

**ENGLISH 1040 and 1041**  
**Reading Popular Culture**

**Dr. Jason Haslam**

**Fall 2016**

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**Office and Office Hours:** McCain 1193; Fridays 1:30 - 3:30, or by appt.

**Note:** Syllabi on the Brightspace pages for 1040 and 1041 are specific to the respective courses.

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At the heart of this course lies the basic assumption that popular culture *means something*, that it has artistic, historical, social, political and other meanings that go beyond its role as “simple entertainment.” In order to examine the material fully, we will therefore need to place it in its artistic, historical, social, political, and other contexts. In other words, we will engage in a critical exploration of some of the forms of popular culture, and focus on developing the critical thinking and methodological skills necessary for cultural study. This work will involve learning some of the basic terminology and theories of the disciplines of cultural and literary studies and the different approaches that can be used when analysing cultural material.

Fundamentally, we will work on the skills of critical and close analysis, and the basics of academic writing and argumentation. We will study a wide range of cultural work (including print fiction, film, and television), examining the ways in which structure, content, and context come together to create multiple layers of meaning for any given work or cultural moment.

In order to focus our discussions, we will trace the figures of the *hero* and the *monster* through the various works, and relate these figures to some of the concepts and themes at the heart of cultural analysis (including concepts of intertextuality, power, cultural and political representation, and identity, especially in terms of gender, race, and sexuality). However, the course is also designed to allow students to develop their own interests through the different material studied.

Make no mistake: the material we are covering can be very difficult, but through lectures, class discussions, and our tutorial hours, we will be able to reach a high level of understanding.

**Required Readings and Viewings**

Note: because of the focus on “the monster,” we’ll be reading and viewing many horror and gothic texts that will include violence and gore. These are required materials for this course. If such material does not appeal to you, the instructor or your academic advisor can point you to other courses.

**Textbooks:** All readings are mandatory; unless otherwise noted, books are available in the Dalhousie bookstore.

- Douglass, Frederick. *The Heroic Slave* (on Brightspace)
- Haslam, Jason. *Thinking Popular Culture*, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian ed. (Note: any royalties received will be donated to charity and to a Dalhousie scholarship)
- Moore, Alan, and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*.

**For 1040 only:**

- Northey, Margot. *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*.

**Film and Television Viewings:** Film and television viewings are also mandatory. Screenings for the material below will be arranged, either during or outside of class time. If you cannot attend an out-of-class screening, you are still required to view the work. Some of this material is available through Netflix or other streaming or rental services.

- *Doctor Who*, “The Shakespeare Code” (2007)
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, “Hush” (1999)
- *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)

### **Differences Between English 1040 and 1041**

Two courses, English 1040 and 1041, are meeting in the same room and at the same time, and being taught the same material. They are, however, different courses:

**English 1040:** This course is a **WRITING REQUIREMENT** course. That means, in addition to formal instruction in university-level writing, you will also have your work assessed primarily through the evaluation of written assignments.

**English 1041:** This course is **NOT** a writing requirement course, and so will **NOT** satisfy any portion of your writing requirement. Some formal instruction in university-level writing will be given, but your work will be assessed primarily through tests.

#### **For all students:**

- **MAKE SURE** that you are enrolled in the correct course.
- **MAKE SURE** that you do the correct assignments for the course in which you are enrolled. If you do the wrong assignments and/or do not complete the proper assignments, **you will receive a zero** on those assignments. **You will not be given the opportunity to redo any assignment that was missed for this reason.**

### **Assignments**

#### **1040**

Mini-essay (300-450 words): 10%; **DUE September 28**

In-class Writing Assignment: 15%; **In tutorial October 19**

Essay Outline Peer Review: 5%; **In tutorial November 2**

Final Essay (1200-1500 words; approx. 4-5 pages, double spaced): 30%; **DUE November 21**

Final exam: 30%; TBA (during University exam period at the end of the Fall term).

Tutorial Attendance and Participation: 10%

#### **1041**

Two Tests: 25% each = 50% overall; **In tutorials October 19 and November 16**

Final exam: 40%; TBA (during University exam period at the end of the Fall term).

Tutorial Attendance and Participation: 10%

### **1040 Assignment Descriptions**

**Note:** All formal written assignments are to be written according to MLA guidelines. (The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* should be purchased by all English majors. MLA citation style will be discussed in tutorials, and is covered in our writing handbook.)

**Mini-essay:** The first essay will be a very short essay in which you analyze a specific object or text provided, following a method discussed in class. No secondary research, outside of course material, is permitted for this assignment. It will be marked in terms of basic grammar, general essay structure, and argument. This assignment is also meant to serve as a diagnostic tool, to assess some of the specific areas of writing on which you need to work.

**In-class Writing Assignment:** The midterm will consist of short analyses designed to test your knowledge of the material covered in in the course readings, lectures, and tutorials before the date of the assignment, as well as your ability to write well in a test situation.

