

# ENG 3850

## Writing about Culture & Society



**Class Location:** Ellis Hall, Room 020  
**Class Time:** Tuesday & Thursday  
10:30 to 11:50 AM  
**Class Dates:** Aug. 22 through Dec. 10



### Dr. Ryan P. Shepherd



**Email:** [RPShepherd@gmail.com](mailto:RPShepherd@gmail.com)  
**Office:** Ellis Hall, Room 312 // (740) 593-2803  
**Office Hours:** Tues & Thurs 12:30-1:30 & 2:50-3:30 PM  
**Cell:** (602) 369-6496 (text)

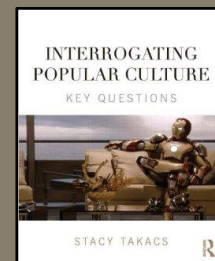
### Required Materials

Textbooks:

- *Interrogating Popular Culture: Key Questions* by Stacy Takacs

Additional Materials:

- Schoology Account
- Google Account
- Daily Email Access
- Access to Digital Media



### Course Description

ENG 3850 is an advanced writing course focused on understanding and writing about culture and society. This section of the course will focus on popular culture texts and how these texts affect society. Students will be asked to analyze their own pop culture media consumption and understand the ways that these texts affect them and others.

### Course Outcomes

Students will be able to do the following by the end of Writing about Culture & Society:

- Create their own theories about culture and society
- Effectively analyze pop culture texts
- Use a variety of lenses to understand pop culture
- Place pop culture within dominant and subversive ideologies.

## Major Projects

There will be two major projects as part of ENG 3850. Together, these two projects account for 60% of your final grade.

### Group Prosumer Project

Your first major project of the semester will be a group prosumer project. The purpose of this assignment is to shift the focus from merely analyzing pop culture texts to actually producing them: to move from consumer to “prosumer” (producer/consumer). You will be asked to create a small group of like-minded peers who want to work on a similar project: an original pop culture text, such as a song, a video, a website, a comic book, a piece of art, etc. In addition to creating the text, your group will offer a short reflection on what the text is doing and how it contributes to pop culture.

### Final Project & Presentation

The final project and presentation will focus on a single pop culture text or very closely related group of texts. You will be asked to analyze these texts using the tools we have developed this semester. The project will be a multimodal text, meaning it must include additional modes of meaning beyond written words, such as images, sound, video, etc. The modes will depend on the text chosen: for example, the analysis of a film will likely require still images and/or video clips. Fully multimodal texts, such as videos, can take the place of a traditional paper. The final presentation will take place during the final week of class and will be a summary of this analysis.

## Homework

Homework includes all work done outside of class except final drafts of major projects. For ENG 3850, homework falls into three categories: tasks, mini-projects, and reading responses.

Homework is not accepted late without prior approval. No make-up assignments or extra credit is given for missed homework. Most homework is easy to complete: keep on top of assignments in Schoology, and homework is likely to be a boost to your grade.



## Homework Categories

### Tasks

Tasks are larger projects that require more out-of-class time. These include a proposal for each of your major projects and a final reflection at the end of the semester. Each task is worth 3% of your final grade.

### Mini-Projects (MP)

Mini-projects are smaller projects that apply ideas from our reading to your real-world consumption of pop culture texts. They are designed to help prepare you for your final project. Ideas from mini-projects may be reused for the final project, in fact. There are 8 mini-projects this semester accounting for 2% of your final grade each.

### Reading Responses (RR)

Reading responses are a simple reflection on the chapter we have read that week. Reading responses are open ended in content, but a list of possible questions will be provided to kick start some ideas. You will be asked to write a response for each of the 10 chapters in the textbook. Each will be worth 1% of your final grade.

## Participation

You are expected to attend and actively participate in all classes. If you attend and actively engage with class material, you will be counted present. Some classes will involve one-on-one interaction with me or other students in conferences or revision workshops. These classes are worth extra points.

Please do not be late to class or leave early without permission. This is disruptive to class activities. If you are late or leave early, you will lose ½ of participation points for that day.

Some classroom content may be sensitive. Please be considerate of other students' work and opinions. When disagreeing with someone in class or offering feedback on his or her work, please try to be polite.

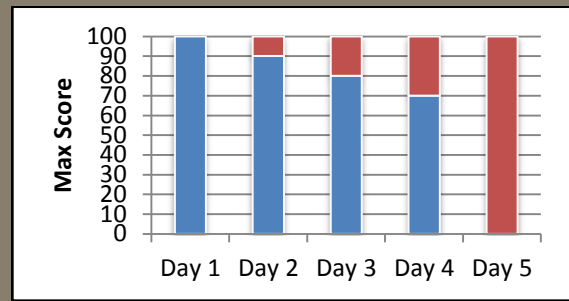
In this class, we encourage the use of technology to learn. Please use technology (including laptops, tablets, phones, and classroom computers) to assist with class activities, not to distract from them.

