Course description: This course seeks to help us take a critical look at how popular culture shapes our lives and values. We will study how semiotics is used in advertising, newspapers, movies, television, magazines, and books. Many of us take popular culture for granted. We tend to accept its images and values without question. Are we mere consumers of society, or can we achieve some critical distance and become cultural critics and producers?

This course is offered through the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to eligible students at Sturgeon Bay High School. The university does all the testing and makes all decisions as to the placement of students. The course is coordinated and monitored by the Literature and Language Department at UW-GB and is taught by an instructor whose experience and credentials are similar to those instructors in the writing program on campus. In all respects, this course reflects the practices, approaches, and standards of the writing courses offered on campus.

Course goals:
1. Develop fluency in writing
2. Sharpen critical thinking, writing, and reading skills
3. Hone research strategies
4. Develop awareness of semiotics
5. **Produce four of the best papers you have ever written.** This won’t be by accident or luck. You will know exactly why they are effective and what you did to make them work.

Required Text:

Writing: This class is based on the philosophy that writing is a process and that better writing comes with time and practice. **I expect your final papers to be free of common errors in punctuation, usage and grammar (such as subject verb agreement, subject pronoun agreement, fragments and run-on sentences). Absolutely no late work will be accepted for any reason.** If you know you will be absent when essays are due, either turn in your essay early or email it to me at hmeikle@sbsdmail.net.

Plagiarism: Presenting all or part of another person’s work as your own without giving proper credit (whether you copy it word for word or paraphrase) is plagiarism. Students who plagiarize may receive a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. Students who actively or passively enable others to plagiarize are equally responsible. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, contact me. I expect all of your papers to be properly cited using MLA documentation.
Conferences:
Twice during the term you will be expected to meet with me for an informal one-on-one writing conference. I will provide you with an appointment calendar.

Required readings:
1. Introduction: Popular Signs p. 1-22
2. Writing about Popular Culture p. 23-64
3. A Stand Against Wikipedia p. 66-68
4. Judging Quality on the Web p. 69-71
5. The Culture of American Consumption pp. 81-89
6. Brought to you B(u)y: Signs of Advertising pp. 171-181
7. Video Dreams: Television and Cultural Forms pp. 271-286
8. The Hollywood Sign: The Culture of American Film pp. 365-376
10. American Paradox: Culture, Conflict and Contradiction in the U.S.A. pp. 513-523
11. American Makeover: Constructing Identity in the Age of Entertainment pp. 615-624

Essay Assignments: Choose 4 of the 7 topics to research from your textbook: American Consumption, Advertising, Television, American Film, New Media, Culture & Conflict, and Identity.

Paper 1: Must be 4-5 pages in length; cite 1 essay from your text and 2 academic essays
Paper 2: Must be 6-7 pages in length; cite 2 essays from your text and 3 academic essays
Paper 3: 8-9 pages in length; cite 2 text essays and 4 academic essays for sources
Paper 4: 10-15 pages in length; cite 3 text essays and 5 academic essays for sources

All papers must include a title page and a works cited page and demonstrate mastery of internal documentation. Title page should include: title of paper, your name, name of course, date of deadline.

Assignment Deadlines: You may (and are encouraged to) turn papers in before the deadlines. You may turn in the papers in any order.


Grading Assessment
A   All papers reveal a strong, sophisticated point, in-depth analysis and development, a clear sense of purpose and audience, a well-defined focus, solid organization, and sentence-level polish and style (no errors in conventions). All sources are cited correctly.

AB  Papers meet most of the above criteria but fall short in one area, such as needing paragraph development, organization, or engaging introduction, or fuller conclusion. All sources are cited correctly. Minimal errors in conventions.

B   Papers still need work in more than one area. For example, ideas need to be more fully developed and prose needs to be more polished for grammatical correctness and easy reading. Some errors in citations.
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Papers have potential, but are clearly in “draft stage.” They need substantial revision in terms of one of the following major areas: thesis, organization, analysis and focus. Some errors in citations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Papers fall short in some or all of the above areas and demonstrate consistent problems at the sentence or paragraph level. Errors in citations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Work falls short in <strong>many</strong> of the above areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Student plagiarizes material for papers, or major assignments are <strong>not turned in on time</strong></td>
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