

York University
Graduate Programme in Political Science

GS POLS 6221 3.0
Autumn 2015-16

World Politics and Popular Culture

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Tuesday 8:30-11:30
SLH 120E

What can we learn about world politics from popular culture? Most scholarly representations of world politics present an image of a 'higher' realm of politics, one peopled by elites such as diplomats, heads of state, military officers or, more abstractly, by states-as-actors. Such representations of world politics are typically reproduced in popular culture, such as in spy fiction. However, by virtue of being 'popular', popular culture also presents the possibility of a politics that is not abstracted and insulated from the concerns and experiences of 'ordinary' people. Thus, world politics in popular culture can be both the reproduction of alienated or elite versions of world politics and the critique of that politics. This course explores the intersections of popular culture and world politics, through a reading of selected popular cultural artefacts and scholarly literature, to ask what are the analytic and political possibilities of these sites.

Aims and objectives

- To introduce current critical approaches to international politics and to popular culture;
- To develop interdisciplinary skills for international political analysis;
- To understand the links and mutual influences between global politics and popular culture; and
- To introduce methods relevant to the study of popular culture and world politics.

Organisation of the Course

This course will be run in parallel with a course also titled World Politics and Popular Culture at the University of Newcastle in the United Kingdom (POL8048). In at least eight (8) sessions, seminars will be held jointly with the class in Newcastle through video-conferencing. The overall map of the course and its connection with that in Newcastle is outlined below. In many of the jointly held seminars, students will present to the joint class in collaboration with at least one member of the Newcastle class.

Because the course involves reading (world) politics in and through popular cultural artefacts, the required reading for each week is rather lower than is usual in a graduate seminar. This does mean, however, that it is imperative that you do all the reading, and that you use the additional time to consume the appropriate artefacts.

Assignments

There are three forms of formal assignment: presentations, blog posts, and a final project. In addition, general participation, including commenting on others' blogs, will be assessed.

Presentations (30%)

1. On 6 October our class will present to the Newcastle class on the discussions we have had in the first three weeks of the course. (UK Universities begin their year later than we do, so you will have a head start. On 6 October you will try to help them catch up.
2. On 13 October we will meet without Newcastle and have a session on a topic they will not cover, and students will present on various artefacts (see below)
3. For the classes on 27 October, 10 and 24 November, and 1 and 8 December, one or more members of this class will present on the day's topic in collaboration with one or more of the members of the Newcastle class. These presentations will involve analysing a series of popular cultural artefacts with the methods we will develop in the classes on 20 October, 3 and 17 November.

Blogging (25%)

Each member of the class who is not presenting that day will post a blog entry (no more than 500 words) on 27 October, 10 and 24 November, and 1 and 8 December. The posts should focus on the artefacts, but in light of the reading for the seminar.

Final Project (30%)

Each student will prepare a final piece of work that connects to the themes of the course. You have a choice about the form that such a project will take:

- You may write an academic paper that involves the reading of one of more popular cultural artefacts, following the form of much of the reading we will do over the term.

OR

- You may produce an artefact of your own that provides a reading of, or intervention in, global politics in some variety. Such artefacts could include:
 - A short documentary or dramatic film (10 - 15 minutes);
 - A short 'radio' documentary or play (10-15 minutes);
 - A multimedia website;
 - A video mash up;
 - An electronic game for computer or mobile device;
 - A piece of written fiction (short story, poem cycle, play, screenplay)

There is no requirement for a preliminary outline and proposal, but I would recommend that you submit one to me **before the end of November** . I will happily read and comment on the proposals if you do so.

Participation (15%)

Participation in seminars is always vital, as the best learning happens in discussion. It is particularly important in this course because of the addition of the video conferencing in most sessions.

In addition to the conversations in class, students will be expected to contribute to the online conversation by commenting on the posts of other students.

Course Map

The following provides an overview of the course, showing the relationship with Newcastle.

