BAA Course Proposal-Popular Culture Media and Identity Construction 12
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District: Vancouver, School District #39
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Course name: Popular Culture Media and Identity Construction
Grade level of course: 12
Number of course credits: 4
Number of hours of instruction: 115
Prerequisite(s): Completion of grade 10
Special training, facilities or equipment required: The class should take place in a computer lab with Internet access and a minimum of 1 computer for every 2 students. The classroom must also be equipped with a television and DVD player or a projector screen and speakers to show films, images and other print media. Additionally the students must have access to audio and visual recording material.

Course Synopsis: Popular Culture Media and Identity Construction 12 will explore the ways in which various forms of media such as film, music, television, text and online social networks contribute to identity construction. Students will analyze images, text and sound to develop a clear understanding of popular culture media. Topics such as normativity in gender and race, stereotypes and clichés will be covered and students will gain a greater understanding of how their school culture and social lives shape ideas about who they are, what they value, the choices they make and how they act. Social media and networking will also be a central focus in discussing these issues. Media literacy, analysis and production will serve as the framework for every unit of this course. The media triangle (text, production, audience) will serve as the guiding tool in deconstructing media texts and images. Students will engage in the production of media in the form of short films, audio, photographs, music videos, advertisement campaigns, newspaper articles and magazine columns.

Rationale: In today's modern world, teenagers are increasingly surrounded by images, text and other media influenced by popular culture. Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of youth using the Internet and other media sources to inform their thinking. These images and ideas serve a central role in constructing and changing their identities and have a significant impact on their morals, ethics and behaviour. Television, music, film, social media and print media communicate particular ideas and ideals to teens and are often the sources referred to in the process of identity construction. Therefore, it is extremely important for students to be media literate beings who have the ability to critically analyze the information they receive. This content is highly relevant, meaningful and readily accessible to students, yet they may not be aware of how it contributes to their identity and that of their peers. Our course seeks to help students navigate this complex world of images, sound and text. They will learn to recognize how various media mediums construct meaning in our lives. This course will develop critical thinking and visual, auditory and textual analysis skills through a multi-literate approach to learning. It also seeks to guide students to a greater level of self-awareness and develop a positive self-attitude.

Organizational structure:

Unit Number	Unit Title	% of Course Time
1	Identity Construction & Deconstruction	10%
2	Forms of Media: Film, music, print media	15%
3	Stereotypes & Cliches	10%
4	Teenagers, School Culture & Identity	15%
5	Social Media & Identity	10%
6	Normativity-Gender & Race	15%
7	Heroes & Villains	10%
8	Morals, Ethics & Behaviour	15%

Popular Culture Media and Identity Construction 12 will focus on 3 central areas that serve as a guiding framework for the course:

Literacy: Students will engage in "meaning-making" through various forms of media. Students will engage in a multi-literate approach to learning and express their thoughts and ideas through written text, images, video/film, theatre and verbal dialogue. The development of visual literacy is also a central focus of this course.

Analysis: Students will engage in critical discussion and answer guiding questions posed by the teacher and peers for every unit. They will engage in verbal, written and productive analysis of the text using the 'media deconstruction triangle' (text, production, audience).

Production: Students will be responsible for producing their own media content. Specific project choices will be up to the individual instructor at the beginning of unit planning, however suggested projects include: Short films, short documentaries, screen plays, commercials, PSA's, music videos, analytical essays, posters, advertisements. This is a hands on course in which students learn through direct experience. Students will design, create and present images, sounds and text.

<u>**Unit 1: Identity Construction & Deconstruction**</u>

Guiding Questions: *What is Identity? How do we construct identity? How do we see ourselves? How do we see others? How do others see us?*

Unit Description: Students will explore the basic concept of identity and how it is constructed and influenced by our media-saturated world. We will discuss what identity means as a concept for everyday life as well as in academic thought. As a class we will form a collective understanding of the ways in which identity is constructed through various forms of media. We will also explore historical aspects of identity construction including early forms of media. The overall goal of this unit is to provide a basis for continued exploration of identity construction in a popular culture context.

Learning outcomes
At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
• Define the term identity and understand how it is constructed and deconstructed
• Identify the economic, social, personal and political factors that contribute to identity construction
• Describe how the media influences identity construction and the construction of reality

Production: Sample assignments may include:
• Autobiography (screenplay, poster, film)
• Music video: Students select a song and create a music video that reflects their life
• Photo essay

Resources to Consider:
She's All That (Film)
Glee (TV series)
Mean Girls (Film)
Heroes (T.V Series)
If You Really Knew Me (MTV show)
Teen magazines

<u>**Unit 2: Forms of Media: Film, music, print media**</u>
Guiding Questions: *How do various forms of media inform people's construction of their identity? Which forms are most powerful and meaningful, why? How accessible are each forms of media? What forms of media are teenagers accessing most?*

Unit Description: This unit will provide an elemental understanding of each of the forms of media we will explore over the course. These will include: Print media (journals, newspapers, magazines, advertisements), online print media (Blogs, ads), music (albums, radio, MTV Generation), television, movies, documentaries and commercials. As a class we will discuss and explore which forms of media are most meaningful and powerful in our identity construction. Students will utilize the media triangle to deconstruct and derive meaning from various media

sources and develop key vocabulary necessary for success in the course. The key concepts of media literacy will also be explored such as media as constructions of reality and negotiating meaning in media.

