

## Politics and Popular Culture A | POU11033

Year	Junior Freshman
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	20 Hours of lectures and 5 hours of tutorials
Pre-requisite	Nil
Semester	1
Module Leader & Lecturer	Dr Liam Kneafsey
Contact Email	<a href="mailto:lkneafse@tcd.ie">lkneafse@tcd.ie</a>

### Module Outline

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationship between politics and fictional media.
- Enable students to identify and interpret the political dynamics within a fictional work.
- Examine how the external political context influences the creation of pop culture content.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to interpret the political meaning of works from popular culture.
- Critically analyse political themes in fiction and how these shape political attitudes and values

#### Module Learning Aims:

This module focuses on the intersection of popular culture and politics. We explore in particular the intrinsic political narratives in works of film, television literature, music or video games. We investigate how these stories mirror or challenge the political climates of their times, interpret the political world, and ask whether fiction can not only reflect but can also influence public opinion and real-world political dynamics.

#### Module Content:

This course proceeds from the premise that politics is everywhere- it shapes our lives including the popular culture we engage with daily. At its core, the course is grounded in the belief that pop culture is inherently political. Its primary aim is to explore how popular media both reflects and shapes political realities. Students will examine the ways in which political themes in film, television, literature, music and video games echo, reinforce or challenge the political contexts in which they were created. We also examine internet culture, social media content, and fandom as these function as political communities and shape political attitudes and behaviour. We ask whether entertainment and fictional media not only mirror the world around us but actively influence public opinion and real-world political dynamics.

This course explores the intersection of politics and pop culture through three overlapping lenses. First, it delves into the internal politics of fictional worlds – analysing the political systems, ideologies, and power dynamics portrayed in a range of fictional media. The focus here is on how these fictional narratives construct and critique political landscapes and social structures. Second, the course examines the external politics of pop culture, asking how real-world political climates influence the creation and reception of popular media. Finally, the course considers the catalytic potential of fiction – how stories can shape political discourse and influence public opinion. Although the specific media, political theories, themes and analytical frameworks will change from week to week, the overarching goal is consistent: to understand how fiction mirrors, critiques, and even moulds real-world political dynamics.

## Assessment

Discussion Point Submission and Tutorial Attendance: 10%

Short assignment: 30%

End of term final essay assignment 60%

## Recommended Reading List

Haas, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen and Peter J. Haas, 2015. *Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), Abingdon: Routledge.

Trepanier L (2020) 'What can Political Science learn from literature?', *Political Science Review*, 44(1): 1-19.

Scott K (2016) *The Limits of Politics: Making the Case for Literature in Political Analysis* (Maryland: Lexington).