Week	Date	York	Newcastle
1	Sept 15	Intro to Class • Discussion of World Politics	
2	Sept 22	EISA No Class	
3	Sept 29	Intro to WP and Pop Culture	
4	Oct 6	Intro to Newcastle • York to present to NCL	Intro to Module
5	Oct 13	Genre and Medium	Intro to WP and Pop Culture
6	Oct 20	Visual Politics (method 1)	
7	Oct 27	Cinema	
8	Nov 3	Aural Politics (method 2)	
9	Nov 10	Hip hop	
10	Nov 17	Affective Politics (method 3)	
11	Nov 24	Gaming	
12	Dec 1	Monsters	
13	Dec 8	Food	
14	Dec 15	Optional Cricket	Cricket

Seminars and Readings

15 September
Introduction

Readings

Grayson, K., Davies, M. and Philpott, S. (2009), Pop Goes IR? Researching the Popular Culture–World Politics Continuum. *Politics*, 29: 155–163.

22 September
No Class (I will be attending a Conference)

I am still assigning reading for the week. We will take up two weeks of readings in one class the week following.

The course explores the intersection of world politics and popular culture through lenses provided by social critique. This first week's reading begins that exploration by reviewing some of the leading contributions to critical thinking in IR and how it led to a concern with popular culture.

Readings

Cox, Robert W (1981), Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. 10 (2): 126-155.

Bleiker, Roland (2001), The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30 (3): 509-533.

Connolly, W (2005) The Evangelical Capitalist Resonance Machine *Political Theory* 33 (6): 869-86.

Bleiker, R & Hutchinson, E (2008) Fear no more: emotions and world politics, *Review of International Studies*, 34 (Special Issue): 115-35.

Shapiro, MJ (2009) The New Violent Cartography. In *Cinematic Geopolitics* (London: Routledge), pp. 16-38.

29 September

6

An Introduction to World Politics and Popular Culture

Building on the reading for the first week, which led the study of world politics to consider popular culture seriously, this second set of readings allow us to explore the ways we can think about popular culture as an object of study in and of World Politics.

Readings

- Benjamin, Walter (2010) The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproduction (First Version) *Gray Room* 39 (Spring): 11-37. <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/grey.2010.1.39.11>
- Williams, Raymond (2005) Popular In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana), pp. 236-238.
- Williams, Raymond (2001/1958) Culture is Ordinary In John Higgins, ed., *The Raymond Williams Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers), pp. 10-24.
- Laclau, Ernesto (1977) Towards a Theory of Populism In *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London and New York: Verso), pp. 143-198.
- Frith, Simon (1988) Art Ideology and Pop Practice In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), pp. 461-475.
- Landy, Marcia (1994) ,They Were Sisters: Common Sense, World War II, and the Woman's Film.? In *Film, Politics, and Gramsci* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): pp. 99-122
- Allison, A (2006) Chapter 8: Gotta Catch 'Em All: The Pokémonization of America (and the World) In *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 234-70.

6 October

Introducing Newcastle

This is the first week the students in Newcastle meet. There will be no readings for the week, but rather we will begin by reviewing the first two weeks' discussions, brainstorming about the key themes to have emerged from those weeks, particularly at their intersections, and plan how best to present them to your colleagues.

In the second half of the class we will connect to the Newcastle class, introduce ourselves, and you will present the first two weeks' work to the Newcastle students to begin their discussion of that material.

13 October

7

Questions of Genre and Medium

Popular cultural artefacts come in a range of different forms, comprising a number of media, and engaging in various modes of story-telling. Indeed, the common forms of academic ‘story telling’ can and should be included in this observation. The week we will consider the nature of ‘genre’ and the possibilities and limitations imposed by genre and media.

Artefacts

In preparation for this class, you will be divided into three groups, each of which will choose a story that has been presented in at least **three** media (book, film, television, stage, video game, online), and consider the differences the medium imposes on the story and other elements of the text. The groups will deliver a presentation on their findings for discussion in the class.

