

Department of Popular Culture

For those who are not familiar with this field, we have a [description](#) of the discipline of popular culture.

Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University

The Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University has been a leader in the scholarly movement to investigate popular culture since its inception in 1973. Dr. Ray Browne's early efforts in the Department of English led in 1973 to the establishment of the Department of Popular Culture as an M.A. program, followed with the establishment of the undergraduate major a year later. Previously, in 1967, Dr. Browne had founded the *Journal of Popular Culture*; and in 1969 he founded the scholarly association for the study of popular culture, the Popular Culture Association, which has been headquartered since its inception at Bowling Green State University. Through these innovative curricular and programmatic developments and the research and other professional activities of the faculty, the department has established its national reputation as the leader in the study of popular culture.

Curriculum Development

Bowling Green State University is the only university in the United States to implement a graduate department devoted to the scholarly study of popular culture. By expanding literature course offerings to include the research and analysis of detective fiction, romance fiction, westerns, and other so-called genre fiction; and by developing coursework on popular film, popular television, popular music, and folklore and folklife, the Department of Popular Culture in 1973 opened students to a consideration of cultural forms that they were familiar with in their everyday lives, but had not reflected upon critically. Through the consideration of popular materials, students confronted issues concerning the relationships of commerce to art, the popular media to society, and the popular use of the mass media. Very quickly, a high student demand for popular culture courses developed on both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Students found them relevant, meaningful, and challenging. In 1977, the Department of Popular Culture became a founding and contributing member of the American Culture Ph.D. program at Bowling Green State University, and in 1987, popular culture became an area of concentration in that program.

Bowling Green State University has provided national leadership in the development of the research and analysis of popular culture. Since the initiation of the department at Bowling Green, popular culture courses have been developed in other universities throughout the United States and internationally as well. Many of these institutions have modeled their courses on those at Bowling Green; indeed, many of them have adopted the textbooks edited by faculty members Christopher D. Geist and John G. Nachbar (1983 and 1992) for their courses.

Bachelor of Arts Degree Program in Popular Culture Studies

Bowling Green State University is the only institution in the nation to have a Department of Popular Culture. Each year more than one thousand students enrich their undergraduate education with courses in Popular Culture through our Department. While this major is certainly not for everyone, our undergraduate minor and our general education courses provide excellent support for a multitude of majors and career programs.

Students who major in Popular Culture receive a well-rounded Bachelor of Arts degree which helps them to prepare for dozens of specific and general career goals. Popular Culture students study those aspects of national and international culture which have the most impact on a majority of the population. The field includes the study of television, popular music, popular literature such as magazines and best sellers, sports, amusement parks, and movies. Students examine how and why people select their entertainment, what such things as television programs and movies mean to those who watch them, how popular products such as records and compact discs are marketed, and how all aspects of our daily lives influence our basic beliefs and values.

Training in Popular Culture can prepare students for many careers. Past graduates have gained positions in small museums, with major photographic firms, in various mass media industries, as consultants in a number of fields, in colleges as Student Program Directors, as distributors of recorded music, in radio and television stations, in public relations, and in the general business field. The Popular Culture major is an individually designed and planned program which allows students to develop specializations in dozens of specific areas.

Recent trends in business and industry hiring indicate that Liberal Arts graduates are highly desirable and that Liberal Arts students are often selected over business students for entry-level positions. And you will not find a better, more complete Liberal Arts degree than the one offered in our program. While no program at BGSU can guarantee that you will find employment immediately after graduation, graduates of our program have done very well indeed.

Popular Culture Major and Minor Requirements for Students Entering the College of Arts and Sciences Beginning Fall, 2001

In addition to the General Education Core Curriculum, the Popular Culture Major consists of 36 credit hours (a minor of your choice is also required):

Required Courses:

[POPC 160 Introduction to Popular Culture](#) or [POPC 165 Popular Culture and Media](#) (Credit for both may not be used towards the major)/3 credits

[POPC 170 Black Popular Culture](#)/3 credits

[POPC 260 Popular Culture Research](#)/3 credits

[POPC 300 Topics in International/Global Popular Culture](#)/3 credits

[POPC 480 Senior Seminar in Popular Culture](#)/3 credits

One of the following: [POPC 250 Introduction to Popular Film](#); [POPC 270 Introduction to Contemporary Popular Literature](#); [POPC 280 Introduction to Popular Music](#); [POPC 290 Television as Popular Culture](#) (Students who wish to minor in "Folklore and Folklife" must select TWO courses from this list)/3 credits

One of the following: [POPC 220 Introduction to Folklore and Folklife](#); [POPC 320 Folktale and Legend](#); [POPC 321 Folklife and Material Culture](#); [POPC 325 The Folk Group/Folk Region](#); [POPC 424 Folklore Genres](#) (Students who wish to minor in "Folklore and Folklife" may omit this requirement)/3 credits

One of the following: [POPC 350 Advanced Studies in Popular Film](#); [POPC 370 History of Popular Literature](#); [POPC 380 Contexts of Popular Music](#); [POPC 460 Popular Culture Advanced Studies](#)/3 credits

One of the following: [POPC 365 Youth in Popular Culture](#); [POPC 426 Popular Entertainments](#)/3 credits

Plus 9 additional popular culture credit hours (6 of which must be at the 300 or 400 level)/9 credits

Please Note: No more than 3 hours of [POPC 490 Problems in Popular Culture](#), may be counted towards the major requirements and no more than 3 hours of [POPC 395 Workshop on Current Topics](#), may be counted towards the major requirements.

Please also note the department cannot guarantee all courses will be offered each year.

Popular Culture Minor (21 hours)

Required Courses:

[POPC 160 Introduction to Popular Culture](#) or [POPC 165 Popular Culture and Media](#)/3 credits

[POPC 170 Black Popular Culture](#)/3 credits

[POPC 260 Popular Culture Research](#)/3 credits

One of the following: [POPC 220 Introduction to Folklore and Folklife](#); [POPC 250 Introduction to Popular Film](#); [POPC 270 Introduction to Contemporary Popular Literature](#); [POPC 280 Introduction to Popular Music](#); [POPC 290 Television as Popular Culture](#)/3 credits

Two of the following: [POPC 350 Advanced Studies in Popular Film](#); [POPC 365 Youth and Popular Culture](#); [POPC 370 History of Popular Literature](#); [POPC 380 Contexts of Popular Music](#); [POPC 426 Popular Entertainments](#)/6 credits

One additional POPC course/3 credits
