

INTL 2005: Pop Culture and World Politics¹

Fall 2024

Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 03:00 PM to 03:50 PM.

Location: MLC 245

Course Instructor: Qingyan Wang
Office: Zoom Meeting
Office Hours: By Email appointment
Email: qywang@uga.edu

Course Overview

This introductory course explores the intersection of global political dynamics and popular culture. It examines how pop culture reflects and influences political identities, events, and processes around the world. Through films, music, social media, photos, and more, students will learn to critically analyze contemporary world politics and the role of popular culture.

Course Objectives

- Understand key concepts and theories in world politics.
- Analyze the impact of popular culture on political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
- Examine case studies that illustrate the role of pop culture in political movements, policymaking, and diplomacy.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills through written assignments and discussions.

Suggested Readings (No required textbooks)

- Street, John. 2012. *Music and Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet. *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.
- Several readings will include articles from academic journals, book chapters, and media reports, which will be available to you for free online or through the UGA library.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Attendance (5%)

Only ONE absence is allowed for any reason. Additional absences will need legitimate reasons and documentation (ex. doctor's note). Please report to the instructor if you are late or unable to attend. Failing to do so may result in deduction in score, which is not disputable.

Participation (24%)

Read and reflect upon assigned readings before coming to class. You are responsible for reading all assigned material for each class period. Some of the academic articles we will read are dense. You are not expected to understand all of the technical aspects of these articles. However, you are expected to make a good faith effort to identify the argument, evidence, and conclusions presented by the authors. You are not required but encouraged to read optional readings. In certain cases, readings may be adjusted during the semester. We will have **12** in-class activities during the semester. Students are expected to actively participate in these in-class assignments such as group discussions, role-play activities, and group presentations. Participation will be measured by the students' contribution to these activities. Only quality participation that directly refers to the

¹ The syllabus is not the final version, and it may have some changes accordingly.

topic at hand will be counted. Solid preparation for each activity is essential as you may be called upon to provide your own assessments of the various assignments.

More importantly, all students are expected to be good course citizens in the group discussion activities. Contributions to discussions should meaningfully relate to the course material and advance the quality of deliberation. Students should be respectful of their classmates. This does not mean that criticism of others' ideas is barred; in fact, such criticism is helpful for advancing discussion. Importantly, though, any critiques should be cordial and professional. Your participation in class is not just an important part of your grade, but also a sign of respect to the instructor and your peers. The academic enterprise is founded on the open exchange of ideas; to that end, we will hold regular in-class discussions. You may hold strong opinions about the topics we read about and discuss in this class. I expect you to follow the golden rule during in-class discussions and treat your classmates and their ideas with the same respect you would like to receive.

Discussions (36%)

We will use the ELC's Discussion Forum to provide 12 discussion questions after each substantive week. Each discussion is worth of **THREE** points. You are expected to participate in the discussion with one short paragraph with at least **200 words** and at least **ONE** quality response to others' comments.

Individual Project (15%)

Detailed instructions and rubrics will be announced later. In general, you are expected to write a 10-Minute movie script riting including one theme song to reflect any politics-related topic of your interest. Generative-AI is encouraged to use in this project, especially in the writing of the song lyrics and composition. Each student will have **ONE week** to finish this task. After the submission, each student will be randomly assigned ONE anonymous script from their classmates to do the peer review. You are expected to write at least three points that interests you most and three points you think could be improved. The evaluation of individual project will be a combination of instructor's grading and your contribution to the peer-review session.

Group Project (20%)

Detailed instructions and rubrics will be announced later. In general, you have the freedom to choose one or two as your teammates if they said YES. Please make sure that you find your teammates by the end of October 2024. As a group, you are expected to submit **ONE video work** that is 8-minute show for 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games by the deadline. As an individual, please also submit **ONE self-evaluation** that lists your role, contributions, challenges, and reflections of this project. The length of this evaluation should be no more than one page.

Extra Credit

So far, I intend to offer **ONE** extra credit opportunities, which are listed as follows:

1. If you participate in all in-class activities or online discussions, you can get one extra credit or,
2. You can self-nominate once on why you can get a credit extra during the semester.

Course Grade

5% Attendance
24% In-class Participation
36% Online Discussion
15% Individual Project
20% Group Project

Grading Scale

A 90-100 A- 87-89
B+ 84-86 B 80-83 B- 77-79
C+ 74-76 C 70-73 C- 67-69
D 60-66 F 59 and below

Late or Missed Assignments and Make-up Procedures for Exams

If you do not complete an assignment, you will receive a zero for the assignment unless you have a medical excuse, religious obligation, or family emergency. Please be careful about the we do not accept any late or resubmission after each task's deadline unless you have a solid medical excuse, religious obligation, or family emergency.

