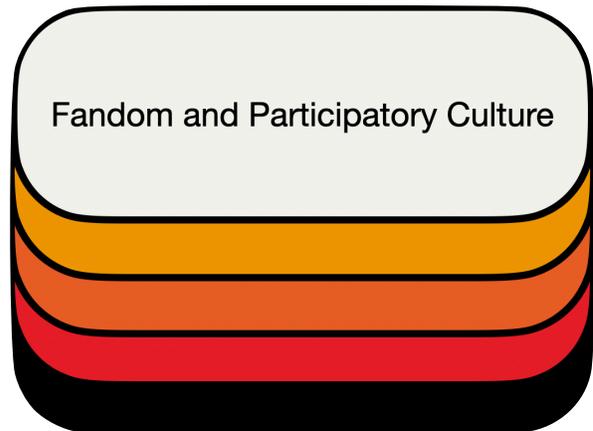
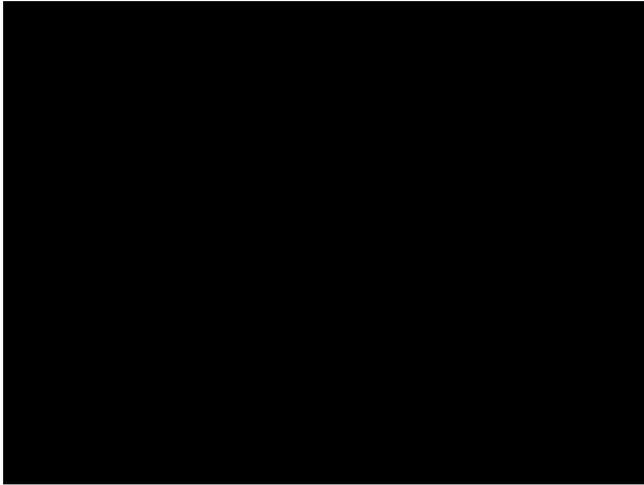


# COMM 4300: Topics In Popular Culture (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Hale



## Course Description

This course will examine the complex and oftentimes intense (either attractive or repulsive) relationships that individuals and audiences develop with popular media. We will explore the history of fan studies scholarship, understand and apply social theory, and critically investigate a number of fan practices including but not limited to: fan art, fanfiction, vidding, filk singing, cosplay, and collecting.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- (1) Become more critical, creative, and ethical media producers/consumers
- (2) Think systematically about media, culture, and society
- (3) Better understand and apply complex social theories, research methods, and create original popular media texts
- (4) Improve your reading and writing comprehension
- (5) Learn to design, create, and distribute multimedia content to audiences

## \*\*\*Required Texts/Materials\*\*\*

**Texts:** All readings for this course will be provided for free via D2L.

**Production Technologies:** You will need a camera (anything from a smartphone or GoPro to a DSLR or prosumer camcorder) and you will need access to basic editing software (our Dept. has Final Pro X and Adobe Premiere Pro, but you can just as easily get by with iMovie or any

number of free editing platforms). Basically, you need a phone and some sort of computer. If you do not have or have access to these devices, contact me ASAP.

## **Course and University Policies**

**Participation:** You must participate in class discussions. This means being in class (and conscious...both literally and intellectually) and on time, having completed the assigned readings/screenings before class.

**Disability Access:** Any student who has a disability that may affect his/her academic performance is encouraged to make an appointment with me to discuss this matter, or you may contact Disability Services; Telephone 221-6230; TTY 221-6278; Fax 221-7102.

**Official Communication:** AP Mail is the official means of communication at APSU. Correspondence between the university and students will be sent to the students' APSU Mail account; other email accounts will not be utilized. Students are encouraged to check their AP Mail account on a regular basis.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The Austin Peay State University Student Handbook states: Academic dishonesty may be defined as any act of dishonesty in academic work. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, the changing or falsifying of any academic documents or materials, cheating and giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations or other assigned work. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. Penalties for academic misconduct will vary with the seriousness of the offense and may include, but are not limited to, a grade of "F" on the work in question, a grade of "F" in the course, reprimand, probation, suspension and expulsion.

**Academic And Classroom Misconduct:** Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Academic and classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Students must read the "Code of Student Conduct" in the new [Student Handbook](#) for an understanding of what will be expected of them within the academic setting. [Policy 3:005](#) will be followed in reporting any suspected cases of academic misconduct:

**Professionalism and Respect:** You are expected to behave professionally in your contributions to discussions, feedback given to your peers, interactions with the instructor, and, of course, in the work you do for class assignments. Discourteous, threatening, or harassing behavior will not be tolerated. Respect works both ways. I do my best to be courteous and fair in all situations and at all times. If you ever feel that you are being treated otherwise by anyone (including me), please contact me.