**Essay Outline Peer Review Assignment:** This assignment is necessary preparatory work for your final essay assignment, and is intended to give you practice with designing functional outlines for essays, and with drafting and revision. The topic for the final essay will be handed out in advance of this assignment (see Final Essay assignment description, below).

The **outline** will begin by listing the topic you have chosen and the primary object texts you will examine. The assignment will then provide the following:

- a proposed thesis statement
- two to three proposed main-body points, which will include what the point will be, what aspects of the object text you will analyze to prove that point, and how that point will connect to your larger argument

To receive marks for this assignment, you **must attend the peer review session of your tutorial**. Bring **two copies** of your outline: one to mark up with your peer reviewer; the other to hand in to show you were present and worked on the outline. **Only documented medical reasons will be accepted as excuses for missing peer review, and documentation must be handed in no later than one week after the original assignment due date.** If such documentation is submitted, the peer review work will have to be made up at a date specified by your tutorial leader. If it is not made up on that date, or if proper documentation is not submitted, your assignment will receive a 0 (zero).

**Final Essay:** You will be asked to analyze **two works** chosen from the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode “Hush” and the short stories listed as readings for October 31st. You should take into account the comments made during the Essay Outline Peer Review Assignment.

**Final Exam:** The exam will consist of two sections. The first will be a series of multiple choice and short answer questions designed to test your knowledge of the material covered both in required readings and during lectures and tutorials. The second part of the exam will consist of an essay, written to answer a question about the course material. In the essay, you will cover two works: one primary text from before the midterm, one primary text from after the midterm, and

you will place them in the context of one theory from the readings in *Thinking Popular Culture*. The question should be answered in essay form (i.e. it should have a coherent, structured argument).

**Tutorial Attendance and Participation:** Tutorial attendance and participation are mandatory in this course, and since the tutorials will include much of the formal writing instruction, these are considered part of your writing requirement. In addition to the writing instruction, you will continue discussion of the course material and the methodologies of study. Each of attendance and participation will be worth half of the 10%. The attendance mark will be based on attending each class and signing the sign-in sheet. The participation mark will be based on activity in class discussions and any group work, and on the level of engagement with the material that is demonstrated (i.e. you must demonstrate that you have read or viewed *and* thought seriously about the material before class).

### **1041 Assignment Descriptions**

**Tests:** The tests will consist of identification, short answer, and analytical questions designed to test your knowledge of the material covered in course readings, lectures, and tutorials, as well as your ability to write coherently in a test situation.

**Final Exam:** The exam will consist of two sections. The first will be a series of multiple choice and short answer questions designed to test your knowledge of the material covered both in required readings and during lectures and tutorials. The second part of the exam will consist of an essay, written to answer a question about the course material. In the essay, you will cover two works: one primary text from before the midterm, one primary text from after the midterm, and you will place them in the context of one theory from the readings in *Thinking Popular Culture*. The question should be answered in essay form (i.e. it should have a coherent, structured argument).

**Tutorial Attendance and Participation:** Tutorial attendance and participation are mandatory in this course; in the tutorials, you will continue discussion of the course material and the methodologies of study. Each of attendance and participation will be worth half of the 10%. The attendance mark will be based on attending each class and signing the sign-in sheet. The participation mark will be based on activity in class discussions and any group work, and on the level of engagement with the material that is demonstrated (i.e. you must demonstrate that you have read or viewed *and* thought seriously about the material before class).

### **Other Course and University Policies Applying to Both Courses**

#### **Late Penalties and Missed Assignments**

Formal written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated, or at the time and date indicated. Late assignments will be docked 5% for each 24 hours that they are late. For example, a paper due at 12:00 pm on Day 1 will drop 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 1, another 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 2, etc. **Assignments will not be accepted after the marked, on-time assignments are handed back;** any assignment not handed in by that point will be given a grade of 0 (zero). Marking schedules will be made clear in class.

All formal written assignments must be handed in to your tutorial leader and submitted electronically through the assignment tab on our Brightspace page. If either copy is not submitted, the assignment could be given a grade of 0 (zero).

In-class assignments can only be completed during the time and date listed on the syllabus. Missed assignments will be assigned a grade of zero. **Only properly documented medical problems or other documented severe circumstances which are out of your control will be accepted as excuses for late or missed assignments. Documentation** must state which days the student was unable to complete work, and **must be provided within a week of the missed work**, or the documentation must cover the time past that week.

**Travel plans are not an excuse for missing assignments or the final exam.** Book your holiday travel accordingly.

#### Accommodation Notice

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit [www.dal.ca/access](http://www.dal.ca/access) for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 902-494-2836 for more information or send an email to [notetaking@dal.ca](mailto:notetaking@dal.ca).

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to fully participate in the class.

#### Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All students in this course are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Academic Policies and Student Resources sections of the [academicintegrity.dal.ca](http://academicintegrity.dal.ca) website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. All forms of cheating, including plagiarism, are considered serious academic offences which may lead to such penalties as loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality. As a student in this course, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Failure to submit an electronic copy when it is requested will result in a grade of 0 (zero) for that assignment.