Content Warning

Pop culture is linked to provocative and contentious issues, such as violence, nationalism, racism, drug use, sacrilege, sexuality, and sexism. It is, despite or because of this, academically intriguing. Nevertheless, some of the material assigned in class is controversial and potentially polarizing: some of what students will read, watch, and listen to will be obscene, graphic, or offensive. I assign, rather than avoid, such content to facilitate learning about the link between politics and pop culture and to contend with the issues underlying this relationship. Any student who is uncomfortable with any of the course materials is welcome and encouraged to contact me.

AI Policy in this Course²

In this course, thoughtful and creative engagement with AI is encouraged. Therefore, you will not be penalized for using Generative AI tools (GAI) in this course. However, remember that AI tools are best used to augment, not replace, our skills. It is important to be aware of the limitations of GAI tools. For example,

- GAI may exhibit bias and inaccuracies. You are responsible for assessing the validity and applicability of any GAI output incorporated into your work.
- If you provide minimum effort prompts, you will receive low quality results. Practice careful prompt engineering.
- Be cautious with data privacy. Refrain from entering information of a highly personal or confidential nature into a GAI tool.

To gain a deeper understanding of GAI tools and enhance your interaction with GAI output, you can explore the following resources:

- [Introduction to Generative AI](#)
- [UGA LibGuide on Generative AI](#)

Note also that any work not created by yourself should include a proper source citation. For Generative AI, that may include prompts, specific AI used, and date. For full details on how to properly cite AI-generated work, please see the APA Style article, How to Cite ChatGPT. Keep in mind that this AI-permissive policy applies only to this course. Using AI tools in courses without permission is a violation of UGA's Academic Honesty policies and is

How to Succeed in this Course?

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.

² Please refer to the "Example 1: Highly permissive" in the Sample AI Policies in this file: <https://ctl.uga.edu/resources/documents/sample-syllabus-policies.pdf>.

- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings and assignments.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

***** **Important Dates** *****

- September 4th ___ Labor Day, No Class
- October 31th ___ Submit Your Group Project Teammates
- November 1st ___ No Class, Fall Break
- **November 15th ___ Individual Project Due**
- **December 3rd ___ Group Project Due**

Grade Dispute

If you have any questions about your exam grade, you shall report to the instructor within one week from the time you receive the grade. You need to present a written appeal explaining why you think your grade should be changed. Please also bear in mind that disputing grade may end up with higher, lower or no change in your grade.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. *UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."* A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

FERPA Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants student's certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar. **This means that students should use their UGA email address if they want to discuss a grade.**

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (August 14 & 16) Introduction to Pop Culture and World Politics

Wednesday (Syllabus)

- Syllabus overview

Friday **What is pop culture and how it could influence Politics?**

- Street, J., Inthorn, S. and Scott, M., 2015. From entertainment to citizenship: Politics and popular culture. In *From entertainment to citizenship*. Manchester University Press.

Week 2 (August 19, 21 & 23) Olympic Games and Politics

Monday **Video Watch:** 2024 Paris Olympic Opening Ceremony

- “The Unexpectedly Hopeful Paris Olympics”, <https://www.newyorker.com/sports/sporting-scene/the-unexpectedly-hopeful-paris-olympics>
- “5 takeaways from the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics”, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/26/sport/takeaways-opening-ceremony-2024-paris-olympics/index.html>

Wednesday **Discussion:** What have you learned from this opening ceremony in terms of Politics?

- “Olympic opening ceremony drag performance resembling Last Supper rankles conservatives”, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/drag-performance-resembling-last-supper-olympics-opening-ceremony-rcna163927>
- “An Olympics Scene Draws Scorn. Did It Really Parody ‘The Last Supper’?”, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/28/sports/olympics-opening-ceremony-last-supper-paris.html>
- “Olympic chiefs 'sorry' opening ceremony caused offence”, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/articles/cw4yqvegkexo>

Friday **Share-out & Discussion:** Opening Ceremony and Politics

Understanding Pop Culture and Politics

Week 3 (August 26, 28 & 30) LGBTQ+, Sports, and Politics

Monday **Lecture: Transgender in Olympic Games**

- Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination in Olympic Sport, <https://olympics.com/ioc/human-rights/fairness-inclusion-nondiscrimination>
- Team USA's Chris Mosier Continues to Break Barriers for Trans athletes, <https://olympics.com/en/original-series/episode/team-usa-s-chris-mosier-continues-to-break-barriers-for-trans-athletes>

Wednesday **Discussion: Transgender in Sports**

- Are there any transgender athletes competing at the 2024 Olympics?, <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/paris-2024-olympics-transgender-athletes-b2582038.html>

Friday **In-class Assignment**

Week 4 (September 2, 4 & 6) Photography and Politics

Monday (No classes, Labor Day)

Wednesday (Case Analysis: Pulitzer Prize for Photography)

- Feature Photography, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/217>

Friday Share-out & Discussion: Politics in Photography

Week 5 (September 9, 11 & 13) Fashion and Politics

Monday Video Watch: The Top 20 Political Fashion Moments of All Time

- The Top 20 Political Fashion Moments of All Time, <https://artfulliving.com/top-political-fashion-moments-of-all-time/>

Wednesday Discussion: How fashion show could participate in politics?