**Policy on Minors:** Minors accompanying staff, faculty, students, or visitors on campus are not permitted in classrooms. However, affiliated minors may utilize classrooms designated for use by a program approved by the university in which they are a participant.

**Service Animals:** Consult [Policy 3:007 Animals on Campus](#) for appropriate situations allowing service animals in the classroom.

**Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure:** Discuss your concerns with your faculty member or contact the department chair if you need assistance in resolving an issue. APSU has a variety of policies and procedures for students to file a complaint, appeal, or grievance. Please visit this [webpage](#) for more information.

**Attendance:** Due to COVID-19, I am practicing a much more flexible attendance policy to account for our multimodal engagement structures, sicknesses, etc. I will be recording attendance for online engagement as my primary metric. You must log into our D2L course website at least 2 times each week.

**Assignment Submission Policy:** All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate “Dropbox” on D2L by the designated time/due date indicated on the syllabus and/or in person. **I will only accept .doc or .docx files for text-based documents. No hardcopies will be accepted.** For video submissions, upload your original content to YouTube, then submit a link from said content via Dropbox.

**Late Assignments:** I will not accept any late assignments.

**Submitting Assignments Correctly:** It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive what I need to grade. Check your files. Double check to ensure your upload worked. If I attempt to open your file and there is nothing there,

an unfinished draft, or the incorrect file format by the due date, I will grade what has been submitted as is. No exceptions.

**Unethical Requests for Special Treatment:** It is unethical for me to provide extra credit opportunities or to artificially inflate any student's grade. Please do not ask me to increase your grade on any assignment or your final overall score for the course. If you find a grading error, please contact me. I am happy to correct it. I will treat all students equally within the classroom and with respect to grading.

**Email Replies:** I will do my very best to reply to all emails within a 4-24 hour period excepting holidays and weekends. If you do not hear from me within 48 hours, I may have missed your email in the digital piles of emails I get each week. Feel free to re-send the email and/or to contact me during office hours or before/after class.

**In Class Technology (cellphones, in other words):** You should not be on your phone in class unless we are specifically using them for an in-class activity. Otherwise, no phones. If you need to make a call or answer a text, please leave the classroom.

**Office Hours:** Office hours will be virtual this semester. Just send me an email to schedule your appointment and/or send me a text at 678-346-1228.

**Grading Turnaround:** I will try my best to always return graded materials with extensive feedback within one week. There are times where assignments may be longer/more involved. Accordingly, my response time may be slower.

**Exceptions:** As with any policies, I am willing to make exceptions under certain extenuating circumstances. If you have any conflicts with the schedule or policies outlined here, please contact me and let me know as soon as possible.

## **COVID-19 STATEMENT & GUIDELINES**

Austin Peay State University is concerned for the health and well-being of the entire community. The nature of COVID-19 is such that each of our

individual actions affects not only our personal well-being but also those of every other person with whom we interact or share a space. Given the possibility of changes to CDC guidelines or those of local or state officials, students and faculty alike will need to be adaptable and flexible as events may occur that necessitate a change in the course schedule or mode of delivery. To minimize the disruption that might occur if a student falls ill or is unable to attend classes for some other legitimate reason, class materials must be made available electronically to students unless the nature of the coursework makes this impossible.

To enhance the health and safety of the APSU community, it is expected that every member of this course acknowledges the following university guidelines:

**Masks and face coverings:**

All students are expected to wear masks or face coverings and maintain physical distancing in all university buildings. Both are necessary classroom requirements that will help keep our community safe.

1. All students and instructors must arrive to class wearing a mask or face covering over their mouth and nose. If a student does not have a mask or face covering, the student must pick up a disposable mask (available throughout campus – in classrooms and in administrative academic department offices) before joining the class session.

1. If a student habitually arrives to class without wearing a mask or face covering, the student may be advised that they can only attend an online section of the course, if such an option is available, for the remainder of the semester. If the course is not available online, the student will be informed that the in-person course is the only option and they will be given one more opportunity to return to class and wear a mask or face covering. The instructor will file a report with the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. The student may face sanctions up to and including the student being administratively withdrawn from the course and not receive a refund of tuition or fees.

2. If a student refuses to put on a mask or face covering in a class, after being instructed to do so, the instructor will request that the student leave the class. The instructor will file a report with the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. The student will face sanctions up to and

including the student being administratively withdrawn from the course and not receive a refund of tuition or fees. If a student refuses to leave the classroom upon request from an instructor, campus police will be called to escort the student from the classroom. In this case, the student will again be referred to the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs. If this situation occurs, the faculty member may take a break or dismiss the class for that day at their discretion. (Questions regarding Failure to Comply Code of Student Conduct violations should be directed to the Dean of Students, 931-221-7323).