#### Other Services

- Other student services on campus: [http://www.dal.ca/current\\_students.html](http://www.dal.ca/current_students.html)
- The Writing Centre: <http://dal.ca/writingcentre>

### Grading Scale

For the official grade scale and definitions used in this course, see:  
[http://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/student\\_services/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/grade-scale-and-definitions.html](http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/grade-scale-and-definitions.html).

### **Reading and Class Schedule**

- **Note 1:** Wednesday classes are dedicated to tutorials; unless otherwise noted, you will need to go to your tutorial rooms on those days.
- **Note 2:** *Thinking* refers to our textbook, *Thinking Popular Culture*
- **Note 3:** “Keywords” refers to words and definitions found in the glossary of *Thinking*
- **Final and Most Important Note:** Do your readings *before* class.

September 07 (in lecture hall; starts at 3:35)	Introduction - Definitions, Goals, Expectations, Material, Brightspace
12	“Traditional” Culture, “Traditional” Reading: Plot, Metaphor, Theme, Close Reading  Reading: <i>Thinking</i> 1-30
14	Tutorials: Introducing tutorials
19	Lecture: Semiotics and Cultural Meaning  Reading: <i>Thinking</i> , 69-83; 89-90; Keywords: sign; signifier; signified; denotative; connotative; mythology
21	Tutorials; 1040 read <i>Thinking</i> ; 283-87, and <i>Making Sense</i> , “Avoiding Plagiarism,” 32-35
26	Lecture: Psychology, Ideology, and Heroes  Reading: <i>Thinking</i> , 33-44; 54-64; Keywords: unconscious; id; ego; ideal ego; sublimation; repression; individual; subject; agent; ideology; base-superstructure model
28	Tutorials; 1040 <b>Mini-essay due</b>
	<b>Case Study: <i>The Tempest</i></b>
October 3	A Brave New Lecture: From Literary Study to Cultural Studies  Reading: <i>The Tempest</i> (read the full play for today)
5	Tutorials; 1040: read <i>Making Sense</i> “Sentence Unity” and “Subject Verb Agreement” 153-58.
<b>October 7</b>	<b>Deadline to withdraw from Fall term classes without a “W”</b>

10	Thanksgiving: No Classes
12	Tutorials; 1040 read <i>Making Sense</i> , “Pronouns,” 161-63
	<b>Revising Caliban: Race, Historical Heroes, and Popular Politics</b>
17	Lecture: “The Heroic Slave”: Context (The Abolition of Slavery and the Popular Press) and Content  Reading: Frederick Douglass, “The Heroic Slave” ( <b>on Brightspace</b> ); <i>Thinking</i> 230-42; Keywords: race; essentialism
19	Tutorials; <b>In-class Writing Assignment; 1041: Test #1</b>
	<b>When Pop Culture Attacks I: Feminism, Voice, and the Zombie Apocalypse</b>
24	In-class viewing: <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> , “Hush” Lecture: Buffy, Feminism, and “Girl Power”  Reading: <i>Thinking</i> , 175-205, 247-49; Keywords: scopophilia; objectification; gender; feminism
26	Tutorials; 1040: <i>Making Sense</i> , “Creating an Outline,” 19-22
31	Readings: Octavia Butler, “Speech Sounds”; Margaret Atwood, “When It Happens”; China Miéville, “The Condition of New Death” ( <b>all on Brightspace</b> )
November 2	Tutorials 1040: <b>outline peer review</b>
7-11	Reading Week
	<b>Revising Monsters: Subcultural Heroes / Camp Heroes</b>
14	“Let’s do the Lecture Again”: <i>Rocky Horror</i> , the 1950s, Sex, and Audience Participation, Oh My!  Reading: <i>Thinking</i> 206-29; Keywords: queer theory; performative  <b>Note: Last day to drop fall term courses with a “W”</b>
16	Tutorials: 1040: read <i>Making Sense</i> , “Comma,” 169-74; “Quotation Marks” and “Semi-colon,” 180-82; <b>1041: Test #2</b>

21	Lecture: <i>Watchmen</i> : Form  Primary Reading: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, <i>Watchmen</i> 1-5 Secondary Reading: <i>Thinking</i> : 111-33; Keywords: culture industry  <b>1040: final essay due</b>
23	Tutorials
	<b>When Pop Culture Attacks II: Superheroes and the Culture Industry</b>
28	Lecture: <i>Watchmen</i> : Context and Content  Primary Reading: <i>Watchmen</i> 6-12 Secondary Reading: <i>Thinking</i> : 154-73; Keywords: postmodern
30	Tutorials: 1040: read <i>Making Sense</i> , “Writing Examinations,” 119-23
December 05	Time and Relative Lectures in Space: <i>Doctor Who</i> , “The Shakespeare Code” (in-class viewing and lecture)
Tuesday Dec. 06 (regular class in lecture hall)	Course review