Course Description
This course will examine the intersections of America literature and popular culture through a selection of novels, films, and television shows about capitalism and consumerism. American popular culture, by definition, is popular; in other words, it is consumed in large doses. This course explicitly argues that popular culture and capitalism are inextricably entwined. Indeed, capitalism and American culture in general cannot be separated. In this course we will explore the recurring themes and tropes of greed, wealth, corruption, consumerism, and the American Dream, and whatever else may come up in our class discussions.

Required Text (available in bookstore)
- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*
- Don DeLillo, *White Noise*
- Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club*
- Cristina Alger, *The Darlings*

Course Requirements and Assessment
Participation 10%
Short Essay 15%
Term Essay Abstract 15%
Term Essay (6 pages) 30%
Final Exam 30%

Assignment Descriptions
Participation (10%): This is a discussion-based class, and you are expected to attend each class and engage thoughtfully in the discussion. I will be keeping track of attendance.

Short Essay (15%): Due Friday, January 30
Students will write a short essay, 3 pages, double-spaced, discussing the roles of capitalism, greed, and wealth in *The Grapes of Wrath*. More detailed instructions will be provided in class. Essays handed in on time will be given a grade with written feedback.
Term Essay Abstract (15%): Due Tuesday, February 24
This one page document provides a preliminary plan of research for your term essay. It will detail your thesis statement as well as provide a minimum of 2 academic citations that support your argument. The purpose of this assignment is to have you thinking about your papers well in advance, to the point that you have already started your secondary research before you sit down to write your essay. This will include an annotated bibliography, in which you cite your sources and explain how they are helpful. Abstracts handed in on time will be given a grade with written feedback.

Term Essay (30%): Due Friday, March 27
Your essay will be 6 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font. You are required to use 2 secondary sources, in addition to your primary source(s), and they must be cited properly and documented on a Works Cited page in accordance with MLA format. You will be required to form your own thesis statement, but I will be available to discuss these beforehand. Essays handed in on time will be given a grade with written feedback.

Final Exam (30%): Details to follow

Course and Assignment Policies

Please feel free to make contact with me during my office hours, by appointment, or via email. Please reserve emails to quick concerns or questions. I will try to respond to all emails within 48 Hours.

Assignments handed in via email will NOT be accepted.
Each student in the class has the option to use a one-week extension on any of the written assignments. If you do so, you will not receive any written commentary or feedback, and will not be deducted any marks. You must let me know you are using the extension no less than one week before it is due. If your assignment is late and you have not let me know you are using your extension, you will lose 2% per day, including weekends and holidays.

Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to show respect and consideration towards your instructor and fellow classmates. Respect and consideration involves NOT talking while others are addressing the class, actively listening, and NOT using any electronic devices (excluding laptops for notetaking) during class time. The means that all cell phones are turned off, NO text messaging, NO internet browsing, and NO social networking. If you are caught using electronic devices in any of these ways, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

***PLEASE NOTE*** The use of any electronic devices or any type of behaviour that is distracting or disrespectful to others (i.e., chatting, texting, Facebook, etc.) will be noted
and will detract from your participation grade. In other words, I will be keeping track of each incident and I reserve the right to penalize your participation grade.

**Course Outline (subject to slight modifications)**

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 5 - 9</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Start The Grapes of Wrath</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>January 12 - 16</td>
<td>The Grapes of Wrath</td>
<td>Week 2 readings</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>January 19 - 23</td>
<td>The Grapes of Wrath</td>
<td>Week 3 readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>January 26 - 30</td>
<td>There Will be Blood</td>
<td>Week 4 readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 2 - 6</td>
<td>There Will be Blood</td>
<td>Week 5 readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 9 - 13</td>
<td>White Noise</td>
<td>Week 6 readings</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>February 16 - 20</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Week 7 readings</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>February 23 - 27</td>
<td>White Noise</td>
<td>Week 8 readings</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 2 - 6</td>
<td>Fight Club</td>
<td>Week 9 readings</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>March 9 - 13</td>
<td>Fight Club</td>
<td>Week 10 readings</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>March 16 - 20</td>
<td>The Darlings</td>
<td>Week 11 readings</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>March 23 - 27</td>
<td>The Darlings</td>
<td>Week 12 readings</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>March 30 - April 3</td>
<td>Course Review</td>
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**Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009**

**Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

**Discipline**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses
(e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

Grievance
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals
A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

Note for Students with Disabilities
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.