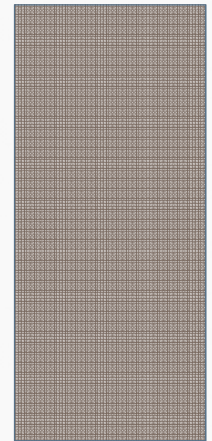


# HUMANITIES 006: POPULAR CULTURE

DAY 1



# WEEK 1

- Welcome to Humi 006: Popular Culture
    - Javy W. Galindo
1. Is everyone in the correct class?
  2. Roll
  3. Introductions
  4. What is this course about in general?
  5. Syllabus Review & Course Expectations
  6. What are artifacts of popular culture?
  7. What is popular culture?
  8. How do you read artifacts of popular culture?
  9. Why is popular culture studies important?

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- What are your goals while attending De Anza College?
- What Humanities classes have you taken at De Anza, or other colleges, if any?
- What are you hoping to study or learn by taking this class?
  - And “I don’t know” is not a good answer. You should drop the class immediately. 😊

# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

## What are the “Humanities”?

- Merriam-Webster Definition:
  - *Those branches of knowledge, such as philosophy, literature, and art, that are concerned with human thought and culture; the liberal arts.*
  - Got it?
- Princeton Website:
  - *Studies intended to provide general knowledge and intellectual skills (rather than occupational or professional skills).*
  - What does this sound like to you?

# “RATHER THAN OCCUPATIONAL OR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS”

Sounds like this to some...



# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

**Is that all true?**

**What are the humanities (revisited)?**

*2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> opinions...*

# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

## **What are the humanities?**

*They are studies of human attempts to understand our relationship to ourselves, to others, to our past, to the future, to nature, and to God.*

# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

## What are the humanities?

Report on the Commission on the Humanities:

*Through the humanities we reflect on the fundamental question: what does it mean to be human?*

*The humanities offer clues but never a complete answer.*

*They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope and reason.*



# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

## What are the humanities?

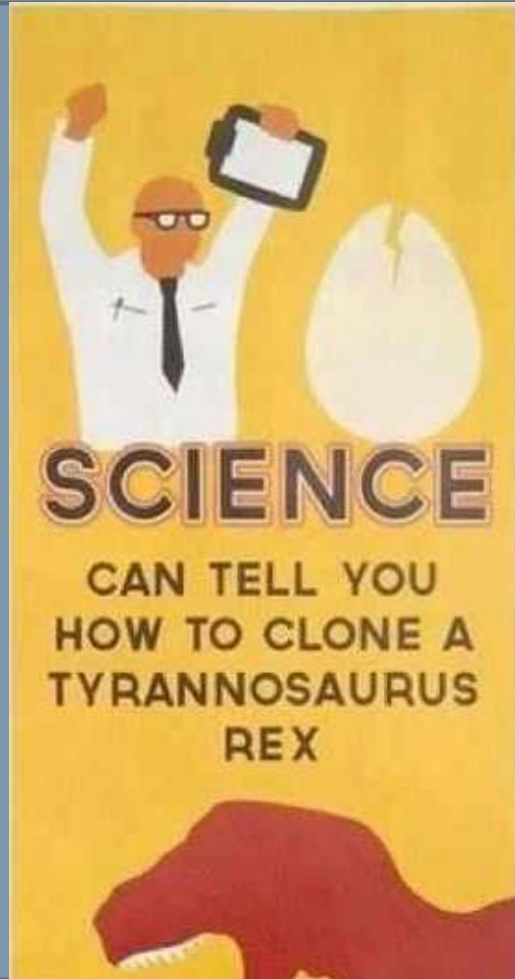
Albert Einstein:

