

POLS 2295F:
Politics and Pop Culture



Dr. Sara MacDonald

Class Times W. 9:30-11:30 and F. 10:30-11:30

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-2:00 (or by appt.) in A 217

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Politics and Pop Culture

What do Homer (ancient Greek poet) and Homer (from the *Simpsons*) have in common? They are both symbols of the popular culture of their time. Sure, to us, *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey* is high-brow literature, but back in the day when the original rapper was a rhapsode everyone could quote Homer and they were telling Iliad jokes at all of their symposiums. And just as his stories were entertaining, who can forget the time they all got high and Cice turned Odysseus' men into animals(?), Homer's devastating account of the war at Troy was a clear political warning of the destruction caused by our unbridled eros. Today, popular culture gets a bad rap. In part this is because it is - just that - popular. For some people that means it's not particularly smart, for others, not sufficiently hip. For these complainants, popular culture is a little too democratic for their tastes. But, like the warning of Homer's *Iliad*, we ignore it at our own peril. Popular culture takes our temperature and that of our political communities. It tells the tale of our health and our sickness. At the same, it can be a kind of medicine, a way of influencing us to aspire to better ends than those to which we might be tending.

In this class, we will explore various forms of popular culture, including literature, music, public art, television and film. We will think about the various genres in relationship to the political cues and messaging that are contained within. We will explore its negative effects and hope to discover how it can be used for good. We/You will also create our /your own piece of popular culture.

So like the Sirens told Odysseus, "Jump right in. The water's fine."

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the course students will have learned how to analyse diverse genres of popular art, including literature, television, film, public art and sculpture, as well as music. They will have the capacity to explain how politics influence popular culture and vice versa. They will be able to write a clear and structured essay. They will have honed their discussion skills. They will have had the opportunity to work with various forms of software in the process of creating their own piece of popular art.

Evaluation:

2 Class Presentations: 10% each

Essay (8-10 Pages): 20%

Field Report (2-3 pages): 10%

Creative Assignment: 15%

Creative Assignment Reflection (3-5 pages): 10%

Twitter Analysis: 10%

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Required Texts:Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, Hackett Publishing

Huron1Read

HBO's *Chernobyl* (available on Amazon)**Tentative Schedule**

Date	Reading	Assignments
Sept. 6	Class Introduction	
Sept. 11	Lysistrata	Short Writing Assignment
Sept. 13	Lysistrata	
Sept. 18	Lysistrata Today	Presentation 1
Sept. 20	Huron1Read	
Sept. 25	Huron1Read	Presentation 2
Sept. 27	Field Trip	
Oct. 2	Huron1Read	
Oct. 4	Huron1Read	Presentation 3
Oct. 9	Indigenous Music	Field Report
Oct. 11	Indigenous Music	Presentation 4
Oct. 16	Indigenous Music	
Oct. 18	Raising Arizona	
Oct. 23	Raising Arizona	Twitter Analysis
Oct. 25	Chernobyl	
Oct. 30	Chernobyl	
Nov. 1	Chernobyl	Essay is Due
Nov. 13	Chernobyl Art	
Nov. 15	Video Game	
Nov. 20	Video Game	
Nov. 22	Class Pick	
Nov. 27	Creative Project Symposium	Creative Projects/Present
Nov. 29	Wrap Up	

COURSE GUIDELINES

GRADING OF ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments will be graded on the basis of: (1) appropriate and adequate substantive content, analysing and explaining the text in relation to the question posed in the assignment. It is crucial that you do not summarize the text. Make sure you provide a detailed argument that is an explicit response to the essay prompt. (2) Writing style, including grammar and construction of a logical argument.

LATE POLICY

There is a late penalty of **2 marks** applied for **each day** past the deadline for the submission of all papers and assignments, weekends included. *Papers more than two weeks late will not be accepted.*

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory, students who miss more than 3 unexcused sessions per term, will lose 2% of their final grade for each additional class.

PAPER SUBMISSION

Essays/Assignments must be submitted to the OWL course site. Drafts of in-class essays must be submitted at the end of the class period. Finished assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the day that they are due.

COMPUTERS/CELL PHONES

As this will be an intensive, discussion-based course, the use of computers in the classroom is not advisable. Those who do use computers may do so only for the purposes of taking notes. If you are using your computer or cell phone in class for other purposes you will be immediately asked to leave the classroom and not return until the following week.

