

**PROJECT 3:  
COMMENTING ON  
POP CULTURE**

Due Week 15 at grading conference  
Total points: 175  
Submission format: hard copy at  
grading conference

**assignment overview**

This semester we have critically examined a variety of pop culture examples: TV shows, movies, documentaries, brands, technology, etc., and discussed pop culture as an individual practice in relation to the “experts.” For P3, you will find a current online conversation about a topic related to pop culture that interests you and practice participating in the discussion. You will write a 5-7 page **academic research paper** plus a **short comment** (250 words) that **persuades** the **readers of a digital comment section** about your topic why you think something is complicated/true/untrue/etc. This should be **midlevel to formal** and should be aware of all the complex audiences involved.

**what do you have to do?**

1. Brainstorm a topic you are interested (use the movie as a starting point!)
2. Find a space online where people are talking about the topic and look at the comment section
  - Find an argument and summarize it. Think about both sides.
3. Draft an argumentative thesis statement (which will probably change as you work with the paper—and that’s okay!)
4. Do some external research (see “Partially Annotated Bib” assignment)
  - Make sure to look at both sides of the issue
5. Outline the different sides of the issue and take a stance

**evaluation criteria: draft for peer review (10 points)**

Your draft grade is based on length.

- 5 pages + works cited page: 10 points
- 4.75 pages + works cited page: 9 points
- 4.5 pages + works cited page: 8 points
- 4.25 pages + works cited page: 7 points
- 4 pages + works cited page: 6 points

Anything less than 4 pages is an automatic zero.

Any draft missing a works cited page will lose 1 point.

**evaluation criteria: final paper (150 points)**

	A	B	C	D	F
Content (Does the writer discuss a social issue and show multiple sides? Do they make an argument?)					
Organization (Has the writer created a topic structure that is easy to follow and helps readers understand the both the topic and its significance?)					
Style (Has the writer effectively targeted an audience of educated peers through use of sentence structure and word choices? Is the paper adapted to function as a short comment?)					
Mechanics (Is the project reasonably well proofed so the project is easy to read? Is the MLA works cited page correctly formatted and complete?)					

**evaluation criteria: project reflection (10 points)**

At your grading conference you will need to bring a hard copy of a 1.5 page (double spaced, MLA formatted) reflection letter. Please write ½ page about each of the following prompts:

- What went well with writing this project?
- What didn't go well with writing this project?
- What would you do differently if you taught the project?

# “EXPERT” DEFINITIONS

## What is “popular culture”?

**DEFINITION 1:** Delany, Tim. “Pop Culture: An Overview.” *Philosophy Now*, vol. 64, 2007, [https://philosophynow.org/issues/64/Pop\\_Culture\\_An\\_Overview](https://philosophynow.org/issues/64/Pop_Culture_An_Overview). Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

“The term ‘popular culture’ holds different meanings depending on who’s defining it and the context of use. It is generally recognized as the vernacular or people’s culture that predominates in a society at a point in time... pop culture involves the aspects of social life most actively involved in by the public. As the ‘culture of the people’, popular culture is determined by the interactions between people in their everyday activities: styles of dress, the use of slang, greeting rituals and the foods that people eat are all examples of popular culture. Popular culture is also informed by the mass media.

There are a number of generally agreed elements comprising popular culture. For example, popular culture encompasses the most immediate and contemporary aspects of our lives. These aspects are often subject to rapid change, especially in a highly technological world in which people are brought closer and closer by omnipresent media. Certain standards and commonly held beliefs are reflected in pop culture. Because of its commonality, pop culture both reflects and influences people’s everyday life (see eg. Petracca and Sorapure, *Common Culture*). Furthermore, brands can attain pop iconic status (eg. the Nike swoosh or McDonald’s golden arches). However, iconic brands, as other aspects of popular culture, may rise and fall.

With these fundamental aspects in mind, popular culture may be defined as the products and forms of expression and identity that are frequently encountered or widely accepted, commonly liked or approved, and characteristic of a particular society at a given time.”

**DEFINITION 2:** “Pop culture.” *Dictionary.com Unabridged*, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/pop--culture>, 20 Sept. 2017.

“Cultural activities or commercial products reflecting, suited to, or aimed at the tastes of the general masses of people.”

**DEFINITION 3:** “Pop culture.” *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/pop-culture>, 20 Sept. 2017.

“Music, TV, cinema, books, etc., that are popular and enjoyed by ordinary people, rather than experts or very educated people.”