*Knowledge and skills alone cannot lead humanity to a happy and dignified life.*

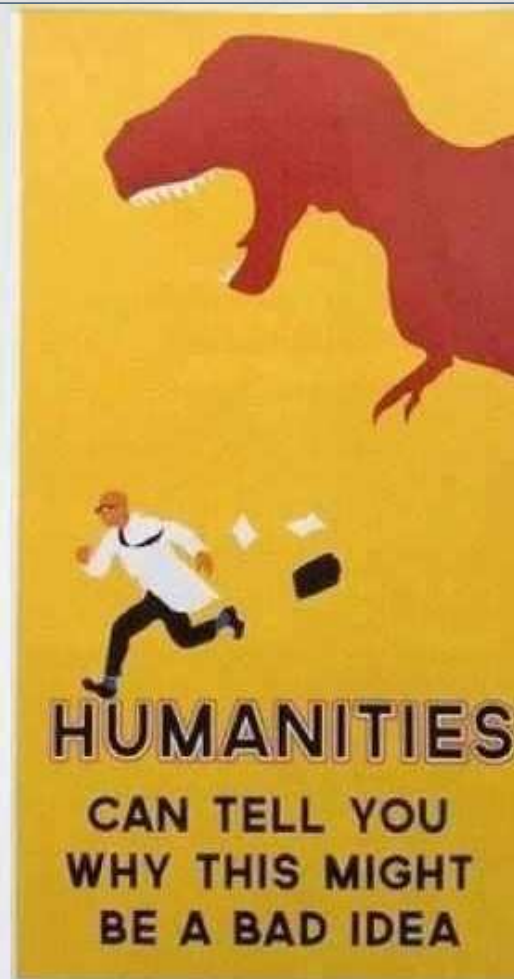
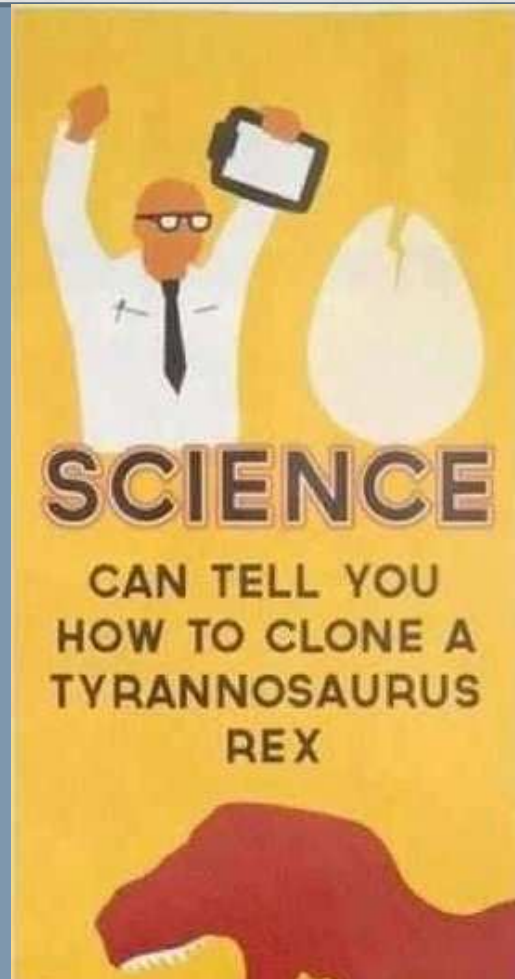
*Humanity has every reason to place the proclaimers of high moral standards and values above the discoverers of objective truth.*

*What humanity owes to personalities like Buddha, Moses, and Jesus ranks for me higher than all the achievements of the inquiring and constructive mind.*

# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)



# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

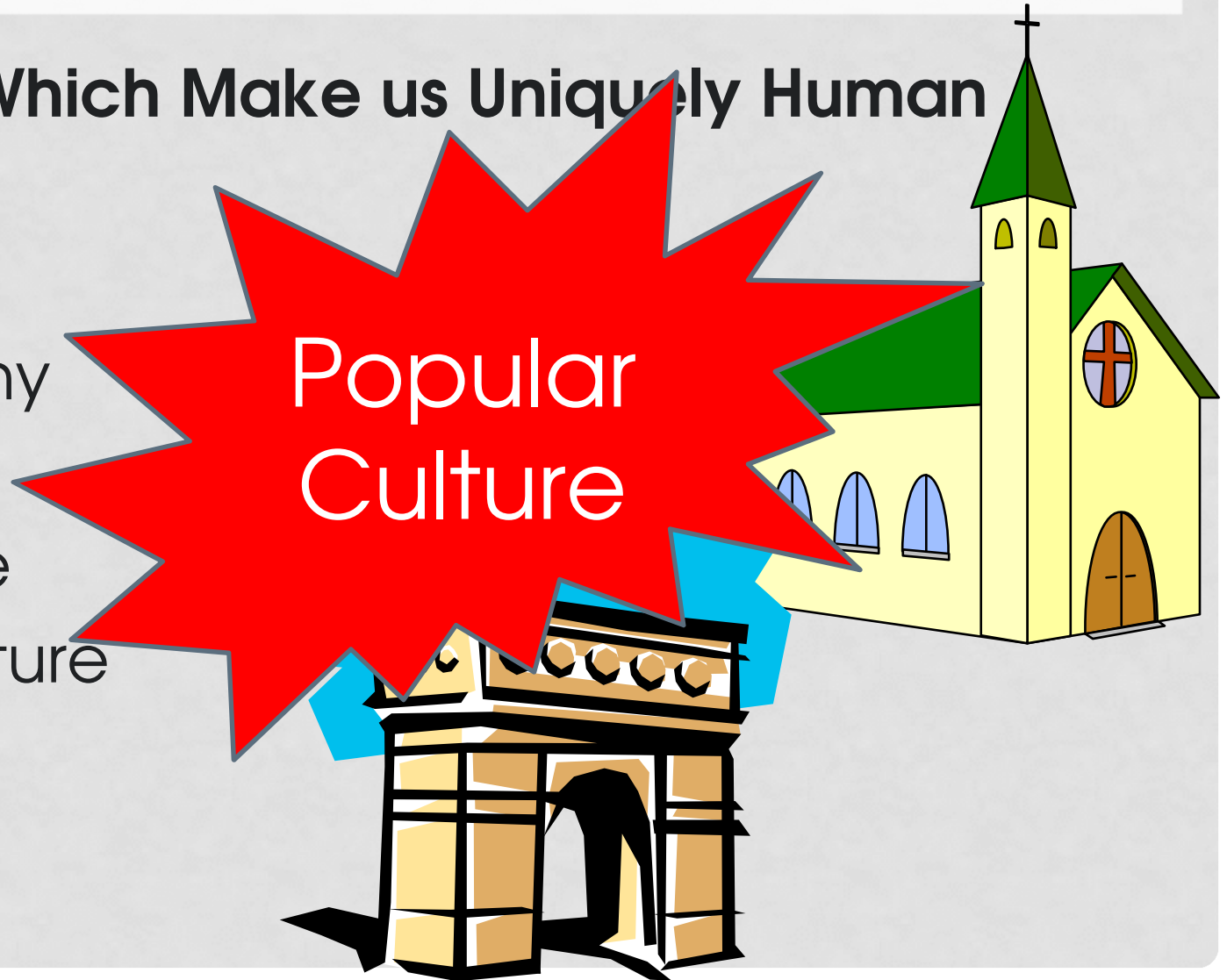


# THE HUMANITIES: WHAT ARE THEY?

## That Which Make us Uniquely Human

- History
- Art
- Philosophy
- Music
- Literature
- Architecture
- Dance
- Film

Popular  
Culture



# THE COURSE (IN GENERAL)

**In groups of 4-6**

**Summarize your groups response to these questions:**

- 1. What do you associate with popular culture?*
- 2. What is popular culture?*
- 3. Based on the article "Scholars Spend as Much Time with Love Boat as with Shakespeare" what types of things do you think we will study in our class?*

# SYLLABUS REVIEW

Page 1

## **Course Description**

We hear it, see it, smell it, taste it, and live within it all of our lives, yet many of us are unaware of its impact on our choices, preferences and values. For many Americans, the result is that we have become programmed by popular culture to behave and pursue happiness in ways that are not necessarily in our best interests.

This course will encourage you to become more consciously aware of the impact popular culture has on your life. The course will have you examine various artifacts of popular culture (including television shows, movies, advertisements, music, historical events, fashion trends, and much more) and analyze their meaning and significance to your worldview. In particular, students will take a closer look at how popular culture has perpetuated archetypal myths related to personal identity, love and relationships, materialism, and the pursuit of happiness.

## **Instructor Information**

**Javy Galindo**

**Fall, 2013**

**E-mail:** [javy.w.galindo@gmail.com](mailto:javy.w.galindo@gmail.com)

**Phone:** (408) 357-0504

**Office Hours:** 1:00-1:20 PM in L13 & 3:20-3:50 PM in MLC113 Mon & Wed, 1:20-2:00pm Friday in MLC111, or By Appointment

**Course Website:** <http://www.thinking-differently.com/popculture>

# SYLLABUS REVIEW

Bottom  
Page 2

## **Course Expectations and Requirements**

### Attendance

- Students may miss a total of 1 class meeting without penalty during the term. If a student misses 1.5 class meetings (6 hours) they will receive a full letter grade deduction assessed at the end of the term. Missing 2 class meetings may result in dismissal from the course. Students are highly encouraged to speak to the instructor after his or her 2nd absence.

