**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
In the era of media convergence, geeks and fans have been transformed from a stigmatized subculture into a mainstream power demographic, catered to and courted by the media industry. Yet, even as President Obama can signify “nerdiness” and “coolness” simultaneously, comic book movies reign at the box office, and fanboy auteurs are overseeing the expansion of their televusial empires, fangirls have become culturally marginalized. Since the first wave of fan studies in the early 1990s, scholars have focused on the textual production of fangirls and their frequently feminist counter-readings of mass media texts. Can we view this new cultural preoccupation with the fanboy as a move towards gender equality in fan studies? Conversely, could we view the apparent gender bias of convergence culture as reinforcing a fallaciously gendered digital divide?

Among the questions this course will pose for discussion: Has the mainstreaming of geek culture in any way tempered the mass media’s pathologization of fans? Is new media fulfilling its implicit promise to decentralize creative power and textual authority, or are developments such as transmedia storytelling and ancillary content limiting fannish interpretation and co-opting fan labor? What is the shifting industrial function of fan spaces such as Comic-Con? How do fanboys and fangirls differ in their interactions with the text and their production of their own fan works? And finally, how might we expand this debate beyond gender divides to think about how geek culture is racialized?

**COURSE GOALS:**
- To practice creating and shaping arguments
- To learn how different creative practices impact arguments
- To use digital media to create a sense of fan community and collaboration in the classroom
- To promote media literacy and introduce students to the language of critical media analysis
- To learn about the history of fan studies and debate the politics of participation within media convergence
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:
Details on all your course assignments, including instruction handouts, submission guidelines, and due dates, can be found under the “Assignments” tab of our course blog. The google calendar on the blog is also a good resource for keeping track of deadlines, but I’d encourage (nay, insist) that you plug all these due dates in now, to help manage your workflow.

First, your **weekly attendance and active participation (20%)** is central to the class’ success and to your success in the class, as is your thoughtful engagement with the course readings. Documented medical or family emergencies will be excused (provided you email me prior to class to explain your circumstances), and you have one “free pass” for when you need a personal day. All other absences will negatively impact your attendance and participation grade. Time will be allotted to discuss your response to the readings and their correlation to the course screenings, but you’re encouraged to post any additional material you come across that you think might be relevant to the class (blog posts, videos, articles, etc.) to our course blog. You can also send me comments and links via Twitter @iheartfatapollo, using our course hashtag (#csp26). In short, this is a class about the politics of participatory culture, so your participation is vital!

Every Monday after class, I will post a video to our course blog that resonates with the week’s theme and/or our readings. As part of your **participation grade, you are required to comment on this post, due before Sunday at 6pm.** As with class attendance, you have one “free pass” for these blog posts, use it wisely. Though this is an informal weekly writing requirement, I hope you’ll monitor this space throughout the week and continue contributing to the conversation and responding to your classmates comments, especially if you don’t always feel comfortable speaking up in class (I will consider your blog involvement when calculating your participation grade). Your remarks can be relatively short (1-2 paragraphs), but should be substantive and critical, draw meaningful connections between the video and course content, and engage with comments from your classmates when applicable.

In addition to your attendance and participation grade, you will have five major assignments for this course, including a **fan autoethnography (10%)**, a **poaching position paper (10%)**, a **take-home midterm exam (10%)**, a **vid creation/analysis project (20%)**, and a final project that will consist of an in-class **presentation (10%)** that summarizes the focus and argument of your 8pg. **term paper (20%)**. More details instructions for all of these assignments will be distributed in the coming weeks on the course blog.

Just as fans use a vast array of media to compose their analyses and critiques of media texts, these assignments will require you to think through how to compose arguments on a variety of digital platforms. Many of these assignments will require multiple steps (thesis statements, outlines, peer review, revision, etc.), so plan your workflow accordingly.

**All assignments must be handed in on time**, and turning in assignments late will be detrimental to your grade. For each week your assignment is late, you will be docked one full letter grade. All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Exceptions will be made and extensions will be given only for medical or family emergencies (provided you can offer documentation).

**Grading breakdown:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fan Autoethnography</td>
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<td>Poaching Position Paper</td>
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<td>Take-Home Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vidding Assignment</td>
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<td>Term Paper Presentation</td>
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<td>Term Paper</td>
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REQUIRED READINGS:
Readings are listed below on the course schedule; assigned articles are to be read before class each Monday (unless noted otherwise below). All readings will be available through Moodle (housed under “Files”), or online via the links provided below. You can also link to all the course readings through the “Syllabus” tab on our course blog.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments can contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:
The CAE is an excellent resource for students looking for one-on-one assistance with writing assignments. They offer meetings with both student writing advisors (on a drop-in basis) and faculty writing specialists (by appointment). More information, and online appointment scheduling, can be found here: http://departments.oxy.edu/cae/. The CAE is located on the ground floor of the library, down the hall from the Center For Digital Learning and Research, where I will be holding my office hours each week.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM:
Fall Semester Avoiding Plagiarism Requirement: All frosh are required to complete the Occidental College Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial and Exam during finals. Both the tutorial and the exam will be available through Moodle. The tutorial will introduce students to what plagiarism is, how to recognize it, and, most importantly, how to avoid it. The exam section will then ask them to apply that knowledge in a series of questions. Before beginning this tutorial, students are required to have read Academic Ethics and Academic Misconduct in the Occidental College Student Handbook, or online at http://www.oxy.edu/x8000.xml. All other information necessary for passing the exam is available in the online tutorial.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 • Introductions
Wednesday, 8/31: Introduction to Course, Course Goals, and Cohort
Friday, 9/2: Wordpress blog orientation and framing of fan autoethnography assignment
Read (by 9/2): - Francesca Coppa, “A Brief History of Media Fandom”
Due: - Friday, 9/2 by 11:30am: Complete tech and media survey
- Saturday, 9/3: Sign up for wordpress account (see email invitation sent 9/2) using a fan pseudonym as your wordpress username, and familiarize yourself with the Wordpress dashboard

