading (SPR) you submit
- a variable number of points for every Critical Essay (CE) you submit (actual points earned will depend on the quality and length of any given CE)

I reserve the right to offer occasional opportunities for you to earn points via in-class quizzes and/or extra assignments. Such opportunities will be the exception, rather than the rule, and they will not be offered on an individual basis.

Points will be awarded in a “pile it on” fashion: i.e., submitting more work allows you to add to your final point total. Overall point totals will translate to letter grades as follows:

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|
| A | 93-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 |
| A- | 90-92 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 60-66 |
| | | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | F | 0-59 |

- “S/N” grades will only be given to students who have registered for the course on an S/N basis.
- “I” grades will only be given under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., major life emergencies).

Attendance/participation

Our class meetings will typically be structured around discussions rather than lectures, and so this is not a course where passive spectators will do well. You will need to (1) attend class regularly, (2) do the required reading carefully and thoughtfully, and (3) come to class prepared to discuss those readings in a productive fashion.

On any given day, I will make every reasonable effort to guarantee that everyone gets a chance to make meaningful contributions to our conversations. This may mean that I will call on you by name (even if you haven't raised your hand to speak) if you have been too quiet. This may also mean that I will tell you not to speak for a while if you have been extra talkative and there are other students who have not yet contributed as much as you have.

Days when you are "present in name only" (PINO) will not earn you grade points. As the label implies, PINO days are days when you are physically present for our scheduled class meetings, but where you do not contribute to our discussions and/or exercises in a substantive fashion. This includes (but is not necessarily limited to) days when:

- you are present for less than half of a given class meeting,
- you have clearly not done the assigned reading,
- you are primarily a passive spectator, rather than an active participant, in our in-class activities, and/or
- your contributions to our discussions are superficial enough to make me believe that you have not done the required reading with the proper level of care and attention.

As a word of friendly advice, you are better off not coming to class than you are trying to bluff your way through discussions for which you are not actually prepared. If you're lucky, you might get away with such a bluff once. More likely, though, it will be obvious to everyone else in the room -- but especially to me -- that you're unprepared. Final decisions about what counts as a PINO day will be based on my assessment of your in-class performance, and I will inform you of any such assessment via email within 24 hours of the class meeting in question.

For grading purposes, you will earn 1 point for every class meeting you attend that is not also a PINO day for you. Each PINO day you have will result in a 1-point penalty assessed against your overall course grade. There are precisely 30 class meetings scheduled this semester, and so the maximum number of grade points you can earn through attendance/participation is also 30.

Course blog participation

The course blog is accessible via the "Course blog" link on the main page of the course Moodle site. From there, you can start a new thread by clicking on the "Add a new topic" button. You can comment on an existing thread by clicking on the "Discuss this topic" link at the bottom right corner of that thread's box.

Your contributions to our course blog will be measured every course week (i.e., the seven-day cycle that begins each Tuesday at 11:15 am). In order to receive credit for any given week, you must post at least 500 words of thoughtful commentary during that week about (1) the assigned readings and/or (2) our in-class discussions/exercises. Acceptable contributions can include new posts and/or comments on existing posts, and they can be spread over multiple posts/comments. For assessment purposes, only your own words count: e.g., quoting 500 words from the readings and following it up with 75 words of your own counts as 75 words, rather than 575. Similarly, in cases of wordcount padding, I will only count the substantive words in your posts/comments.

Your blog contributions need to engage -- clearly, directly, and significantly -- with the major issues raised by our required readings and/or our in-class discussions. Posts/comments that (1) are primarily summaries of those readings/discussions, (2) veer off on lengthy tangents about minor facets of the material in question, and/or (3) offer nothing more than statements of agreement/disagreement will not count towards your fulfillment of this requirement. These sorts of quality-related problems will trump fulfillment of the quantitative requirements: e.g., 1000 words of pure summary will not earn you blog credit, even if the summary in question is excellent.