Top  
Page 2

- A student who is absent on his/her scheduled presentation time slot will not be able to receive credit for their group assignment. It is highly encouraged, that if this situation arises, that the student's group arranges to trade presentation slots with another group.
- It is a student's responsibility to obtain any information or assignments they may have missed while absent.
- Attendance may be taken at the beginning of class on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
- Students are expected to come to class *on time* and stay for the duration of the class meeting. Any combination of three late arrivals or early departures will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- Students who arrive late or leave early must do so respectfully, causing minimal distraction to the rest of the class.

# SYLLABUS REVIEW

Middle of Page 2

## Classroom Policies

- **All homework will be due on Wednesday** (except for project proposals) following the day they are assigned via Google Drive. Students are encouraged to save their response in their favorite word processor in case there is an error in the submission process. Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances for partial credit. No assignments will be accepted that is more than one week late, regardless of circumstances.
- Students are expected to be in class on time and may miss assignments and graded activities if they arrive late.
- Place all phones and pagers to vibrate. **Using electronic devices such as laptops, mobile phones, and pagers is not permitted during class time without instructor approval.** Students who use electronic devices without prior permission from the instructor may be asked to leave.
- Be respectful to others in the class and behave in a professional manner. Students who the instructor deems as being disrespectful to the class may be immediately dropped from the course.

HW: <http://www.thinking-differently.com/popculture>



# SYLLABUS REVIEW

## Bottom of Page 2

### Grading

- There are no make-up exams or make-up quizzes. The lowest of the four quiz scores will be dropped when calculating the student's final grade.
- Homework will be graded on a pass/fail/zero system: 100% for passing assignments, 50% for failing assignments, and zero points if the assignment is not turned in on time.
- Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups in a respectful manner. Students not fully engaged in small-group work may be asked to leave and will not receive credit for the assignment.
- Academic honesty is imperative in all written work. Plagiarism, the use of unauthorized electronic devices during quizzes, and other violations will automatically result failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me.

# SYLLABUS REVIEW

Page 3

• <b>Final Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>
• <b>Final Presentation</b>	<b>20%</b>
• <b>Quizzes &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>20%</b>
• <b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>15%</b>
• <b>Midterm Presentation</b>	<b>15%</b>
• <b>Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>

4 Quizzes  
(20 pts/ea)

6 HWs  
(10 pts/ea)

## Required Textbook

Tomasino, Anna. [Discovering Popular Culture](#). Longman, 2006.

If the bookstore is out of copies, I recommend searching online vendors such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com) for reasonably priced used copies.

Most of the required readings will be handed out in class or distributed to students electronically through our course website.

Most of our "readings" are videos found on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), [hulu.com](http://hulu.com), and various network television websites. It is your responsibility to find ways to view videos from these sites. Please see me within the first week if you need assistance.

**\*Schedule:** Check Final Exam Date/Time

# SYLLABUS REVIEW

## How to do well:

- Read, read, read...
- Not a lot of “work”, but a lot of reading and reflection assignments
- Listen and participate in class.
- Take good notes.
- Write/ask questions.

## What this class is:

- A place to explore and think critically about ideas.
- A place to respect personal beliefs.

## What the class is not:

- Not a class you can miss.
- Not a passive class.

