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American Popular Culture BTAN5202OMAL	Distance learning Teacher Training

"Fiction reveals truths that reality obscures."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The aim of this course is to give an introduction to the theoretical background of Popular Culture and illustrate it through the discussion of some of the typical pop culture genres, like romance, science fiction or the western, as well as including aspects of contemporary culture, for instance, fandom studies. Putting theory into practice, the course will focus on how popular culture can be used in the classroom. Students will collectively build a repository of classroom activities based on pop culture genres (comics, music, film, video games, etc.) through the term.

Classwork, materials, and assignments will be managed via Google Classroom.

Evaluation: based on
- A collection of 7 to 10 activities/tasks specifically organized around a genre or topic and a short description of the advantages and possible disadvantages when using this genre/topic in the classroom (50%). These tasks will be made available to everyone enrolled, so you can use them in the future.
- Short essay (1000-1100 words) introducing a pop culture phenomenon of your choice and your reasons for picking it for classroom use, and 3 lesson plans based on it. Two of them should be planned for face-to-face instruction but different language levels (for example, the same cartoon can be used with a beginner class as well as an intermediate level group), and the third lesson plan should transfer the topic to a digital asynchronous learning environment. (50%)

Deadlines to be discussed.

More than 3 absences will result in no mark, just like plagiarism!
Students should be advised that the quality of their written linguistic performance will count significantly toward their final mark.

Introduction to the theoretical background:

High and low culture? The mass culture debate
Romeo + Juliet. (1996) dir. Baz Luhrmann

Gnomeo and Juliet. (2011) dir. Kelly Asbury
Strinati, Chapter 1, pp. 1-19

A typical American genre: the Western
Crane, "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky"
The Searchers (1956) dir. John Ford
Into the Wild (2007) dir. Sean Penn

Mass culture and Americanization?
Strinati, Chapter 1, pp. 19-45

Disney, Pop Art, advertising and other iconic images
Preface and "The image in ELT: an introduction" in *The Image in English Language Teaching* pp. ix-11

Technology in pop culture: science fiction
Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic"
Online resources, types of ESL tasks, digital pedagogy

Fandom studies

Genres and topics for activities and tasks (one person should pick one genre/topic):

Icebreakers and warmers based on American culture

Songs, lyrics, music – in teaching

Films 1. (listening and speaking)

Films 2. (speaking and writing)

Various forms of visual input, memes, art, etc. in teaching

Using visuals for teaching grammar

Comics and graphic novels

Online resources created for and by fans

Video games

Set texts
Crane, Stephen. "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky." (1898)

Gibson, William. "Johnny Mnemonic." *Burning Chrome*. (1986) London: Grafton Books, 1988. 14-36.

Films
Gnomeo and Juliet. Dir. Kelly Asbury. Perf. James McAvoy, Emily Blunt, Maggie Smith. Touchstone Pictures, 2011. Animation.
Into the Wild. Dir. Sean Penn. Perf. Emile Hirsch, Vince Vaughn, Catherine Keener. Paramount Vantage, 2007.
Romeo + Juliet. Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Perf. Leonardo DiCaprio, Claire Danes. 20th Century Fox, 1996.
The Searchers. Dir. John Ford. Perf. John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Vera Miles. Warner Bros, 1956.

Theoretical background
Storey, John. "Chapter 1: What Is Popular Culture?" *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. 5th ed. London & New York: Pearson Longman, 2009. 1-15.
Strinati, Dominic. "Chapter 1: Mass Culture and Popular Culture." *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2005. 1-45.
The Image in English Language Teaching. Edited by Kieran Donaghy and Daniel Xerri, ELT Council, 2017.