For grading purposes, you will earn 1 point for every course week in which you meet the requirements described above. There are 17 course weeks in the semester, including spring break and finals week, and so the maximum number of grade points you can earn through blog participation is also 17.

Critical essays (CEs)

You must write at least one essay that engages in a critical (i.e., thoughtful and analytical) fashion with the major issues raised by one or more of our required readings. Any individual CE must be at least 1000 words in length. There is no formal limit on the number of CEs that you may submit. Each CE that you submit must be substantially different -- in both theme and content -- from any other CE that you submit.

You have two major options for what to write about in your CEs.

Option #1 involves writing a critical response to one (or more) of our required readings. In general, there are three types of approaches that work well for this option:

- Argue against a particular position expressed in a given reading. Explain why the authors in question are wrong to make the claims they do and what a more appropriate way of looking at the issues might be.
- Take an argument from a given reading and extend it further than the authors who made the original point do (e.g., "if we apply what author X says about topic A to topic B (which author X doesn't discuss), then it follows that . . .").
- Make a critical "compare and contrast" argument about two (or more) readings (e.g., how might author X respond to the arguments made by author Y? how might author P's argument have been different if they had read author Q's essay?).

Option #2 involves using one (or more) of our required readings as a way to make a critical response to an outside source (e.g., a journal article, a blog post, a news report) related to the main themes of the course. Any outside sources you use must meet all the following criteria:

- it must have been published in 2012 or 2013
- it must be at least 500 words long
- it must be publicly accessible (e.g., no unpublished essays, no blog posts hidden behind paywalls)
- it cannot be written by anyone who is currently a UMN student or employee, or who is a member of your immediate family
- it cannot be written by the same author(s) who wrote the required reading(s) you are using for your CE
- it must engage substantially with a significant social, cultural, and/or political issue related to the course theme

You are free to draw on more than one outside source as long as they all meet the criteria above. You must provide full and accurate citations (in either APA or MLA style) for all outside sources you use. You cannot use the same outside source for more than one CE.

The goal of this assignment is to get you to take a stand on a significant issue related to the course material and then to make a persuasive argument in support of your chosen position. In the end, your grade depends less on what position you take than it does on how well you argue it. Focus your CEs on the main argument(s) in the readings/sources in question, and make sure that your paper does something more than simply summarize or rephrase those arguments. CEs that are primarily summaries or paraphrases of those readings/sources will not meet the requirements of this assignment.

All CEs are due no later than 10:00 am on 18 May. That said, it is to your clear and definite advantage to submit one or more CEs much earlier in the semester than that. While individual totals will vary from student to student, I would estimate the total CE wordcount for most students to be ~5000 words. That is not a lot of writing when you spread it out over several months, but it's a very formidable task to give yourself during finals week.

For purposes of grading, each CE will be worth up to 1 point for every 100 words in length. In calculating potential point values, I will not use fractions, nor will I round up (e.g., a 1472-word essay is potentially worth 14 points). The actual grade point total for any given CE will be based on the percentage of its maximum value that corresponds to its letter grade: e.g., a 1300-word CE that earns a grade of B- will be worth 10.4 points (13 x 0.8). CEs that earn grades of D or F will only be worth 5 points (no matter how much longer than 1000 words they are), and you will receive credit for no more than one such CE (no matter how many such CEs you actually submit). Failing to submit at least one gradeworthy CE will result in a 10-point penalty assessed against your overall course grade.