See <https://t.co/tfAhaE5MZz?ssr=true>

ESSAY DOCUMENTATION

Students must use standard social science reference, footnoting and bibliographic form. **Whenever you use the words or the ideas of someone else, you must give a footnote, endnote or reference, or else you are committing an act of plagiarism** (see Plagiarism and Other Academic Offences below).

CITING INTERNET SOURCES

All information obtained through the Internet must be cited in footnotes and bibliographies. Internet citations must include all of the same information that is provided when citing a book or article. This includes the name of the author, name of the organisation that has posted the website, the title, the date that the website was consulted, and the complete website address.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90–100%
- A 80–89%
- B 70–79%
- C 60–69%
- D 50–59%
- F below 50%

ESSAY

(1) **Grade for essays.**

Choosing one of the works of popular culture that we are studying, you will write research paper that analyses one of the political themes addressed by the work. Your essay will explain the nature of the issue at hand and analyse the ‘argument’ presented by the piece of popular culture presented. Your grade will be based on the quality of the argument/analysis that you make and the strength of the evidence that you use to demonstrate your argument. I will also be taking into consideration writing style and grammar.

(2) **Essay format.** A clear introductory paragraph stating the issue or question to be addressed, and the conclusion you reach. This is called a **thesis statement**. In the body of the essay you must clearly explain the philosopher’s position(s) with respect to the essay prompt, employing quotations where appropriate as evidence. An excellent essay will demonstrate that you have closely read and analysed the text and are able to clearly and logically lay out an argument. A brief concluding paragraph summarizing your interpretation, principal arguments, and conclusions.

- **Note.** Please consult Professor MacDonald if you require any further assistance with the research, formatting or organization of your essays.
- (3) **Endnotes or Footnotes.** Footnotes/endnotes are needed for all quotations and for ideas that are borrowed or paraphrased from texts. The first footnote/endnote citation of a text must include the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. Succeeding citations to the same text should be rendered in short form.
- (4) **Bibliography.** Essays must conclude with a bibliography of all sources used in the writing of the essay, including the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. See the *Complete Publication Details* in the guide on pp.13–14 below.
- (5) **Page numbering.** The pages of the essay should be consecutively numbered.

Field Report

We will take a class field trip to the Heidelberg Project and Lincoln Street Art Pak in Detroit (if you cannot attend, you will be given another assignment). Before we go, you are responsible for researching the two sites. After we return you will write a 1-2 page reflection on the political purpose/benefits of public art projects such as these

Presentation 1

Working in a group you will choose an international/global popular artist whose work addresses a political issue. In your presentation you will introduce the class to the artist and their art and explain the political nature of the work. **Length: 10-15** minutes plus class discussion. (All member of the group must participate in the presentation.)

Twitter/Instagram Analysis

You will choose a current politician who tweets on a regular basis. Write and public relations analysis of their twitter activity and suggest ways that they might bolster their social media presence by using popular culture. Your brief must include examples of things that have been tweeted, and recommendations as to what might have been added/changed to draw a larger audience. (2-3 pages)

Creative Assignment

In the creative assignment you will construct a dialogue, short story, creative video, photo montage, build a video game, write and record a song or songs, etc. that is an explicit response to a contemporary political issue. Your project should clearly indicate the nature of the issue and demonstrate your understanding of it, even if your creative piece is critical of it. You may include an artist's statement with your creative piece to clarify these points.

Creative Project Symposium

At the end of the term, you will each present your creative assignment to the class and possible guests. This will count as your second class presentation.

Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2019/2020

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it without them, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. If you enrol in this course despite having already taken an antirequisite you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. Removals for these reasons may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites or for having already taken the antirequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the Code of Student Conduct at:

www.huronuc.on.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct.pdf.

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

Please see the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the OWL class site, is <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal> and on the Huron website at www.huronuc.on.ca/about/accessibility .

Academic Student Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: www.huronuc.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/academic-advising.

Department Chairs and Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about their individual programs. Their contact information can be found on the Huron website at: www.huronuc.ca/student-life-campus/art-social-science and at www.huronuc.ca/student-life-campus/management-and-organizational-studies .

Adding / Dropping Courses

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Huron website, huronuc.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/academic-advising or review the list of official Sessional

Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here:
<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and at Western

Students who are stressed, emotionally distressed or in mental health crisis please refer to: huronuc.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/health-wellness for a complete list of options about how to obtain help, or email Huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca to access your wellness staff directly.

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/.