Please do not talk or use technology when someone else is talking—particularly when you are in small-group discussion.



## Late Major Projects

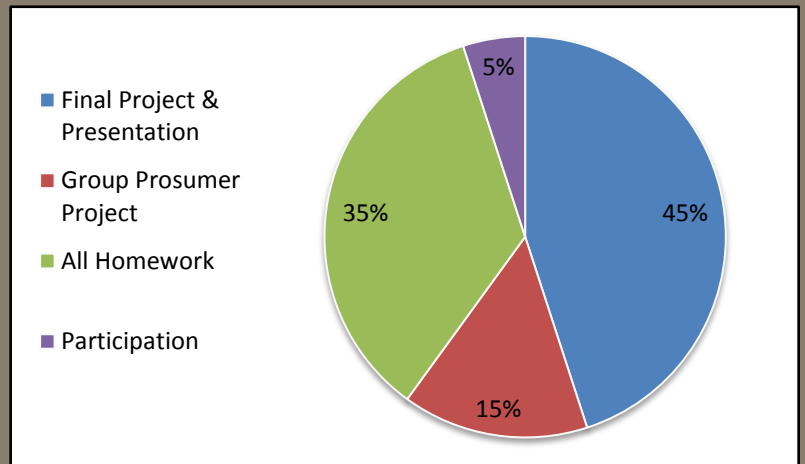
Late homework and journals will not be accepted. Late major projects will be accepted but lose one full letter grade per day. After 5 days, late major projects will receive a 0%.



## Grading

Final Course Grades will be determined by the following:

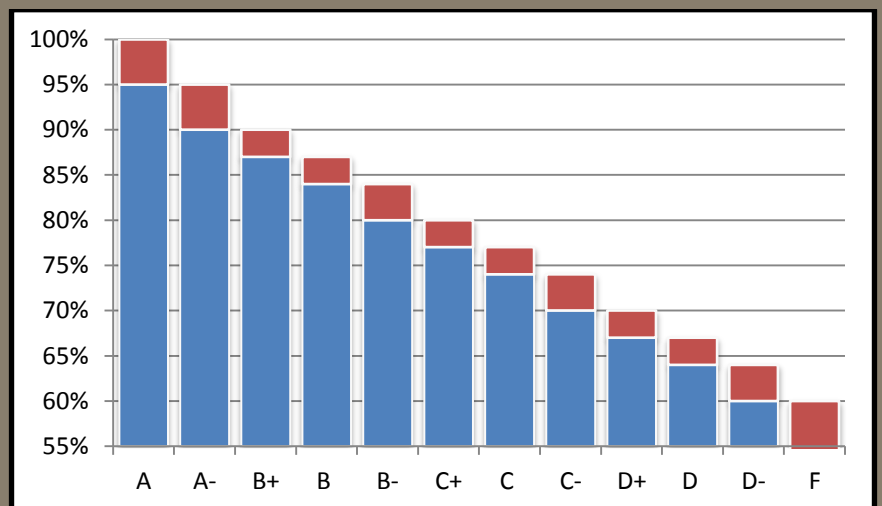
<b>Final Project</b>	<b>45%</b>
Final Draft	30%
First Draft	5%
Presentation	10%
<b>Group Prosumer Project</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Homework</b>	<b>35%</b>
Tasks	9%
Mini-Projects	16%
Reading Responses	10%
<b>Participation</b>	<b>5%</b>



## Grading Scale

Final drafts and the final course grade will be on the following scale:

A	100-95%	C	74-76.99%
A-	90-94.99%	C-	70-73.99%
B+	87-89.99%	D+	67-69.99%
B	84-86.99%	D	64-66.99%
B-	80-83.99%	D-	60-63.99%
C+	77-79.99%	F	0-59.99%



## Disability Resources

If you have a physical, mental, or learning disability that may require special accommodation in this or other classes, please get in touch with the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility](#) at your earliest convenience. I'm happy to provide equal access for you and will work to provide a productive learning environment.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense in college classes. Plagiarism may include but is not limited to:

- Copying all or part of an assignment from an outside source, such as a website or book.
- Presenting work that you did not produce as your own. This may include purchasing an assignment or getting another person to write an assignment for you.
- Allowing another person to substantially change your assignment.
- Presenting work done for another class for a grade in this class.
- Copying words, media, or ideas from another person without giving credit.

Note: Making superficial changes to a document is still plagiarism. If you are unclear whether or not something is plagiarism, please ask in advance.

Intentional, extensive, or flagrant plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Unintentional plagiarism will result in a failure of that assignment.

**NOTE:** This syllabus is subject to change with notification. Changes will be posted in Schoology and notification will be sent by email. If changes are made, please review them carefully.