1.If a student has a medical condition that inhibits the student's ability to wear a mask or face covering, the student must contact Disability Services to receive an accommodation (931-221-6230). If a student seeks an exception to the mask requirement, the faculty member and advisor should work with the student to seek an online section of the course. If an online section is not available, or the student does not wish to enroll in the online course, the faculty member will provide instruction to the student remotely, using available lecture capture and other appropriate technology.

### **Student Absences:**

Students unable to attend class due to COVID-19 policy or another serious illness, will:

- 1.Notify their instructor and follow campus guidelines regarding a safe return to campus;
- 2.Not be penalized for class absences assuming they make up missed assignments in a timely fashion, in consultation with (and at the discretion of) the instructor; and
- 3.Be provided reasonable accommodations to access all course materials and will be given the opportunity to complete missed assignments online as is practicable.

### **Student Illness:**

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, fatigue, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny notes, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea), remain at home,

please complete the COVID 19 reporting form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?AustinPeayStateUniv&layout\\_id=19](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?AustinPeayStateUniv&layout_id=19)), and seek medical assistance or COVID-19 testing if instructed to do so. Students may reach out to Boyd Health Services for guidance. The student should not return to class (or campus activities) until the student has been released by Boyd Health Services. Boyd Health Services will provide guidance during the quarantine/isolation period and a representative from the Office of the Dean of Students will contact the student to provide additional information.

### Assignment Value Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	POINT VALUE	DUE DATE
WEEKLY READING NOTES	100 <i>(10pts x 10 entires)</i>	Sundays
COLLECTION/ITEM TOUR	100	Sept 13
MY FANDOM/IDENTITY VLOG	50	Sept 20
FANFIC (ANALYSIS OR WRITE OR ART)	100	Oct 4
(EX)TRA READING VIDEO LECTURE	100	As Assigned
FINAL PAPER/VIDEO ESSAY	200	Dec 4
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>600</b>	

### Numerical Grade to Letter Grade

LETTER GRADE	POINT RANGE
A	540 - 600
B	480 - 539
C	420 - 479
D	360 - 419
F	0 - 359

## Course Calendar

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### **Week 1: Getting Started** [Aug 24 - Aug 30]

**Watch:** Video Lecture # 1: COMM 4300 and You

**Read:** Henry Jenkins, "Fans."

**Read:** Delwiche & J.J. Henderson, "What is Participatory Culture?"

**Read:** J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, and C.L. Harrington, "Why Study Fans?"

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### **Week 2: History and Foundations of Fandom Studies** [Aug 31 - Sept 6]

**Read:** Henry Jenkins, "Fandom As I See It."

**Read:** Karen Hellekson, "Fandom and Fan Culture."

**Read:** David Cavicchi, "Fandom Before Fan..."

**EX:** (1) [Trekies](#). Directed by Roger Nygard, 1997.; (2) *Trekies 2*. Directed by Roger Nygard, 2004.

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### **Week 3: Between Consumption and Production** [Sept 8 - Sept 13]

**(M)** Sept 7 – **NO CLASS. LABOR DAY. I'll probably still post a lecture.**

**Read:** Matt Hills, "Between Consumerism and 'Resistance.'"

**Read:** John Fiske, "The Cultural Economy of Fandom."

**Read:** Henry Jenkins, "Star Trek, Rerun, Reread, Rewritten..."

**(S)** Sept 13 – **Assignment Due Date**

**Due: Collection/Item Tour via Dropbox @ 11:59PM**

**EX:** (1) Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding."; (2) Dick Hebdige, "Style as Intentional Communication."; (3) Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered."; (4) Michel de Certeau, "General Introduction" to *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

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**Week 4: Identity/Self** [Sept 14 - Sept 20]

**Read:** Mark Duffet, "How Do People Become Fans."

**Read:** Will Brooker, "Star Wars and Everyday Life."

**Read:** M. Click, H. Lee, & H. Holladay, "Making Monsters: Lady Gaga..."

**(S) Sept 20 – Assignment Due Date**

**Due: My Fandom and Identity Vlog via Dropbox @ 11:59PM**

**EX:** (1) [Fursonas](#). Directed by Dominic Rodriguez, 2016.; (2) [Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans...](#) Directed by Laurent Malaquais, 2012.; (3) [Indie Game: The Movie](#). Directed by James Swirsky and Lisanne Pajot, 2012.; (4) Bill Ellis, "What Bronies See When They Brohoof." (5) Mel Stanfill, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Fandom and Fan Studies."