Huron is committed to providing a safe, welcoming campus for students, staff and faculty by providing confidential assistance to those who have personal safety concerns. Providing a safe and welcoming campus for students, staff and faculty is one of Huron's top priorities.

The Student Emergency Response Team (SERT) provides medical response to 9-1-1 calls on Main, Brescia and Huron campuses which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the academic year. SERT is dispatched through the campus community Police Service (CCPS) to any medical emergency on campus at (519) 661-3300. For more information about SERT please visit: sert.uwo.ca/about-sert/about-sert/.

Statement on Academic Integrity

The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action." (CAI Fundamental Values Project, 1999).

A lack of academic integrity is indicated by such behaviours as the following:

- Cheating on tests;
- Fraudulent submissions online;
- Plagiarism in papers submitted (including failure to cite and piecing together unattributed sources);
- Unauthorized resubmission of course work to a different course;
- Helping someone else cheat;
- Unauthorized collaboration;
- Fabrication of results or sources;
- Purchasing work and representing it as one's own.

Academic Integrity: Importance and Impact

Being at university means engaging with a variety of communities in the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and understanding in ways that are clear, respectful, efficient, and productive. University communities have established norms of academic integrity to ensure responsible, honest, and ethical behavior in the academic work of the university, which is best done when sources of ideas are properly and fully acknowledged and when responsibility for ideas is fully and accurately represented.

In the academic sphere, unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas is not only an offence against the community of scholars and an obstacle to academic productivity. It may also be understood as fraud and may constitute an infringement of legal copyright.

A university is a place for fulfilling one's potential and challenging oneself, and this means rising to challenges rather than finding ways around them. The achievements in an individual's university studies can only be fairly evaluated quantitatively through true and honest representation of the actual learning done by the student. Equity in assessment for all students is ensured through fair representation of the efforts by each.

Acting with integrity at university constitutes a good set of practices for maintaining integrity in later life. Offences against academic integrity are therefore taken very seriously as part of the university's work in preparing students to serve, lead, and innovate in the world at large.

A university degree is a significant investment of an individual's, and the public's, time, energies, and resources in the future, and habits of academic integrity protect that investment by preserving the university's reputation and ensuring public confidence in higher education.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as per the Academic Calendar: http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_189 .

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for a detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com.

Computer-Marked Tests/exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Clickers

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Policy on "Special" Accommodation

Students who require **special** accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/index.html> .

Policy on "Academic" Accommodation - Medical / Non-Medical Grounds

Students who require academic accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/index.html> .

- (a) **Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go directly to Huron Support Services/ Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca .**

University Senate policy, which can be found at, https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf , requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the "home faculty" is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf .

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor's decision is appealable to the Dean.

- (b) **Accommodation on Medical Grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly**

When seeking accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of

medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor's decision is appealable to the Dean.

(c) Non-Medical Grounds: Consult your Instructor directly.

Where the grounds for seeking accommodation are not medical, the student should contact the instructor directly. Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor. Apart from the exception noted below, academic advisors will not be involved in the process of accommodation for non-medical reasons.

Where a student seeks accommodation on non-medical grounds where confidentiality is a concern, the student should approach an academic advisor with any documentation available. The advisors will contact the instructor after the student's request is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the challenge without breaching confidence. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified that significant circumstances are affecting or have affected the student's ability to complete work, and the student will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. Before denying a request for accommodation where documentation has been submitted to an academic advisor, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor's decision is appealable to the Dean.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

The full Policy on Academic Consideration for student Absences – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs is available at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf .

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

- a.** students will be allowed **a maximum of two self-reported absences** between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August;
- b.** any absences in excess of the number designated in clause a above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)**, signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, detailing the duration and severity of illness, or appropriate documentation supporting extenuating circumstances to the Academic Counselling unit in their Faculty of registration no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. Please see section 4 below for more details.
- c.** The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following

morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;

d. The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;

e. The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;

f. Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations scheduled during the final week of term;

g. Self-reporting **may not be used** for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.

h. students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form**, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Important Dates and Directory at Huron and Western

For a current and up-to-date list of important dates and campus directories, please visit:

- **Huron – Important Dates:** <https://huronuc.ca/important-dates-and-deadlines>
- **Western – Academic Calendar & Sessional Dates:** <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>
- **Huron Directory – Faculty, Staff and Administration:** <https://huronuc.ca/index.php/contact/contact-directory>
- **Western Directory – Faculty, Staff and Administration:** <https://www.uwo.ca/directory.html>