Readings

- Richler, Noah (2012) Chapter 2: ‘Warrior Nation’. In *What we talk about when we talk about war* (Fredricton, NB: Goose Lane Editions).
- Moine, Raphaelle (2008) Chapter 3: What is the Purpose of Genre? In *Cinema Genre*, A. Fox and H. Radner translate (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 63-95.
- Morney, Anne (2012) Introduction In Anne Morney, eds. *Genre, Reception, and Adaptation in the Twilight Series* (Farnham: Ashgate), pp. 1-12.
- Monaco, James (2009) *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* 4th Ed. (Oxford: OUP), Chapter 4, particularly 289-349.
- Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy (2006) “Digital Games as New Media” in Rutter and Bryce, eds. *Understanding Digital Games* (London: Sage): Chapter 8.
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20 October

Visual Politics, or Seeing the Political

Artefacts

- 'Killed' by Showstudio at http://showstudio.com/projects/kil/kil_start.html
- Montana Meth Project Print Ads (particularly, 'Sex', 'Girlfriend', 'Sharing', 'Bathroom', and 'Jail') http://www.montanameth.org/View_Ads/print.php
- Steven Meisel (2010) 'Water and Oil' Vogue Italia <http://www.vogue.it/en/magazine/cover-story/2010/08/water--oil>

Readings

- Berger, John (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin.
- Lutz, Catherine A. and Jane L. Collins (1993) ‘Inside the Great Machinery of Desire’ and ‘The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes’ in *Reading National Geographic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): pp. 47-85 and 187-216 (the entire book is well worth a read)
- Rose, Gillian (2007) *Research Visual Materials: Towards a Critical Visual Methodology* *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, 2nd edition, (London: Sage): pp. 1-27.

27 October
Cinema

Readings

- Bogue, Ronald (2003) 'Frame, Shot, and Montage' in *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York: Routledge), pp.41-64.
- Khatib, Lina (2006) 'The Politicized Landscape' in *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics and the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp.15-61.
- Monaco, James (1977) "'The Cinema": Esthetics' in *How to Read a Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History, and Theory of Film and Media* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp.232-291.
- Shapiro, Michael J. (2004) 'Film and Nation Building' in *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (New York: Routledge) pp.141-172.
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3 November
Aural Politics, or Hearing the Political

Readings

- Attali, Jacques (1985) *Noise: the political economy of music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp. 1-20.
- Davies, M (2005) 'Do It Yourself! Punk Rock and the Disalienation of International Relations'. In M. Franklin (ed.) *Resounding International Relations: On Music, Culture, and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 113-140.
- Suzanne G. Cusick (2006) 'Music as torture/Music as weapon'. *TRANS: Revista Transcultural de Musica* , <http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/a152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon>
- John Protevi (2010). 'Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March: Music and the Geo-Bio-Techno Affective Assemblages of Ancient Warfare'. *Theory and Event* , vol. 13, no. 3: (online journal via Project Muse).

10 November

Hip Hop Culture and World Politics

Artefacts

Please listen to all of the following selections. Note that you should be concentrating on the music and lyrics as opposed to the videos in the first instance. What immediate physical impacts do these songs have on you? Lyrics can be found using any online lyrics reference site. Please note that this material may contain explicit lyrics and material that may be considered offensive. These songs have been selected in their uncensored versions because they best illustrate particular currents in hip hop and the internal contradictions contained within these currents.

- Gill Scott Heron (1970) 'Whitey on the Moon' Small Talk at 125th and Lenox (Flying Dutchman Records) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5smPcN8AoE>
- Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five (1982) 'The Message', The Message (Sugar Hill Records) <https://youtu.be/O4o8TeqKhgY>
- Eric B and Rakim (1988) Follow the Leader [Full Album] (Uni Records) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5pjkQGAU-w>
- Paris (1990) 'Panther Power' from The Devil Made Me Do It (Tommy Boy Records) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkFgX8xZ65U>
- Public Enemy (1991) 'By the Time I Get to Arizona' from Apocalypse 91: The Enemy Strikes Black (Def Jam Recordings) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrFOb_f7ubw
- Gangstarr (1991) 'Whose Going to Take the Weight?' Step Into the Arena (EMI Records) <http://youtu.be/JsFwPDRJeAw>
- Brand Nubian (1993) In God We Trust [Full Album] <https://youtu.be/BZUTMGIJ5Hs?list=PL5A3F93D13EC8F89A>
- MC Solaar (1994) 'Nouveau Western' from Prose Combat (Cohiba) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO7qzttOphM>
- Mos Def (1999) 'Umi Says' from Black on Both Sides (Rawkus Records) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyp3vha8PNw>
- Jay Z (2000) 'Big Pimpin' Volume 3...The Life and Times of S. Carter (Emi Records) https://youtu.be/Cgoqrge_0cM
- Shadia Mansour (2011) 'Al Kufiyyeh 3Arabeyyeh' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=210XQ4m1-Bo>