# HOUR 1 REVIEW

## **What are the “Humanities”?**

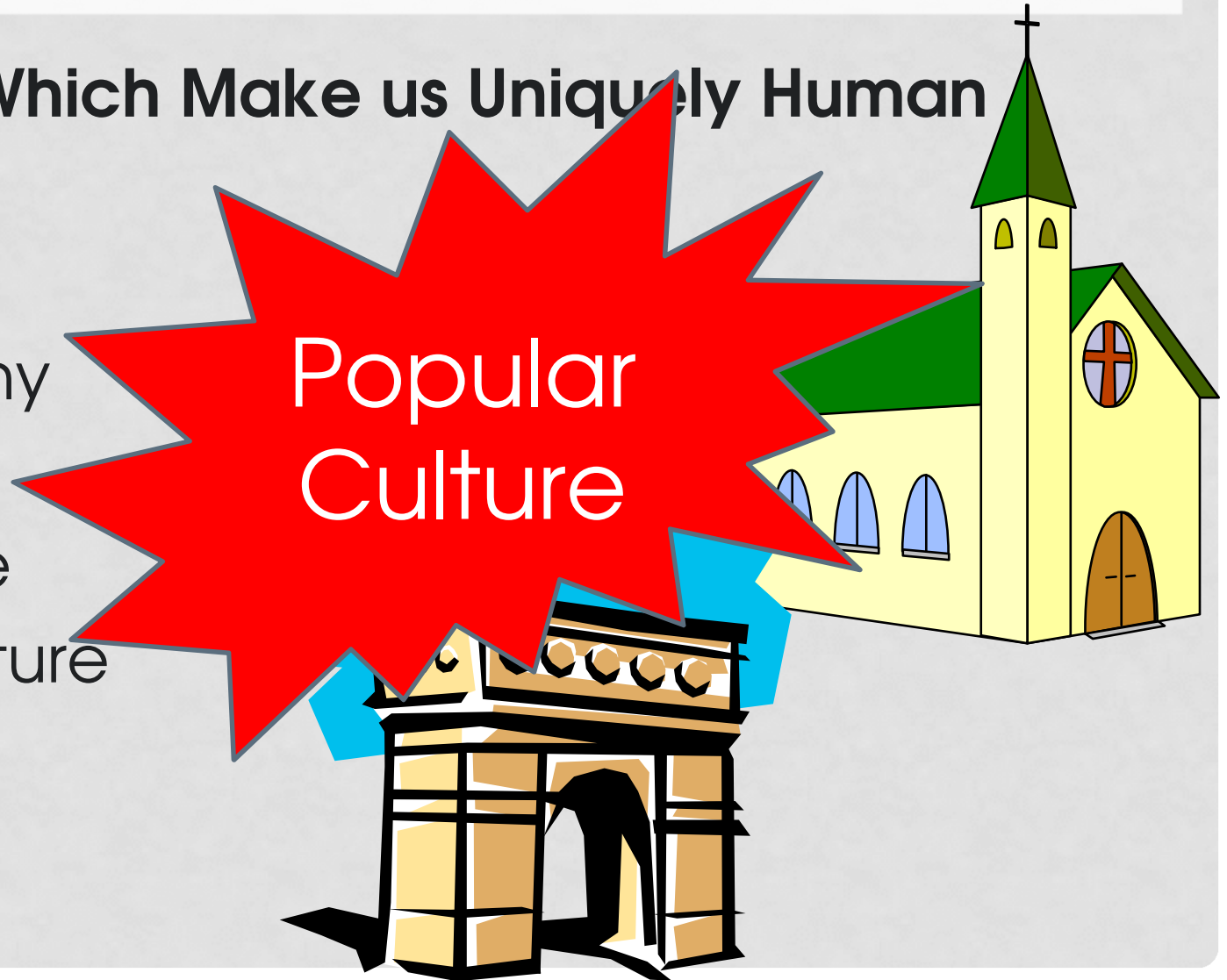
- Studies of human thought and culture; liberal arts.
- Studies of general knowledge and skills with no occupational benefit.
- Studies of our relationship with ourselves and the world at large.
- Studies of meaning and purpose.
- Studies of standards and values.

# THE HUMANITIES: WHAT ARE THEY?

## That Which Make us Uniquely Human

- History
- Art
- Philosophy
- Music
- Literature
- Architecture
- Dance
- Film

Popular  
Culture



# WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

- Can you define it?
- Do you know it when you see it?

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Group of 4 to 6:

Identify as many pop cultural references as you can in each of the video clips.