Student-provided readings (SPRs)

You must locate and provide at least one reading that will potentially get added to our syllabus. For each of your SPRs, you must submit two things:

- A clean, complete, legible copy of the reading. A PDF copy is ideal. In most cases, however, you will need to provide a photocopy (single-sided and on white 8.5"x11" paper). Copies that are missing pages, excessively marked up, or otherwise illegible will not be accepted. If your reading is an online document (e.g., a blog entry, a podcast, a YouTube video, etc.), then the URL should be enough. Any online reading you submit must be available for free, it must not be located behind any password barriers except for the ordinary UMN X.500 ones, the URL must point directly to the reading in question, and your classmates should need no additional instructions to figure out which piece of the linked material is actually required.
- A 300+ word annotation. Your annotation must include three things: (1) a full and proper citation (in APA or MLA style) for the reading in question, (2) a brief summary of the reading's major claims/arguments, and (3) a brief, persuasive argument for why the reading in question is worth making the whole class read. Each annotation must be at least 300 words (not including the required citation). The summary portion of your annotation must consist primarily of your own words: i.e., extended quotes from the actual reading are not appropriate. The argumentative portion of your annotation should be longer than the summary portion, and it should offer a detailed rationale for adding the reading in question to the syllabus. Vague "rationales" such as "this is a very smart article" or "this essay offers important information" are not appropriate.

Any reading you submit must clearly fit the course theme and serve as a useful starting point for a productive in-class discussion. As a general rule, argument-driven readings are better choices than purely fact-driven readings.

The following types of readings are officially off limits (i.e., they will not be accepted at all):

- works by authors that are already represented on our syllabus
- readings that appear on syllabi for other courses that I've taught

All SPRs are due no later than 11:15 am on 2 Apr. Because I will need to read everyone's SPRs, select which of those will be added to the syllabus, and then upload those readings to the course Moodle site, absolutely no late submissions will be accepted for this assignment. The required readings for our final six meetings (23 Apr-9 May) will be selected from the various SPRs submitted, and uploaded to the course Moodle site no later than 16 Apr.

For grading purposes, you will earn 2 points for every SPR you submit that meets the requirements described above. Failing to provide at least one gradeworthy SPR will result in a 5-point penalty assessed against your overall course grade. There is no formal limit on the number of SPRs that you may submit. Submissions that do not meet all the requirements above will not earn grade points.

Senior project

If you hope to fulfill your Senior Project requirement in connection with this course, you will need to research and write an argumentative paper (~2500-5000 words) on a topic appropriate to the course's central theme. Because this project results in a separate grade for an extra credit hour, it entails work above and beyond the regular course requirements.

There are several mandatory deadlines built into the process that should (1) prevent you from procrastinating too much, (2) allow me time to give you constructive feedback, and (3) give you time to act on that feedback:

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 31 Jan | Inform me in writing that you intend to complete a Senior Project |
| 4 Feb | Register for Comm 3995W |
| 14 Feb | Meet with me to discuss your project |
| 21 Feb | Topic proposal / 10-item bibliography |
| 11 Apr | Rough draft |
| 18 May | Final paper and verification pages |

Except for 18 May (when the deadline is 10:00 am), all the deadlines above are 11:15 am. They are also all "drop dead" deadlines: i.e., failing to meet any of them (which includes failing to meet the minimum requirements for each) means that you are no longer eligible to fulfill your Senior Project requirement in this class. Further details about the Senior Project are available on a separate handout.

Paperless (mostly) assignments

With two potential exceptions, *everything* you'll submit for a grade this semester *must* be submitted digitally. For (hopefully) obvious reasons, course blog contributions can only happen online. CEs, annotations for SPRs, and (almost) all Senior Project work must be submitted as file attachments via email to rodman@umn.edu. Acceptable formats for those assignments are LibreOffice/OpenOffice (.odt), Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), and Rich Text Format (.rtf). Except as noted below, assignments submitted in other formats (including PDFs and paper) will *not* be accepted.

Potential exception #1 to this requirement involves the copy of any suggested reading you're submitting as an SPR. *If and only if* a given reading is not readily available in digital format (e.g., it's not a website, or it's not already available online as a PDF), you can submit a clean, complete photocopy of the reading in question. If you're able and willing to turn a paper reading into a PDF yourself, that is also acceptable.

Potential exception #2 applies only to the Senior Project, where the verification pages that are due with your final draft *must* be submitted in hard copy format.