Readings

- Katina R. Stapleton (1998) 'From the margins to the mainstream: the political power of hip hop' *Media, Culture, and Society* 20(2): 219-234.
- Hisham Aidi (2004) "'Verily, there is only one hip-hop Umma': Islam, cultural protest and Urban marginality' *Socialism and Democracy* 18(2): 107-126.
- Jeffrey Louis Decker (1993) 'The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism' *Social Text* 34: 53-84.
- Ted Swedenburg (undated) 'Islamic Hip Hop vs. Islamophobia: Aki Nawaz, Natacha Atlas, Akhenaton' Manuscript excerpt...
- Josef Sorett (2009) 'Believe me, this pimp game is very religious': Toward a religious history of hip hop' *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 10(1): 11-22.

- H. Samy Alim (2006) 'Re-inventing Islam with Unique Modern Tones: Muslim Hip Hop Artists as Verbal Mujahidin' *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, 8(4): 45- 58.
- Suad Abdul Khabeer (2007) 'Rep that Islam: The Rhyme and Reason of American Islamic Hip Hop' *The Muslim World* 97(1): 125-141
- Edgar Pieterse (2010) 'Hip-hop cultures and political agency in Brazil and South Africa' *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies* 36(2): 428-447.
- Nouri Gana (2012) 'Rap and Revolt in the Arab World' *Social Text* 30(4): 25-53.
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17 November

Affective Politics, or Feeling the Political

Readings

- Sara Ahmed (2004), "Introduction: Feel your way" *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London: Routledge): 1-19.
- Can E. Mutlu (2013), "The Corporeal Turn: Introduction" in Mark Salter and Can E. Mutlu, eds. *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge): 139-47.
- Simon Engenfeldt-Neilsen, et al. (2013) *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction* 2nd. Ed. (London: Routledge), Chapter 1 and 3 (7-14 and 27-52)
- Aki Jarvinen (2009), "Understanding Video Games as Emotional Experiences" in Perron and Wolf, eds. *Video Game Theory Reader 2* (London: Routledge): 85-108.
- Bogost, I. (2008) "The Rhetoric of Video Games" in K. Salen (ed.) *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games and Learning* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press), 117-40. [<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/toc/dmal/-/3>]

24 November

Militarisation: Video Games, War, and Violence

Readings

- Jody Berland and Blake Fitzpatrick (2010), "Introduction: Cultures of Militarization and the Military-Cultural Complex" TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies, nos. 23-24: 9-27.
- Jo Rutter and Jason Bryce (2006), "Digital Games and the Violence Debate" in Bryce and Rutter, eds. *Understanding Digital Games* (London: Sage): Chapter 12.
- Robinson, N. (2012) 'Videogames, persuasion and the war on terror: escaping or embedding the military-entertainment complex?', *Political Studies*, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 504-22.
- Stahl, R. (2006) 'Have you Played the War on Terror?', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 112-30.
- Power, M. (2007) 'Digitized Virtuosity: Video War Games and Post-9/11 Cyber-Deterrence', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 271-88
- Allen, R. (2011) 'The Unreal Enemy of America's Army', *Games and Culture*, 6 (1): 38-60.
- Höglund, J. (2008) 'Electronic Empire: Orientalism Revisited in the Military Shooter', *Game Studies*, 8 (1): online.
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1 December

Capitalism, Work, and Monsters

Artefacts:

- Buffy the Vampire Slayer: season 3, episode 1: Anne
- Angel: season 5, episode 14: Smile Time
- <http://www.patriciawaller.com/en/index.html>
- http://www.etsywiki.com/index.php?title=Main_Page
- <http://www.regretsy.com/>