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

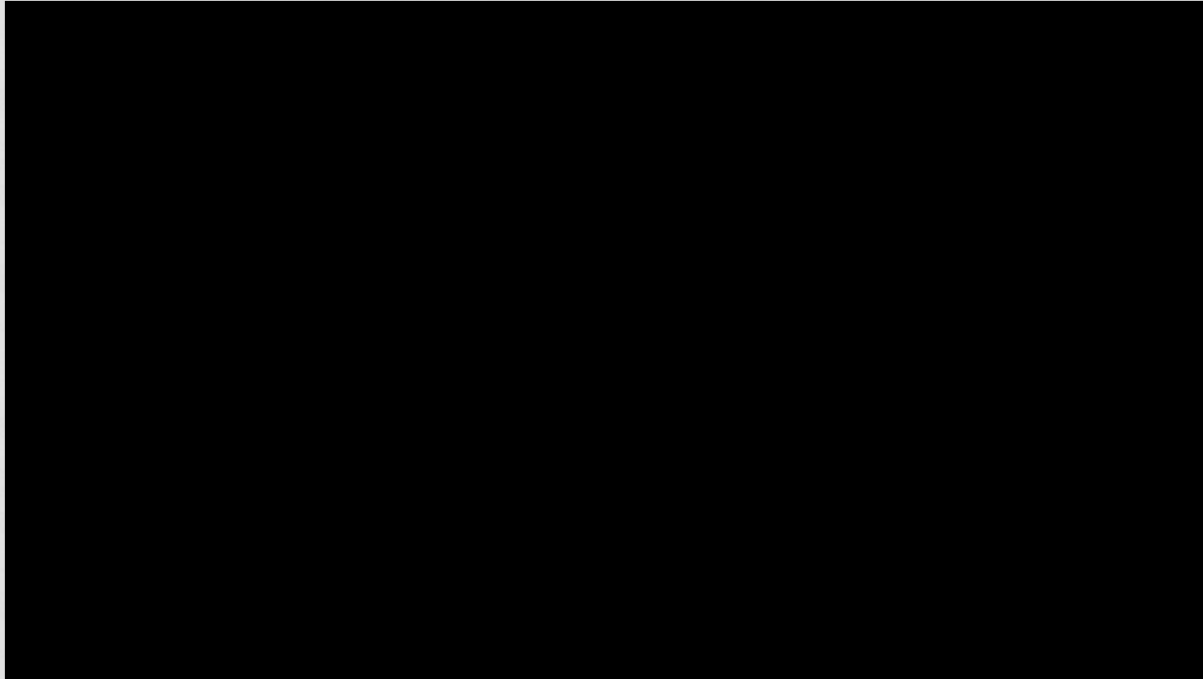
## **“General knowledge” reference vs. “Pop Culture” Reference**

(A Rule-of-Thumb Distinction)

General knowledge reference can be understood by those not familiar with our popular culture.

Pop culture references can only be “really” understood by those familiar with our popular culture.

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



The Super Bowl is mentioned.

The film "Star Wars"

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Actor Nicholas Cage

Singer Celine Dion

Fictional character  
"Charles Widmore"  
from the television  
show Lost.



# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Ann Curry

To Kill a Mockingbird –  
“Bust up your  
chiffarobe.”

The television show  
“Good Times”

Comedian Red Fox

# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



Real Housewives  
series

We need Tracy back but all Angie cares  
about are her own dumb projects.





# POP CULTURE REFERENCES

## Drunk Uncle

<http://dailypicksandflicks.com/2013/04/07/snl-peter-dinklage-and-drunk-uncle-on-weekend-update-video/>

<http://www.hulu.com/watch/476029>



# POP CULTURE REFERENCES



- Government/Policy:
  - April 15<sup>th</sup>/Tax return filing,
  - Native American Tax Exemption & other policies,
  - Immigration Policy,
  - Senator Marco Rubio
- The 80s pop song "I wanna know what love is."
- TV Shows:
  - "The Facts of Life",
  - "Game of Thrones" with reference to King Joffrey.
- Food items:
  - Lunar Bar,
  - Flax Seeds
- Technology:
  - Samsung Galaxy Notebooks,
  - "Snapchat" real-time picture chatting for mobile devices.
- News/Historical Events: Asteroids hitting the Earth
- The band "Huey Lewis and the News"
- Lifetime Made for TV film starring Jennifer Love Hewitt "The Client List"
- Feature Films:
  - "GI Joe Retaliation",
  - "Spaceballs" with reference to Prince Valium

# ARTIFACTS OF A CULTURE

**These all reference “artifacts” of popular culture.**  
*What comes to mind when you think of the word  
artifacts?*



*So what is an artifact?*

# ARTIFACTS OF A CULTURE

## **Artifacts:**

Something made or given shape by man.

## **Why do people (archeologists) care about artifacts?**

Gives us a way to “read” into a culture.

It's characteristics and how it may have evolved.

## **Why “read” artifacts of popular culture?**

# HOUR 3 AGENDA

- What is Popular Culture?
- What can we learn from “reading” it’s artifacts?

# ARTIFACTS OF “POPULAR” CULTURE

## Questions:

- What make the TV clip references artifacts of “popular” culture as opposed to other types of culture?
- Do you think something has to be known by a certain number or % of people to be considered an artifact of popular culture?
- No.
  - But it is an artifact that is familiar to a **significant** amount of the population, particularly the masses or “common” people.
- So what is **popular culture** anyway?

# WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

**First, what does “culture” mean?**

*The knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society.*

Popular culture best understood in contrast to high culture and folk culture.

# WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

## **High Culture**

Based on your reading, what is “high culture”?

- Often “higher class” culture.
- Often has artifacts that are more exclusive in nature; not as accessible to the masses or “common” people.
- Often artifacts that are the result of formal, specialized training.

*What is an example of high culture clothing?*



# WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

## **Folk Culture:**

What is “folk culture”?

- Often refers to culture specific to a family, ethnicity, or region.
- Often has artifacts that are localized to a particular area; isolated from other groups.
- Often artifacts that result from the passing down of generational traditions, knowledge, or skills.
- Think “traditional”

*What is an example of folk culture clothing?*

# WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

## **Popular Culture:**

Based on your reading, what is “popular culture”?

- Culture of the masses and “common” people.
- Inclusive in nature.
- Artifacts are typically not the result of formal, specialized training.

*What is an example of pop culture clothing?*

# DIFFERENCES IN ARTIFACTS

	High Culture	Folk Culture	Popular Culture
Food			
Music			
Dance			
Visual Arts			
Sports			
Movies			

# REMEMBER...

**Why do people (archeologists) care about artifacts?**

Gives us a way to “read” into a culture:  
It’s characteristics and how it may have evolved.

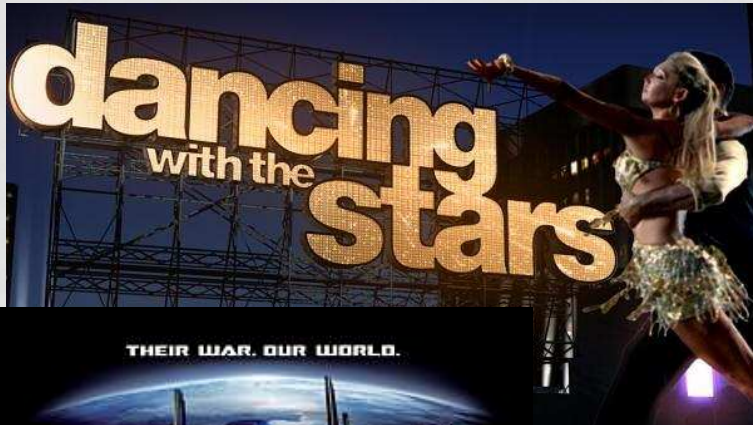
# “READING” ARTIFACTS

Just like an archeologist we will be reading artifacts so we can learn more about popular culture.

But instead of reading artifacts like these...



# “READING” ARTIFACTS OF POPULAR CULTURE



# “READING” CULTURAL ARTIFACTS AS TEXTS

## Reading Culture in Two Directions (Mirror and Impact)

### 1. Characteristics (Mirror): Popular Culture → Artifacts

*Artifacts can be a reflection of the popular culture:*

- How the culture functions
- Values
- Sense of meaning
- Social roles and social structure
- Beliefs
- Customs

### 2. Evolution (Impact): Artifacts → Culture

*Artifacts can also influence culture.*

- Influence often occurs **unconsciously**.

Why is a study of pop culture sometimes referred to as “Semiotics”?

Semiotics = study of signs/symbols of communication.

# HOW TO READ ARTIFACTS

## Think Like an Alien

- Imagine an alien race came across these artifacts. What might they find out about what the culture valued, what gave the culture meaning, and how they lived?
  - Example: What can we learn about a culture that uses a hammer?
- What might the alien learn about the culture's beliefs, customs, and how the culture's society is structured?
  - Example: What can we learn about a culture where men are buried in more decorated coffins than woman, and are often found holding bags of gold?



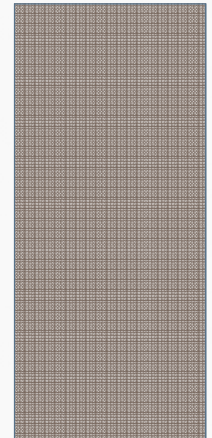
# POP CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

And what might an alien civilization think about us if they were to find these artifacts?



# HUMANITIES 006: POPULAR CULTURE

HOUR 4



# HOUR 4 AGENDA

- Brief History of Popular Culture Studies
- “Reading” Popular Culture Artifacts
- The importance of Pop Culture Studies

# BRIEF HISTORY OF POP CULTURE STUDIES

Based on the Article “Scholars Spend as Much Time with *Love Boat* as with Shakespeare” what can you tell me about the history of pop culture studies?

