

Western University Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MIT 2153B-001 THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES

Winter 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Popular culture is shaped by industrial complexes such as the major film studios and music labels, the video games business, comic book publishing, radio and television networks, Internet Service Providers, and Silicon Valley technology companies. This course examines such cultural industries, considering the role of audiences and fans, and the myths and realities of creative cultural work.

COURSE GOALS

- To appreciate and understand the complexity of institutions and actors that make up the entertainment industries in the Anglo world;
- To understand how our lived lives impact and are impacted by the commercial/industrial production of culture;
- To develop the ability to discuss the history and development of the entertainment industries;
- To appreciate the role that critical theory approaches can play in fostering a critical and potentially transformative engagement with the products of the entertainment industries;
- To refine your ability to research and communicate ideas through formal and informal discussions and written assignments.

PREREQUISITES / ANTIREQUISITES

Please ensure that you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in this course. If not, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course content will be made available through OWL.

CLASS POLICIES

Course Delivery

You will be expected to attend each lecture having read the course readings in advance. You should be ready to engage during lecture with questions, commentary, and ideas about what you have read. We will watch the required viewings during lecture time. Tests will be completed using OWL during lecture time (see below).

Note: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence that requires us to move to remote learning the course will be delivered asynchronously via the course OWL. The methods of evaluation will not change though there may be some necessary alterations to deadlines.

Late Assignments, Missed Tests

Please see the relevant assessment descriptions below. In essence, late assignments and missed tests receive a grade of zero unless you have accommodations through Accessible Education or you have received official Academic Consideration.

If you miss a test and have received Academic Consideration one of three options will be given at my discretion:

- 1) Schedule a proctored make up test through Undergraduate Student Services
- 2) Submit additional work to make up the percentage of the missed test.
- 3) In rare cases the percentage of the missed test will be re-weighted to other course assessments.

Please note that the method of delivery for mak -up tests will likely be paper-based instead of OWL-based.

Academic Consideration

If you are unable to submit an assignment or write a test because you have a medical issue, bereavement, or some other event in your life that prevents you from completing some course work **DO NOT inform me of any of the details of your issue**. For your own privacy, you should only inform me that you have sought or plan to seek official academic consideration. Please see https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html for how to do this. I do not need to know any details as I will receive an official email that will recommend the consideration once it has been assessed. Once an academic consideration is approved then it is your responsibility to communicate with me about steps for moving forward. Even at this point, **I do not need to know the details** that led to the request for consideration.

Back Up Your Work

You are responsible for ensuring that all of your coursework is backed up. Services such as Dropbox or Google Drive are just a few “cloud storage” options. You can copy your data to a USB stick, burn a CD or DVD, email it to yourself, or even (gasp!) print it! “Computer issues” will not be accepted as a valid reason for missing any course assignments.

Office Hours

Our primary mode of communication will be through email, OWL announcements, and in the OWL discussion forums. Should it become necessary for us to communicate in a more immediate and direct manner through video chat then we will work out arrangements together. If you do wish to meet through video chat you will be required to email me *specific questions and issues* that you would like to address. You must do this by the Thursday of the week before the potential video meeting. You are always welcome to ask me specific questions after lectures.

Information Sharing

Students are not permitted to publicly share my course content in any way. Do not upload any material to online platforms. Do not post materials on your social media pages/profiles. It is your prerogative whether or not you wish to share *your own* study notes, but please do not share any of my content.

Audio and Video Recording

Students are prohibited from recording my lectures in any way: No video recording. No audio recording. No photography.

Devices

Please refrain from using your laptops, tablets, and mobile phones during class time unless otherwise instructed or if you have accommodations. It is better for you to be fully engaged in the lectures and viewings than it is for you to attempt to transcribe every last thing that I’m saying. If you have accommodations that require the use of a device, please do so in a manner that does not disturb me or your classmates: consider sitting in an area where others cannot see your screen.

