

## Ph.D. Reading List in Popular Culture

Being housed within an English Department means that this examination will center on critical analysis of texts (broadly defined and including material culture) and the application of relevant cultural theory and criticism. Students will be assessed on their ability to analyze examples of and trends in popular culture in a sophisticated and theoretically informed manner.

Because popular culture, as an area of academic study, is diverse and ever-changing, there is no set canon of texts for students to master. Indeed, the concept of canonicity is arguably antithetical to the popular. Instead, the Reading List for this Preliminary Examination area includes (1) forms and subject areas to be studied, (2) recommended historically significant scholarship.

### 1. Textual Forms/Subject Areas

Students should be prepared to write about diverse popular textual forms, concepts, and subject areas, informed by historical as well as contemporary study. While the U.S. may dominate this field of study, global popular culture and the concept of globalism should be a significant part of a student's study for the examination.

<u>Form/Area</u>	<u>Examples of Textual Categories (Not to Be Considered Inclusive)</u>
Celebrity	Idols/Icons in Music, Film, Politics, on the Internet
Fandom	Conventions, Cosplay, On-Line Chat Groups, Fanzines
Material Culture	Action Figures, Board Games, Sports Equipment, Collectables
Popular Books	Graphic Novels, Young Adult, Romance, Science Fiction
Popular Film	Horror, Musicals, Chick Flicks, Cult
Popular Music	Rock, Rap, Country, R & B
Social Media	Text Messages, Social Networks, Microblogging, Image Sharing
Television	Sitcoms, Soaps, Reality, News
Video Games	1st-Person Shooters, Role-Playing, Multiplayer On-Line, Educational

For all areas, students should have facility with diverse theoretical/critical approaches to popular culture study, e.g. Marxist, post-structuralist, psychoanalytic, semiotic, feminist, postcolonial, queer.

### 2. Historically Significant Scholarship

Although there is no pop culture canon, there are theorists, critics, and texts that have shaped the study of popular culture in important ways. We recommend students read the essays and books in this list as an effective starting point for deeper and broader exploration of popular culture in its myriad forms. This list is not exhaustive. Students should read from within it as well as beyond it to achieve the depth and breadth necessary to write on diverse forms, categories, texts, and approaches to the study of popular culture.

Adorno, Theodor. "On Popular Music"  
Ang, Ien. "*Dallas* and the Ideology of Mass Culture."

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*.

Baudrillard, Jean. "The Precession of Simulacra."

Bobo, Jacqueline. *Black Women as Cultural Readers*.

Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*.

Cawelti, John. *The Six-Gun Mystique*.

Clover, Carol. *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*.

Doty, Alexander. *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*.

Douglas, Susan. *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*.

Dow, Bonnie J. *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement Since 1970*.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*.

Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture and Understanding Television*.

Hebdige, Dick. *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*.

hooks, bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*.

Johnson, Steven. *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter*.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*.

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*.

Rushkoff, Douglas. *Media Virus: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture*.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*.

Sontag, Susan. "Notes on 'Camp'."