

Welcome to Prof. Leah Nielsen's ENGL0240: Cultural Studies course for Fall 2017!

To Contact Prof. Nielsen:

Email: lnielsen@westfield.ma.edu

Office: Bates 210A

Office Hours: M: 1:00-3:00, T: 11:30-12:30, and by appointment

Please send all private communications regarding this course to me via the BB Messaging system. If you have a questions that pertains to the class as a whole, please post that question in our weekly Ask the Professor forums.

What is Cultural Studies?

This course provides an opportunity to practice critical thinking and analysis of cultural texts, in our case television. This semester we will learn the basics of Cultural Studies theory, and apply what we learn to television shows. In other words, our goal is to learn to use the critical theory as a lens for examining the assigned television shows so that we may to analyze and form our own interpretations on our culture.

Culture itself is manifested in media of all sorts (music, film, TV, web, advertising, fashion, architecture, and other forms). To narrow the scope of the class, I have chosen 21st Century television as our focus. We will consider the social and political implications of television shows as objects of analysis and as consumer products.

For viewing ease, all of our shows will be Netflix original programming. The television shows we will examine are:

Luke Cage

Making a Murderer

Master of None

Ozarks

Sense8

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt

All students will watch 3 episodes of all these shows. Then each of you will select one of these shows to study more closely by watching its full first season. You will present what you have learned through your examination of the show to the class in a panel discussion.

While you do NOT need to LOVE television to take this course, it would be best if you were not philosophically opposed to TV.

What You'll Need:

A Netflix account.

Chris Barker: Cultural Studies: Theories and Practices, 4th ed.

Access to Plato/Blackboard

Course Catalog Description:

Credits: 3

The study of American culture through the study of various art forms, such as literature, film, music, visual arts, television, and performance in an interdisciplinary context with an emphasis on critical analysis of cultural texts and events from multiple perspectives including differences in race, class, and gender. This course is always offered with a particular focus, such as an historical period, a current topic, or a specific theoretical approach. Issues of formal differences, varied multicultural and multi-ethnic reception, and universal human response are considered as the class acquires a critical vocabulary. Students will also enter the creative process and explore first-hand the different attributes of some of the genres studied.

There are no Pre-reqs for this course.