Electronic Communication

1. Communicate with me *only* through your @uwo.ca email account. Do not use the OWL messaging system or your personal email.
2. *Do not* expect immediate responses to your emails. Do not email on weekends. Do not expect responses on weekends.
3. Include a *descriptive subject*, not “Course Question,” “Help,” etc. Include the course number and section in the subject line.
4. *Use a salutation*: “Hello Professor,” “Hello Paul,” etc. are appropriate; “Hey,” “Wassup?,” and similar are not.
5. *Use proper grammar, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure and punctuation*. Use capital letters where conventionally appropriate (i.e. at the beginning of sentences), use spaces where conventional (i.e. after punctuation), do not use “text speak” (abbreviations, acronyms, etc.)
6. *Be polite*: say please and thank-you.
7. Sign off your email with your *first and last name and student number*.
8. *Do not* email with enquiries about a due date on that (potential) due date.
9. *Do not* email with questions about an assignment within the week that the assignment is due.
10. *Do not* email with enquiries of a technical nature. “This won't open on my laptop,” “I can't download...” are not problems that I can solve. *Do* email me if there is something that appears to be missing or if a web link doesn't resolve.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Course Attestation (January 20)	Pass/Fail/Rewrite
Written Assignment #1 (February 7)	25%
Test 1 (February 14)	25%
Test 2 (March 21)	25%
Written Assignment #2 (April 4)	25%

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a 1000- or 2000-level course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. Students can find details about this academic policy here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf. Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Course Attestation (Pass/Fail/Rewrite)

Each student is required to complete the Course Attestation found in the “Tests” section on the course OWL. This document asks you to confirm your knowledge of course requirements, methods of testing and submission, and deadlines. You may write the attestation as many times as you wish until you receive a perfect score.

Tests (2 @ 25% each)

There will be two multiple choice tests. These will be cumulative from the first day of class. Tests will be administered via OWL.

Tests will be written on OWL during lecture time. *Bring an appropriate device!* They will be 1h 15m duration (unless you have accommodations) and you will have one attempt. You are *not* permitted to consult course materials while you write the test.

NOTE: If you require accommodations from Accessible Education for the tests, you must make sure to get these approved as soon as possible so that you can write the tests with the appropriate accommodations.

Written Assignments (2 @ 25% each)

Each student must write two 600 (minimum) / 800-word (maximum) reflections on course concepts. The main purposes of this assignments are:

1. To demonstrate to me that you are “doing the work” and becoming familiar with the concepts addressed in the readings. Are you engaging with the concepts in each section? Are you looking closely for definitions, explanations, and so forth?
2. To show that you are able to “apply” or “translate” some of these concepts to the world around you. Do you recognize them at work in your experiences with entertainment?
3. To demonstrate that you are able to write clearly with an eye to precision, clarity, and concision. Make sure that you are consulting all of the writing resources provided and following their direction.

Written Assignment #1 will draw from material on the topics of **Representation, Culture, and Ideology**.

Written Assignment #2 shall draw from material on the topics of **Labour, Work, and Intellectual Property**.

In both cases the main body of your assignment should take ideas and concepts addressed in the readings and apply them to your own experiences with and observations on contemporary popular culture and entertainment: you might find a specific concept interesting and elaborate on it; you may have a “real world” example that speaks to issues raised in the readings; you may have a personal experience that relates to the topic, and so forth.

The choice is yours how you engage with the material. Some potential ideas might be:

- You are a fan of a particular TV show/Musical Artist/Film/Book series/etc.: how can you utilize concepts developed in the course readings and viewings to better understand this cultural “object”?
- You have spent time working in some capacity in an industry related to cultural production: what perspectives are you able to develop based on what you have read and viewed in the course?
- As a fan of popular culture you draw from a variety of media channels: what do the concepts and perspectives developed in the course readings and viewings reveal to you about your relationship to popular culture as an audience member?

These are ONLY EXAMPLES! It is up to each student to determine their own path in the assignments.