Academic dishonesty

The following is a *partial* list of examples of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism in any of its forms
- copying assignments (in whole or in part) produced by other students
- "double-dipping" (i.e., trying to use the same prose to fulfill multiple requirements)
- having someone else research and/or write substantial portions of any graded assignment
- deleting and/or re-editing blog posts/comments after they've been placed on the course Moodle site
- knowingly assisting someone else in their efforts to engage in any of the above practices

The *minimum* penalty for academic dishonesty is a *zero* for the assignment in question. To put it bluntly, the risks are high (most plagiarism cases are very easy to identify), the penalties are higher (as severe as expulsion from the University), and the potential benefits are usually trivial (e.g., you get a "free" blog post that *might* turn a C into a C+). More to the point, the time and effort it takes to engage in "good" (i.e., undetectable) plagiarism is probably more time and effort than it would take to actually do the assignment in question the honest way.

Some helpful resources to avoid academic dishonesty include:

- <http://www.oscai.umn.edu/integrity/student/index.html>
- <http://www.comm.umn.edu/~grodman/wordpress/?p=342>

Miscellaneous

- Our discussions will cover topics that are likely to evoke strong differences of opinion within our group. I don't expect our class meetings to produce unanimous agreement about the issues under discussion, but I *do* expect *all* of our conversations to be characterized by mutual respect and collegiality. Strongly expressed opinions are acceptable in this class; verbal bullying and personal attacks, on the other hand, will *not* be tolerated under any circumstances.
- Significant disruptions of the normal flow of course-related business -- e.g., using cell phones in class, excessive side chatter -- may result in grade penalties.
- You may make audio and/or video recordings of class meetings for your personal use, provided you can do so without disrupting the ordinary flow of the class. The purchase and/or sale of either written notes or recordings of class meetings is strictly prohibited.
- I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate students' needs relating to religious holidays and/or documented disabilities. By University policy, you must provide me with written notice (for religious holidays) and/or official documentation (for disabilities), and you must do so with enough lead time for such accommodations to be arranged.

General tips

(1) **Read your syllabus and handouts.** These documents contain the basic ground rules by which this course works. And while, under exceptional circumstances (e.g., life and death emergencies), I may be willing to bend the course rules, ignorance of those rules on your part is not such a circumstance.

(2) **Do the required readings as scheduled.** This should be self-explanatory. But to drive the point home: almost everything you'll do for a grade this semester will depend on how thoroughly and thoughtfully you've done the assigned readings. If you blow them off, it will hurt your grade. If, for whatever reason, you skip over a given reading, make time to go back and read it anyway, as I will hold you responsible for everything on the syllabus.

(3) **Think about what you read.** None of the assigned readings are intended to be consumed passively. If you're only reading to absorb facts or to be entertained, you will not do well. And while it's cool if you learn new facts and have fun, it's more important that you approach the assigned readings in a critical and thoughtful fashion.

(4) **Attend class.** Our meetings will be spent discussing the assigned readings, not summarizing them. Those discussions will often address issues that won't necessarily be obvious from the readings, and I will assume you have a basic familiarity with those issues when I grade your written assignments.

(5) **Come to class prepared to discuss the readings.** This means more than simply scanning your eyes across the assigned pages in the texts while you concentrate on something else. It means paying close attention as you read, and then coming to class having thought about what you've read with some care.

(6) **Take advantage of my office hours.** If you don't understand why you received a given grade, if the reading has you baffled, if you're not sure whether an idea you have for a CE or SPR is suitable, or if you just want to chat, come to see me during my office hours (or make an appointment to meet with me at some other time).

(7) **Do not overburden yourself.** You may thrive on pressure, or you not feel challenged by carrying 18 credit hours while holding down a full-time job and being a single parent. If so, that's a rare gift. Mere mortals, however, should either not try to take on too much at once, or they should recognize (and accept) that trying to juggle too many major tasks will cause their performance in at least one (and often more than one) of those to suffer.