Learning outcomes:
At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Explain the media triangle (text, production, audience) and demonstrate an understanding of how to deconstruct media
- Describe and distinguish between the various forms of media and understand their influence on identity construction
- Define and explain a variety of media related terms: 'media', 'medium', 'target audience', 'mass media', 'construct', 'deconstruct', 'text', 'representation'
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social and political implications in media
- Describe the ways in which sound, text and images in media work to communicate specific messages and ideas

Production:
Sample assignments may include:
- Advertisement campaign or commercial
- Public Service Announcement
- Radio/broadcasting piece
- Short film
- Newspaper or magazine article/column

Resources to Consider:
- Dove commercials
- *Gossip* (Film)
- Music samples
- Magazines

Unit 3: Stereotypes and Clichés
Guiding Questions: *What are common stereotypes present in pop culture? How do they inform our society? How are they created and maintained? How are they identified? What are the ramifications of stereotypes and clichés?*

Unit Description: In this unit we will be looking for stereotypes and clichés which are present in popular culture. Students will identify and deconstruct stereotypes and clichés in the forms of media they participate. We will look for indicators of stereotypes and cliché's in our everyday life and analyze their impact on identity construction.

Learning outcomes:
At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Identify, explain and analyze common stereotypes and clichés common in popular culture media
- Evaluate the origin, bias and distortion of popular culture media information
- Explain how stereotypes and clichés are constructed
- Explain how stereotypes and clichés contribute to the construction of identity

Production: Sample assignments may include:
- Character profiles
- Short films
- Music videos
- Advertisement campaign or commercial

Resources to Consider:
- *Stranger than Fiction* (Film)
- *Glee* (TV Show)
- *Not Another Teen Movie* (Film)

Unit 4: Teenagers, School Culture and Identity
Guiding Questions: *How are teenagers portrayed in popular culture? How does popular culture construct our perception of school? How does the reality of schools differ from the ideals that are constructed in media?*

Unit Description: In this unit we will explore the popular image of "teenagers" and "high school culture." We will analyse how these images of teens and school inform our self-identity. Following up on the previous unit, students will learn to identify popular clichés and stereotypes of students in high-school. We will base our study on popular television shows, movies and print media concerning high-school life as well as more subtle examples which do not focus on high-school specifically.

Learning Outcomes:
At the conclusion of this unit students will be able to:
- Identify common stereotypes and clichés of teenagers and high school
- Recognize persistent images of teenagers and high school
- Recognize the difference between depictions of high school and teenagers and "reality"
- Discuss and analyze how popular culture concerning teens and high school informs our identity

Production:
Sample assignments can include:
- PSA (i.e. bullying)
- Short film parodying common stereotypes

- Analytical essays
- Music Videos

Resources to Consider:
- *Mean Girls* (Film)
- *Glee* (T.V Series)
- *Saved by the Bell* (T.V Series)
- *Clueless* (Film)
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (T.V Series)
- Unpretty (TLC music video)
- Beautiful (Christian Aguilera music video)

Unit 5: Social Media & Identity

Guiding questions: *How has social media changed the landscape of popular culture? How do we construct our identities through social media? What are the benefits and the pitfalls of social media in constructing and understanding identity?*

Unit Description: It is important to acknowledge the emerging forms of media in popular culture. Social media is one of the most influential forms of identity construction for our students. It is important for students to question social media and be aware of the potential dangers of its use. As with many things social media should be used responsibly and students need to be made aware of how to safely and effectively use it. As a class we will analyze ways in which social media informs popular culture.

Learning outcomes: At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Recognize the advantages and disadvantages of social media
- Use social media responsibly
- Recognize social media as a cultural phenomenon
- Recognize and analyse how we construct identity through various forms of social media

Production: Sample assignments may include:
- Creating a sample facebook page with descriptions of each of elements
- Writing an essay about the film: *The Social Network*
- Class debate about the pros and cons of social networking
- Creation of a sample facebook page for a fake character

Resources to Consider:
- *The Social Network* (Film)
- *The Anthropology of YouTube (*documentary clip)

Unit 6: Normativity-Gender & Race

Guiding questions: *What is normal? What is abnormal? How does popular culture construct what we see as normal?*

Unit Description: This unit will explore the ways in which the dominant political, social and economic systems influence media and communication. We will explore the concept of Heteronormativity and analyse how it effects popular culture. We will define as a class what it means to be male or female in the context of what is presented in pop culture. We will explore how dominant images inform the way we identify with ourselves. Central to this unit will be the discussion of race and gender in pop culture.