***NOTE:** you are not permitted to write on topics that take up issues directly related to the global COVID-19 pandemic. I understand all too well that we all have a lot to say on the matter, and that there have been many interesting developments within our field as a result of this important historical moment. However, we have all in our own ways been deeply affected by the events of the global pandemic. While the topic will inevitably come up anecdotally throughout the term, I ask that for the time that we have together you do your utmost to focus your energies on the topics established for this course and that you rely upon your existing family and social networks to work through your thoughts and concerns about the pandemic. In due time, and after much personal and professional reflection and research, the pandemic will undoubtedly feature in this course. But: that time is not now and that reflection and research has not yet been developed in a way that I feel is appropriate for this course.*

The assignments should include a *brief* summary of the main concepts and issues from the course readings/lectures/viewings that you have found interesting. You are not expected to summarize or utilize all the ideas from all the resources. Choose a particular concept or area of interest from the course topics and elaborate only on only that idea.

The written responses *do not require a thesis statement*. They should not be summaries of course readings. They are intended to be brief summaries of specific concepts followed by reflections on what you have learned from the material in that section. You must endeavour to make connections across the readings, lectures, and audio-visual material. I cannot stress enough how crucial it is that you do everything possible to demonstrate that you are able to recognize concepts from the course reflected in the world around you: this is not a research paper, do not summarize entire articles or books. Tell me what YOU think and relate your thoughts to the course readings explicitly.

The assignment should be free from errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure. I have included a “Writing Guide” document, along with other writing resources, in the “Resources” section of the class website. Read these. There is no excuse for bad writing. You can Google all the proper rules for using punctuation marks. You can double-check proper spelling. You can search for help on run-on sentences. Use these resources; we can all become better writers.

In your assignment you are required to reference course readings and viewings. It is likely that you will include other scholarly and non-scholarly work that you have found useful. All references must be cited properly in the MLA style. *This includes all audio-visual material.* All sources and ideas referenced in the response must appear in the works cited, *this includes any A/V material.* If you are not familiar with MLA style, it is your responsibility to learn about it. You must include the word count at the bottom of the last page of writing (before the works cited). The works cited is not included in the word count.

There will be a writing workshop conducted in class in which I will clarify the expectations for the assignments. This will be based on the writing guidelines documentation found on OWL.

There is a discussion forum on OWL where you may discuss and ask questions related to the assignment.

Documents indicating the proper format for your written assignments are included in the “resources” section of the class OWL.

The completed assignments must be in PDF format, 12-point font, and double-spaced.

Assignments that do not include references will not receive very good marks.

Assignments that fail to reference course readings will not do very well.

Assignments that do not include a works cited will **receive a grade of zero.**

Assignments that fall short of the minimum word count will do poorly. **Assignments that greatly exceed** the maximum word limit will do poorly.

Submitting Your Written Work

Assignments must be submitted to your OWL Dropbox in **PDF format** no later than **11:55pm** on the due dates indicated on the schedule. Failure to do so will result in a **grade of zero** unless you have obtained official Academic Consideration.

Please see this link for how to upload to your OWL Dropbox:

https://owlhelp.uwo.ca/students/tools/dropbox/add_items/index.html

Discussion Forum (optional/ungraded)

There is a dedicated discussion forum for the written assignments. If you have a question about the assignments, chances are that someone else will too, so please post it in the forums. Please consult the Written Assignment Resources folder for answers before posting questions in the forum. If it is a question for me that is specific to your topic,

please email. The sooner you can ask your question, the better it is for you. I will not answer substantive questions about the assignments within the week before the deadline.

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that **individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student**, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): *academic advising; career services*

[Psychological Services](#): *Information about accessing mental health supports*

[Medical Services](#): *Student health related services*

[Office of the Registrar](#): *Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information*

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): *Central Academic Supports, including Writing Centre, Learning Development, Transition and Leadership Supports, and Careers and Experience*

[Accessible Education](#): *Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities*

[Accessibility Information](#): *Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.*

[Indigenous Student Services](#): *Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support*

[Western International](#): *Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange*

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

First year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.

Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.