There are two general strands of thought on the question of popular culture. One sees popular culture as an agent of domination. This position argues that popular culture serves to affirm the dominant order, contain opposition, and suppress reflexivity. The other argues that popular culture may be used in the service of liberation: that it can be a source of negation, critique, and resistance to the status quo. Feminist critics have written from both these perspectives.

This course explores this debate. It asks questions concerning the relationship of women to popular culture. In particular, three areas will be examined: the representation of women in popular culture; the production by women of popular culture products; and the construction of women as audience or consumers of these products.

The course is divided into three sections. The first considers the theoretical context of the debate on popular culture. The second directly examines some popular culture products. The final section looks at some issues and concepts derived from the debate and from our "reading" of popular culture in the second section.

REQUIRED READING


Piercy, Marge, Woman on the Edge of Time. Fawcett.

Atwood, Margaret, The Handmaid's Tale. Bantam-Seal.

Some weeks there will be additional readings on reserve in the Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Tutorial participation/presentation 20%
Mid-term exam 20%
Book Review 20%
Term Paper 40%

THIS COURSE MAY BE APPLIED TO THE CERTIFICATE IN LIBERAL ARTS.