Readings

- Drezner, Daniel (2009). 'Theory of International Politics and Zombies'. Daniel W. Drezner blog at Foreign Policy, http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/08/18/theory_of_international_politics_and_zombies
- Davies, M (2010) "'You Can't Charge Innocent People for Saving Their Lives!' Work in Buffy the Vampire Slayer', *International Political Sociology*, 4:2, 178-95.
- Matt Taibbi (2010). 'The Great American Bubble Machine'. Rolling Stone (05 April): <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-great-american-bubble-machine-20100405>
- David McNally (2012). *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books). Read especially chapter 2, 'Marx's Monsters: Vampire-Capital and the Nightmare World of Late Capitalism'.
- Shepherd, Laura J. (2012). *Gender, Violence, and Popular Culture: Telling Stories* (London: Routledge). Read especially chapters 2 on Angel and 3 on Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

The Global Politics of Food

For this week, please eat a meal in an 'ethnic' restaurant (this is Toronto, after all...) and then post a blog reflecting on the politics of the experience.

Artefacts

- Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011) Dir: David Gelb
- Supersize Me (2004) Dir: Morgan Sperlock
- Iron Chef: America (2004-) / Ryôri no tetsujin (Iron Chef) (1993-)
- Restaurant City (EA Games) <http://www.gourmetgaming.co.uk/>

Readings

Appadurai Arjun (1988) 'How to make a national cuisine: cookbooks in contemporary India' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1): 3-24.

McMichael, Philip (2009) 'A Food Regime Genealogy' *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36(1): 139-169.

Clapp, Jennifer and Eric Helleiner (2012) 'Troubled Futures: The Global Food Crisis and the Politics of Agriculture Futures Derivatives' *Review of International Political Economy* 19(2): 181-207.

Lavin, Chad (2009) 'The Year of Eating Politically' *Theory and Event* 12(2).

Lukacs, Gabriella (2010) 'Iron Chef Around the World: Japanese food television, soft power, and cultural globalization' *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13(4): 409-426.

15 December

Cricket

Laws and Bodies at the Intersections of the International

This class is optional for York students. The Newcastle class will be meeting, and you are welcome to join in if you would like to engage in a conversation of the original, and still best, bat on ball game....!

Artefacts

- Fire in Babylon (2010) Dir: Stevan Riley.
- Sangakkara, Kumar (2011) MCC Spirit of Cricket Cowdrey Lecture 2011, <http://www.lords.org/laws-and-spirit/spirit/mcc-spirit-of-cricket-cowdrey-lecture/2011-cowdrey-lecture,1496,AR.html>
- <http://www.espnricinfo.com/>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCNoKQABZEs>

Readings

Sandiford, Keith A. P. 1983. Cricket and the Victorian Society. *Journal of Social History* 17 (2): 303- 317.

Maguire, Joseph, and David Stead. 2005. "'Cricketers of the Empire': Cash Crops, Mercenaries and Symbols of Sporting Emancipation?" In *Power and Global Sport: Zones of Prestige, Emulation and Resistance*, ed. Joseph Maguire. Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge. 63-86.

- Malcolm, Dominic (2013) 'Cricket and Changing Conceptions of Englishness' in *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. 13
- Marqusee, Mike. 2001. "In Search of the Unequivocal Englishman: the Conundrum of Race and the Nation in English Cricket." In *'Race', Sport and British Society*, eds. Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald. London: Routledge. 121-132.
- MacClancy, Jeremy. 1996. "'Our Blood is Green': Cricket, Identity and Social Empowerment Among British Pakistanis." In *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, ed. Jeremy MacClancy. Oxford: Berg. 87-111.
- Williams, Jack. 2003. "'Paki Cheats!' Postcolonial Tensions in England-Pakistan Cricket." In *Sport and Postcolonialism*, eds. John Bale and Mike Cronin. Oxford: Berg. 91-105.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. 'Playing with Modernity: the decolonization of Indian cricket'. In *Modernity at large : cultural dimensions of globalization*. Vol. . 1 of Public worlds. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gemmell, Jon. 2007. All White Mate? Cricket and Race in Oz. *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 10 (1): 33-48.
- Costeloe, Michael P. (2007) 'To Bowl a Mexican Maiden Over'. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 26 (1), 112-124.