Learning outcomes:
At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Understand and analyse concepts of heteronormativity
- Discuss the position of women in pop culture
- Engage with the roles of minority groups in pop culture
- Define what it means to be male or female in the context of popular culture

Production:Sample assignments may include:
- PSA's about gender stereotypes or racial stereotypes
- Short play about gender stereotypes or racial stereotypes
- Music video analysis
- Essays which engage critically in the conversation about heteronormativity

Resources to Consider:
Slumdog Millionaire (Film)
Mrs Doubtfire (Film)
Mean Girls (Film)
Juno (Film)
Glee (TV Series)
Friday Night Lights (TV Series)

Unit 7: Heroes and Villains

Guiding questions: *What are the archetypal heroes and villains in popular culture? How can we identify them? What characteristics do we ascribe to these heroes and villains? What do we value in our heroes and what do we despise in our villains and what does this say about our society?*

Unit Description:
In this unit we will delve into concepts of heroism and villainy which pervade popular culture. We will look at various examples of heroes and discuss what defines them. The unit will explore heroes and villains through films, T.V and print forms. The unit will also cover common conflicts which face heroes and villains.

Learning outcomes: At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Identify archetypal heroes and villains in popular culture
- Discuss common characteristics we ascribe heroes and villains
- Discuss what we value in heroes and villains
- Discuss what we value in society and in our own identities

Production:
 Sample assignments may include:
- Short film about a hero or a villain
- Creation of a comic book
- Analytical essays about a film, T.V series or album

Resources to Consider:
- Scott Mcloud's guide to comic books
- *The Dark Knight* (Film)
- *Hook (*Film)
- *The Lord of the Rings* (Film)
- *Starwars* (Film)

Unit 8:Morals, Ethics & Behaviour
Guiding questions: *What is the difference between morals and ethics? When is media unethical? How does our identity influence or behaviour and our choices?*

Unit Description: The media has a major influence on the way in which we construct ideas about what is right or wrong. Pop culture can govern our behaviour and the choices we make. In this final unit of our media studies course we will use evidence we have collected from previous units to make an informed argument about how pop culture shapes our morals and ethics.

Learning outcomes:
 At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:
- Define the terms 'morals' and 'ethics'
- Analyze the individual and social consequences of unethical use of media
- Describe the ways in which popular culture media influences behaviour, choices, actions
- Describe the ways in which our identity contributes to the construction of our morals, ethics and behavior

Production:
 Sample assignments may include:
- Summative essay
- Group presentations
- Short films
- Music videos

Resources to Consider:
-*Crash* (Film)
-*Slumdog Millionaire* (Film)

Assessment and Evaluation:

Type of Assessment	Category	Details	Weighting(10%)
Formative	Participation	-Peer and self evaluation -Contribution to class and small group discussions -Contribution to group projects and activities	20%
Formative	Assignments	-Journals -Media reviews/analysis -Character profiles -Class blog -Newspaper column -Magazine article -Prescreening & postscreenign reports	25%
Summative	Projects	-Media production-commercial, PSA, short film, music video, advertisement, comic book -Presentation of completed works -Major research project on unit of student choice -Essay -Media Guide for film, album, TV series	30%
Summative	Tests	-Exams -Quizzes	25%

Instructional Components:
- Direct instruction
- Indirect instruction
- Group work
- Class discussions
- Media production
- Media analysis
- Independent research

Additional Learning Resources:
- Course lecture notes, handouts, Powerpoint presentations
- Magazines, newspapers, films, music samples, commercials
- Internet sources-Video clips, advertisements, images
- Scholarly article: *What are the Mass Media & Popular Culture?* Duncan, Macpherson & Wilson, 1996
- Scholarly article: *How Teens Use Media*, Nielsen Report, 2009
- *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989
- Textbook: *The Media Student's Book*, 5th Edition, written by Gill Branston & Roy Stafford, 2010 and accompanying website www.mediastudentsbook.com/
- Textbook: *Mediamaking: Mass Media in Popular Culture*, 2nd edition, written by Grosberg, Wartella, Whitney & Wise, 2006
- Teacher resource: *Popular Culture in the Classroom: Teaching and Researching Critical media Literacy*, written by Donna E. Alvermann, 2002

Additional Course Information: It should be understood that this course will include a variety of media. Students should be aware of the diversity of subject matter which will be covered. Teachers should request parental consent prior to showing films, images or music that may be controversial or considered inappropriate. Teachers should also create detailed media guides explaining films, images and music choices and provide a written rationale for showing them in class.

Bibliography:

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        http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/reports/nielsen_howteensusemedia_june09.pdf

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