On Studies of Popular Culture:

“(People) are reading our material and realizing that movies and ‘new history’ and music and fast foods ... are the things that shape and drive American culture. They may not be loved, but they have to be understood.”

Q: Why do they have to be understood?

To begin understanding, we need to become experts at “reading”.

# READING POP CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

## Think Like an Alien

- Imagine an alien race came across these artifacts. What might they find out about what the culture valued, what gave the culture meaning, and how they lived?
- What might the alien learn about the culture's beliefs, customs, and how the culture's society is structured?
- In our class, this is what we'll do first with our past, so that we can be better prepared to explore our present.

# READING CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

**How can you read these?**  
*Function, Value & Meaning*



# ARTIFACTS AND CULTURE

In Groups of 4-6

First, identify 3 physical artifacts of **popular** culture that are in your group's possession right now (aside from your cellphone).

Second, try "reading" each artifact.

1. What does it say about how our popular culture functions?
2. What does it say about what our popular culture values, and about what gives us our lives meaning?

# POP CULTURAL ARTIFACTS



Why would it be important to realize that these are the artifacts of our popular culture?

Because we often aren't aware of the influence popular culture has on our beliefs, values, and our interaction with others.



# POP CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

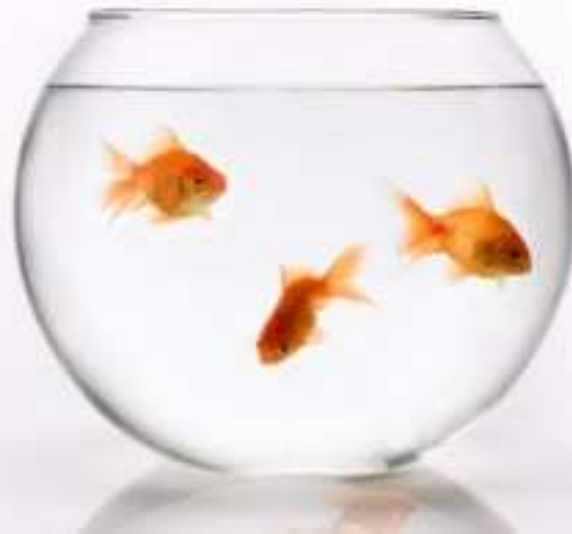
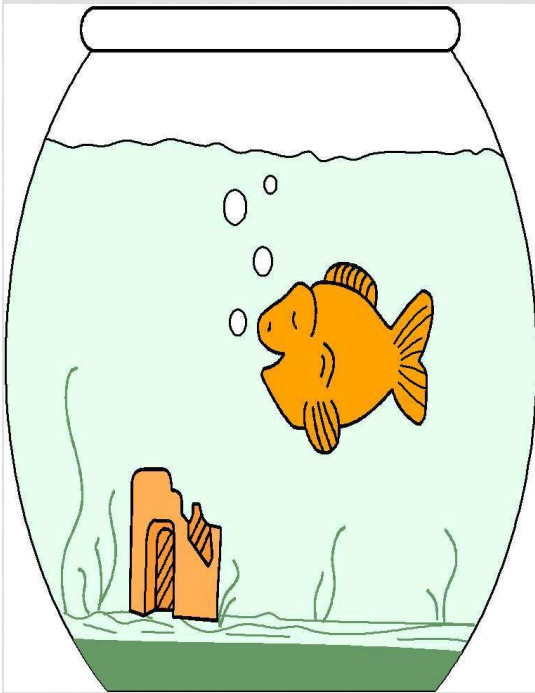
Where do most artifacts of popular culture come from?

- Artifacts of popular culture are often produced by individuals of power to be distributed to the masses.
  - Network television shows.
  - Record producers.
  - Movie studios
  - Book publishing houses.
  - **Miscellaneous Big Business**

What can be the problem with this?

# THE PROBLEM? INFLUENCED BY POPULAR CULTURE

**How do these images represent popular culture?  
And how might it be a problem?**



# THE UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE OF POPULAR CULTURE

If you have heard this story before, please don't ruin it for others...

*A man is driving his son to school.*

*They both get into an accident, and due to the severity of the collision, the man dies.*

*The son is also severely wounded and is rushed to the hospital.*

*When he arrives for emergency surgery the doctor says "I can't operate on this boy! He's my son!"*

*How is this possible?*