



AMST 3423 American Popular Culture (H)

Spring 2019
Dr. Stacy Takacs

M 1:40-4:20

What is “popular culture”? How has it shaped Americans’ views of themselves and others? And what role has it played in reinforcing (and challenging) dominant ideologies of race, gender, and nation? This course explores the origins and evolution of popular culture in the United States, from the early twentieth century to the present day. Working closely with a wide array of primary sources (e.g., advertisements, Hollywood films, TV shows, songs, memes, rituals, etc.), students will analyze how popular culture functions in modern American society. Assessments will likely include 2 essays and 2 exams.

Topics may include: Coney Island, Country Music, Reality TV, Media Panics, Blackface Performance, Shaming, and Karaoke Culture.

Readings: Selections from David Grazian, *Mix It Up*; Jennifer Posner, *Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV*; Jon Ronson, *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed*; the podcast *American Hysteria*, plus a collection of articles and primary sources on the above.