- Designers Who Have Used Their Platform for Making Political Statements, <https://www.photobookmagazine.com/features/designers-who-have-used-their-platform-for-making-political-statements/10/8/designers-who-have-used-their-platform-for-political-statements>

Friday Mock Activity: Design a Fashion Show

Week 6 (September 16, 18 & 20) Celebrity and Politics

Monday Lecture: Celebrity Endorsement in Politics

- Majic, S., O'Neill, D. and Bernhard, M., 2020. Celebrity and politics. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(1), pp.1-8.

Wednesday Role Play Activity

Friday Share-out & Discussion

Week 7 (September 23, 25 & 27) Music and Politics

Monday Lecture: Why We Need Music in Politics?

- Sorce Keller, M., 2007. Why is music so ideological, and why do totalitarian states take it so seriously? A personal view from history and the social sciences. *Journal of Musicological Research*, 26(2-3), pp.91-122.
- Lamont, A., 2011. University students' strong experiences of music: Pleasure, engagement, and meaning. *Musicae Scientiae*, 15(2), pp.229-249.

Wednesday Case Analysis: How Could Music Reflect Politics?

- Devenport, S.P. and North, A.C., 2019. Predicting musical taste: Relationships with personality aspects and political orientation. *Psychology of Music*, 47(6), pp.834-847.
- A Timeline of Taylor Swift's Political Evolution, <https://www.billboard.com/lists/a-timeline-of-taylor-swifts-political-evolution/>

Friday Share-out & Discussion: How Music Impacts the Politics?

Week 8 (September 30, October 2 & 4) Film and Politics I

Monday Video-watch: <Parasite> I

Wednesday Video-watch: <Parasite> II

Friday Discussion: Politics in *Parasite*

- 'Parasite' Review: The Lower Depths Rise With a Vengeance, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/movies/parasite-review.html>
- 'Parasite' Hooks You With Its Emotional Power And Extraordinary Cunning, <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/10/768638368/parasite-hooks-you-with-its-emotional-power-and-extraordinary-cunning>

Week 9 (October 7, 9 & 11) Film and Politics II

Monday Video Watch: <Green Book> I

Wednesday Video Watch: <Green Book> II

Friday Discussion: Race and Self-Identity in *Green Book*

- Review: I Expected Green Book to be Bad. It Turned Out It Was God-Awful., <https://jamesjguild.com/blog/2019/9/19/review-i-expected-green-book-to-be-bad-it-turned-out-it-was-god-awful>
- 'Green Book' Review: A Road Trip Through a Land of Racial Clichés, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/movies/green-book-review.html>

Week 10 (October 14, 16 & 18) Stand-up Comedy and Politics

Monday Video Watch & Discussion: Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America! I

Wednesday Discussion on Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!

Friday Role Play Activity

Week 11 (October 21, 23 & 25) Television and Politics

Monday Video Watch & Discussion: Jon Stewart's The Daily Show

- Jon Stewart Knows "The Daily Show" Can't Save Democracy, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/jon-stewart-knows-he-cant-save-democracy>

Wednesday Video Watch & Discussion: Jon Stewart's The Daily Show

Friday Discussion on How Television Participates/Impacts Politics

- Goldstein, K. and Ridout, T.N., 2004. Measuring the effects of televised political advertising in the United States. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 7(1), pp.205-226.

Week 12 (October 28, 30 & November 1) Meme, Social Media and Politics

Monday Discussion on the Internet Meme and U.S. Presidential Election

- Bebić, D. and Volarevic, M., 2018. Do not mess with a meme: the use of viral content in communicating politics. *Communication & Society*, 31(3), pp.43-56.

- Kulkarni, A., 2017. Internet meme and Political Discourse: A study on the impact of internet meme as a tool in communicating political satire. *Journal of Content, Community & Communication Amity School of Communication*, 6.

Wednesday Share-out & Discussion

Friday (No Class, Fall Break)

Week 13 (November 4, 6 & 8) Social Media and Political Communication

Monday Social Media in Election Campaigns)

Wednesday Mock Activity

Friday Presentations & Discussion

Week 14 (November 11, 13 and 15) Individual Project

- 10-Minute Movie Script Writing including one Theme Song
- Please submit your individual project by November 15, 2024.

Week 15 (November 18, 20 & 22) Group Project

- 8-minute show for 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games
- Please be sure that you need to prepare for one show script and use any creative tools to make this script a video within 8 minutes.

Week 16 (November 25, December 2 & 3) Final Project Submission

- Please submit your group project and your self-evaluation by December 3, 2024.
- Please submit your peer-review work by December 3, 2024.