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**Week 5: Community** [Sept 21 - 27]

**Read:** Mark Duffet, "The Fan Community."

**Read:** C. Bacon-Smith, "Training New Members."

**Watch:** [The Fandom: A Furry Documentary](#).

**EX:** (1) [Ghostheads](#). Directed by Brendan Mertens, 2016.; (2) [Done the Impossible: The Fans' Tale of Firefly and Serenity](#). Directed by Jermei Neish, et al., 2006.; (3) *Ringers: Lord of the Fans*. Directed by Carlene Cordova, 2005.; (4) Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities."; (5) Janice Radway, "Women Read the Romance."

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**Week 6: Reading, Writing, and Fanfic** [Sept 28 - Oct 4]

**Read:** Sara Gwenllian Jones, "The Sex Lives of Cult TV Characters."

**Read:** Anne Jaminson, "A Prehistory of Fanfiction."

**Read:** Selections of FanFic (TBD)

**(S) Oct 4 – Assignment Due Date**

**Due: Fanfic via Dropbox @ 11:59PM**

**EX:** (1) P.J. Falzone, "The Final Frontier Is Queer,."; (2) Cornel Sandvoss, "The Death of the Reader,."; (3) Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author."

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**Week 7: Fandom and Technology** [Oct 5 - Oct 11]

**Read:** Rhiannon Bury, "Technology, Fandom, and Community..."

**Read:** Katharina Freund, "Becoming a Part of the Storytelling..."

**Read:** Roberta Pearson, "Fandom in the Digital Era."

**EX: (1)** [Raiders!: The Story of the Greatest Fan Film Ever Made](#). Directed by Jermei Koon and Tim Skousen, 2015.; **(2)** Henry Jenkins, "Worship At the Alter of Convergence."; **(3)** Nancy Baym "[Music Fandom and the Shaping of Online Culture](#)."; **(4)** Lucy Bennett, "Music Fandom Online..."

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**Week 8: Performing Fandom** [Oct 12 - Oct 18]

**Read:** Lynn Zubernis and Katherine Larsen, "Make Space For Us!"

**Read:** Matthew Hale, "Cosplay: Intertextuality, Public Texts, and the Body..."

**Read:** Rebecca Williams, "Fan Tourism and Pilgrimage."

**Watch:** [Cosplay: Crafting a Secret Identity](#).

**EX: (1)** [Darkon](#). Directed by Luke Meyer and Andrew Neel, 2006.; **(2)** [Comic-Con: Episode IV: A Fan's Hope](#). Directed by Morgan Spurlock, 2011; **(3)** [The Dungeon Masters](#). Directed by Kevin McAlester, 2008.; **(4)** [Confessions of a Superhero](#). Directed by Matthew Ogens, 2007; **(5)** Suzanne Scott, "Cosplay Is Serious Business."

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**Week 9: Sex and Sexuality: Behold the 34th Rule** [Oct 19 - Oct 25]

**Read:** Constance Penely, "Future Men."

**Read:** Dru Jefferies, "Servicing Fanboys With Superhero...Parodies."

**Read:** Alan McKee, "Porn Consumers as Fans."

**EX: (1)** Sean Griffin, "You Never Had a Friend Like Me: Target Marketing to a Gay Community,,"; **(2)** Richard Dyer, "Judy Garland and Gay Men,,"; **(3)** Catherine Tossenberger, "Oh My God, The Fanfiction!: Dumbledore's Outing,,"; **(4)** Alexis Lothian, et al., "Yearning For the Void and Infinite Potential."

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**Week 10: Ownership** [Oct 26 - Nov 1]

**Watch:** [The People VS George Lucas.](#)

**Read:** Richard McCulloh, et al. "Of Proprietors and Poachers..."

**EX: (1)** Rebecca Tushnet, "Legal Fictions."; **(2)** Lawrence Lessig, "Creators" and "Mere Copyists."

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**Week 11: Antagonism, Gate Keeping and Toxic Fans** [Nov 2 - Nov 8]

**Read:** Derek Johnson, "Fantagonism."

**Read:** Jonathan Gray, "New Audiences, New Textualities."

**Read:** A Selection from *Anti-Fandom*. Edited by Melissa A. Click.

**EX: (1)** Matt Hills, "Negative Fan Stereotypes."; **(2)** Jonathan Gray, "Antifandom and the Moral Text."

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**Week 12: Fandom as Labor** [Nov 2 - Nov 8]

**Read:** Abigail De Kosnik, "Fandom As Free Labor."

**Read:** R.M. Milner, "Working For the Text."

**Read:** Suzanne Scott, "[Repackaging Fan Culture.](#)"

**EX: (1)** Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor."; **(2)** Mark Andrejevic, "Estranged Free Labor."; **(3)** Marcel Mauss, "Foreword" and Chapter 1 from [The Gift.](#); **(4)** Karl Marx, "[Estranged Labor.](#)"

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**Week 13: Nov 23 - 29**

Thanksgiving No Classes!!!

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(F) Dec 4 – Auteur Profile Paper or Video Essay Due by 11:59PM

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