(8) **Plan ahead.** Bear in mind that the work required of you this semester takes time. This is not a course where trying to cram all (or even most) of the assigned work in during finals week will earn you an acceptable grade. The semester will go by much faster than you think, so plan accordingly.

Writing tips

(1) **Meet the assignment's basic requirements.** One of the most common mistakes that students make is to ignore a vital part of the assignment's instructions: e.g., they turn in a descriptive essay instead of an argumentative one, they submit only one part of a two-part assignment, etc. This is a sure-fire way to earn a low grade.

(2) **Present your work as if it matters to you.** Spellcheck it. Proofread it. Copy-edit it. If you don't care enough about what you've written to make it as polished as possible, you shouldn't expect it to earn a good grade.

(3) **Trim the fat.** Padding out the wordcount of an essay with unnecessary description and/or needless repetition is not a recipe for success. In most cases, such padding will dramatically lower the quality of your essay, since it will distract from (and even undermine) your actual argument.

(4) **Show your evidence.** Use quotations and citations from the required readings as necessary to support the claims you're making. Know when a claim you're making needs to be supported with outside sources. And, if you're drawing on outside sources, make sure to cite those sources properly.

(5) **Argue your points.** Don't merely assert them. For example, simply saying that you think that Author Q is wrong is far less convincing than explaining why you think so. Similarly, if the main point of what you're writing boils down to "I agree with what the author says" or "This reading taught me something new," you will not do very well.

(6) Argue your points well. Get the facts straight. Make sure the facts support your case. Know the difference between correlation and causation. Perhaps most importantly, anticipate counter-arguments to your position -- especially if your argument runs contrary to ideas we've already covered. You are free to disagree with our required readings but, if you do, you need to be able to explain why you're right and the material in question is wrong.

(7) Don't overstate your case. Sweeping generalizations about what "everyone" knows or about what has "always" been true will rarely (if ever) be accurate. More likely, they will undermine your argument's validity. Similarly, overblown claims (e.g., "the most important invention since fire") rarely work well. If there are important truths in your more hyperbolic statements, you want to present them with appropriate nuance and subtlety.

(8) Avoid the passive voice. There are circumstances when the passive voice is appropriate -- and even necessary -- but a persuasive, argumentative essay is usually not one of those moments. In most cases, passive sentence constructions weaken your argument by taking people and institutions who are absolutely central to whatever claim(s) you're trying to make and then making them invisible.

(9) Be cautious about personal anecdotes. Used properly, stories from your own life can provide valuable support for a good argument. But anecdotes that merely provide another example of a phenomenon described in the reading ("this happened to me too!") rarely help your argument. Similarly, your personal experiences may not be representative of the population as a whole, and so it may be risky to use such experiences as supporting evidence for a thesis that purports to address broader social and cultural phenomena.

And finally...

(1) Your grade is based on your performance, not your effort. Trying hard is a good thing (it's certainly better than not trying at all), but it's not the same thing as succeeding. Hard work will probably improve your grade but, by itself, it does not guarantee that you'll earn the grade you want.

(2) You have to earn your grade; I don't simply give it to you. To get an A, you need to do A-level work. You will not earn a passing grade simply because you've paid your tuition, because you're graduating, because you're on the tennis team, because you've never gotten a bad grade before, etc. If you need a particular grade to graduate, keep your scholarship, stay in school, etc., you need to do the work that will earn you that grade.

(3) The semester lasts seventeen weeks -- and they all count. Your course grade is based on the work you do all semester long, not just part of it. Finishing strong will generally not repair the damage done by blowing off the first two months of the semester. Similarly, a strong beginning to the semester will rarely allow you to safely coast through the final month without doing any work at all.

(4) The time to worry about your grade for this course is now. Do not wait until finals week to try and earn whatever grade you need/want. And definitely do not wait until after final grades have been turned in. Turning up after the semester is over to plead for a better grade will not work -- especially if you seem to be working harder to "earn" a grade change than you worked to earn your original grade.

