

First-Year Seminar 036: “Underground Voices: Amateur Media”

Fall 2018

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:45pm

FAC 204

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Office Hours:

- **Mondays & Wednesdays 2pm-3:45**
- **Tuesdays & Thursdays by appointment**
- **Fridays 10am-12pm**

Course Description & Objectives

This First Year Seminar (FYS) helps to serve as your introduction to college-level academic work. Each FYS has its own theme, which serves as the focus of the reading and writing assignments. This participatory and discussion-oriented course explores the evolution of the alternative / underground press over the past 50 years. We will look at many different aspects of this often amateur, DIY segment of the media and examine the effects of changes in technology and social norms.

The main objective behind this course is to develop and improve your critical thinking, reading, information literacy, research, writing, and presentation skills. I also expect you to have gained an understanding and knowledge of alternative media of the past half century.

Evaluation

Class Participation	200 points
Weekly Writing Assignment	200 points
Zine Paper	150 points
Research Paper	250 points
Group Presentation	200 points
Des Moines	50 points

1050 total available points

Grading Scale

A 100-95.5% , A- 89.5%, B+ 85.5%, B 82.5%, B- 79.5%, C+ 77%, C 72%, C- 69%, D+ 66% , D 63%, D- 60%

Important Dates

9/20	Zine paper topic discussion
10/4	Zine paper due
10/25	Research paper topic discussion
11/8	Presentation topic discussion
11/20	Research Paper due
12/4 & 12/6	Final Presentations

Weekly Writing Assignments

Every week you will be given a topic to write a short (500 words) paper on. These writing assignments will focus on the readings you have been assigned, or materials we have covered in class. These informal papers are designed to foster critical thinking and may be the basis for our discussion. These papers will be graded based on completion of task. Papers that are turned in on time and follow the guidelines will receive full credit. Papers that are late or incomplete or an obvious last minute nonsensical scrawl will receive half or no credit depending on circumstance.

Des Moines Assignment:

As a first year student in a new town, I'd like to make sure you leave Drake's campus and see a little bit of the Des Moines area. You can earn these 50 points by visiting or attending **Three** cultural centers or events. Entertainment (including theatre, sports, music, etc.) events work as well. The things you need to remember is that the event/place must be off campus, in the Des Moines area, and not a Drake event. Document your visit with a picture of yourself at the place/event. Give me a brief description of what you are documenting. These will need to be submitted before the last day of class. Again, you need to document **3 events/visits to earn the 50 points.**

Examples of events or venues that count:

An all ages concert at Lefty's; a street/music festival; a visit to the Des Moines Art Center (free); the Des Moines Farmers Market (free) ; an Iowa Wild hockey game; a performance at the Des Moines Playhouse or the Des Moines Social Club; An art gallery (free); the Papajohn Sculpture Garden (free); the Iowa State Capital (free); haunted houses, corn mazes etc. This is a short list, there are many more opportunities for you to explore in the Des Moines area.

Conduct

Alternative/underground media has often been intentionally offensive. In this course you may be exposed to materials created in bad taste – with foul language, nudity, and/or other offensive content. If you ever feel the need to leave the room, you may always do so without academic penalty. (You will still be responsible for any material you miss). Feel free to talk to me about any concerns you may have.

While we may view and discuss materials with crude content, please keep in mind that your conduct in class should not mimic what we are studying. Any behavior in class that is sexist, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise disruptive will not be tolerated.

Students are permitted to use their laptops in class to take notes and for other classroom activities. Any use of a cellphone in class must be done in a discreet and respectful way. I do not want to see your phone during class time. If it is a special circumstance, and you need to be available by telephone, let me know ahead of time and we'll work something out.

Contacting Me

My office hours are at the top of the syllabus. Feel free to stop by my office anytime during the week. You may want to call ahead or drop me an email to see if I'm available beforehand. If I'm not available in person, send me an email. Please use your Drake email account and state the reason for your email in the subject line. Please address me as Bart or as Professor Schmidt in your emails or in person.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Class Participation is 20% of your grade. It is based on your attendance, class preparation, and participation in class lectures and discussions. Don't miss class, it will have an adverse effect on your grade. I understand that unavoidable circumstances do occur, but if you are going to miss class I expect to hear from you ahead of time.

Writing Workshop

If you want additional help outside of class, I strongly encourage you to make an appointment for a tutoring session at the Writing Workshop. Please consult their website:

<http://artsci.drake.edu/writersworkshop/wwshop.html>

Plagiarism

Don't do it. Seriously, Don't. You will not be happy. See the Drake Student Handbook for more information:

<http://www.drake.edu/studentlife/handbook-resources/handbook/academic/#dishonesty>

Disability Statement

If you have a disability and will require academic accommodations, please see me.

Accommodations are coordinated through Student Disability Services. Please contact Michelle Laughlin, Director of Student Disability Service at 281-1835 or michelle.laughlin@drake.edu.

Statement on Sexual Misconduct

The University has resources available for students who have experienced sexual or interpersonal misconduct, which can include sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking,

for example. Some resources are confidential, which means personal information will not be shared with anyone else. Other non-confidential (yet still private) resources can explain how to locate support resources, file a complaint within the university, or file criminal charges – these non-confidential resources must share incidents of sexual and interpersonal misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. Resources, as well as reporting options, can be found on the Title IX webpage at www.drake.edu/titleix.

As a professor, I am non-confidential; however, please know that sharing with the university does not mean the individual must participate in a formal university or criminal process. There are also options on the Title IX webpage to anonymously report to the university. Other services the university can provide include crisis intervention (safety plan, counseling, rights information) and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed.

University contacts:

Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text 515-512-2972.

Katie Overberg, Title IX Coordinator 271-2982 or titleix@drake.edu

A few quick definitions for you:

From A Dictionary of Journalism (2014):

Alternative Media:

Media projects, often run by untrained and unpaid activists that reject and/or challenge the conventions and structures of mainstream commercial or state-funded media. Alternative and radical journalism can be found within many examples of alternative media, but countless other forms of expression that have little or no connection to journalism have also been labelled as alternative media, including graffiti, flyposting, badge-making, pamphleteering, experimental film-making, creative writing, music distribution, and fanzine production. Alternative media may be defined as media output produced by its (potential) audience and can be seen as serving and as helping to form what might be described as an alternative public sphere in which groups and individuals on the margins of mainstream culture and media can form communities of interest within which they can communicate and debate issues of mutual interest.

Fanzine or Zine

A media product created, written, and illustrated by members of a community of interest and circulating within that community; typically it is produced on a non-commercial basis and often celebrates an ‘amateur’ style of writing and ‘do-it-yourself’ production values. There were particular flowerings of UK fanzines associated with punk music in the late 1970s and football in the following decade.

Merriam-Webster defines a **Zine** as a noncommercial often homemade or online publication usually devoted to specialized and often unconventional subject matter.

The Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies refers to the **Underground Press** as "those newspapers that are committedly anti-establishment, opposing in part or entirely the political and cultural conventions of the time; often publishing information or views seen as threatening by those in authority, and likely to incur censorship."