(5) Your chance to earn your grade ends when the semester does. The only exceptions to this rule involve the sort of major life emergencies (e.g., extended hospitalization, death in the family, etc.) that cause you to miss large portions of the semester. In such cases, you will be required to provide independent verification of the emergency in question, and you will receive a final grade of "I" pending the completion of the work that you've missed.

(6) Your life outside this class is your responsibility. There are lots of things in this world more important than this course. But the vast majority of those won't excuse you from the course requirements (and the ones that will tend to be major life emergencies). It's certainly your prerogative to decide that (for instance) your internship at Target matters more to you than this course. But you need to recognize that your coursework (and thus your grade) will suffer if you put this class too low on your list of priorities.

Reading/assignment schedule

[Readings should be completed in advance of the dates listed. Readings marked with asterisks (***) are available on the course Moodle site.]

22-24 Jan

this syllabus

Duncombe, pp. 1-15, 35-41 (Duncombe, Williams)

***Williams, "Defining a Democratic Culture"

29-31 Jan

Senior Project deadline #1 (notification): 29 Jan

Senior Project deadline #2 (registration): 4 Feb

***Bagdikian, "Common Media for an Uncommon Nation"

***Harold, "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism"

***McLeod, "On Pranks"

Duncombe, pp. 327-346 (Hoffman, Rubin, Epstein)

Yes Men, pp. 7-76

5-7 Feb

Duncombe, pp. 316-317, 358-369 (Frank, Grote)

Yes Men, pp. 77-190

***Mönkedieck, "The iPhone 4^{CF (Conflict Free)}: The Yes Men Address the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo"

12-14 Feb

Senior Project deadline #3 (meeting): 14 Feb

Duncombe, pp. 42-67, 185-192 (Marx & Engels, Arnold, Gramsci, Hall)

McLeod, pp. 1-113

19-21 Feb

Senior Project deadline #4 (topic proposal/bibliography): 21 Feb

Graduate Student Project deadline #1 (meeting): 21 Feb

Duncombe, pp. 67-81, 89-96 (Benjamin, Scott)

McLeod, pp. 114-225

26-28 Feb

Graduate Student Project deadline #2 (topic proposal): 28 Feb

Duncombe, pp. 135-149, 369-378 (Hobsbawm, Boyd)

McLeod, pp. 226-338

5-7 Mar

Duncombe, pp. 113-118, 347-357 (Bey, Jordan)

***McLeod & DiCola, *Creative License: The Law and Culture of Digital Sampling* [selections]

***Lessig, "Piracy"

***Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* [selections]

***Raymond, "The Cathedral and the Bazaar"

***Vaidhyanathan, "Open Source as Culture/Culture as Open Source"

12-14 Mar

Duncombe, pp. 379-396 (Dominguez)

***Norton, "Inside Anonymous"

***Gournelos, "Breaking the News: Power and Secrecy in the Age of the Internet"

***DeLuca, Lawson, & Sun, "Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement"

***Mirzoeff, "Why I Occupy"

19-21 Mar

NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

26-28 Mar

Duncombe, pp. 157-182 (Cosgrove, Hebdige, Clarke, Riot Grrrl, Hanna)
Negativland, pp. i-186

2-4 Apr

Final deadline for SPRs: 2 Apr

Negativland, pp. 187-266

Duncombe, pp. 259-267 (Radway)

***Penley, "Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture"

9-11 Apr

Senior Project deadline #5 (rough draft): 11 Apr

Duncombe, pp. 82-88 (Bakhtin)

Kipnis, pp. vii-92

16-18 Apr

Duncombe, pp. 215-231, 240-248 (Levine, Woolf)

Kipnis, pp. 93-206

23-25 Apr

Student-provided readings

30 Apr-2 May

Student-provided readings

7-9 May

Student-provided readings

18 May (10:00 am)

Final deadline for CEs, blog posts/comments, and Senior Projects