Week 2 • Geeks, Dorks, and Nerds: Fandom as Pathology
Monday, 9/5: Labor Day [No Class]
Wednesday, 9/7: Fan Studies in Context
Friday, 9/9: Speaker: Margaret Somers (Thorne Hall)
Read (by 9/7): - Joli Jensen, “Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization”
Due: - By Monday, 9/5 @ 8pm: Record and upload fan autoethnography. See assignment guidelines on the course blog.
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 9/11 at 6pm)

Week 3 • Fans’ Textual Poaching and Production I: From Slash to Wincesst
Monday, 9/12: Poaching as Fan Practice, Slash as Subversive Reading
Wednesday, 9/14: Screening and discussion
Friday, 9/16: Library instruction session (Brown Lab @ the Academic Commons)
Read: - Henry Jenkins, “Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing As Textual Poaching”
- Catherine Tosenberger, "The epic love story of Sam and Dean: Supernatural, queer readings, and the romance of incestuous fan fiction.”
http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/30/36
Screen: Supernatural, “The Monster At the End of This Book” (Mike Rohl, 2009, 42 min.)
Due: - Monday, 9/12 @ 11am: fan autoethnography reflection paper (PDF via email)
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 9/18 at 6pm)

Week 4 • Fans’ Textual Poaching and Production II: Vidding/Transformative Works
Monday, 9/19: Zotero primer (15 min); Contemplating “poaching” as a practical model for critical media analysis; poaching position paper discussion
Wednesday, 9/21: Vidding and transformativity in context
Friday, 9/23: Discussion of readings and screenings
Read: - Francesca Coppa, “Women, Star Trek, and the Early Development of Fannish Vidding”
http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/44/64
- Alexis Lothain, “Living in a Den of Thieves: Fan Video and Digital Challenges to Ownership”
- Julie Levin Russo, “User Penetrated Content: Fan Video in the Age of Convergence”

**Screen:**

*Us* (lim, 2007, 4 min.)
*Closer* (t. jonsey & killa, 3 min.)
*I Can't Fight This Feeling Anymore* (inthedeeppxx, 5 min.)

**Due:**
- By Monday, 9/19: Install Zotero (see “Tools” page on our course blog)
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 9/25 at 6pm)

**Week 5 • Convergence Culture and the Incorporation Paradigm**

**Monday, 9/26:** Peer review of poaching position paper drafts, thesis dissection
**Wednesday, 9/28:** The representational revenge of the fanboy
**Friday, 9/30:** Screening and discussion

**Read:**
- Dick Hebdige, selections from *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*
- Matt Hills, “Negative Fan Stereotypes (“Get a Life!”) and Positive Fan Injunctions (“Everyone’s Got To Be a Fan of Something!”): Returning To Hegemony Theory in Fan Studies”
- Heather Hendershot, “On Stan Lee, Leonard Nimoy, and Coitus…Or, the fleeting pleasures of televisual nerdom”
- Patton Oswalt, “Wake Up Geek Culture. Time to Die”
  http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/12/ff_angrynerd_geekculture/

**Screen:**

*Big Bang Theory*

*Big Bang Theory clips (minus laugh track)*

**Outside Screening:** *Chuck* [Location/Time TBD]

**Due:**
- Monday, 9/26: Email me a PDF of your poaching position paper draft before 11am AND bring a hard copy of your draft to class.
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 10/2 at 6pm)

**Week 6 • The Rise of the Fanboy Auteur**

**Monday, 10/3:** Transmedia Storytelling and Ancillary Content Models
**Wednesday, 10/5:** Screenings and discussion
**Friday, 10/7:** Fanboy Auteurs and Textual Authority

**Read:**
- Henry Jenkins, “Transmedia Storytelling 101”
- Jonathan Gray, “Digital Auras and Authors”
- Suzanne Scott, “Authorized Resistance: Is Fan Production Frakked?”

**Screen:**

*Battlestar Galactica with podcast commentary*

**Due:**
- Monday, 10/3 by 11am: PDF final draft of poaching position paper submitted via email
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 10/9 at 6pm)

**Week 7 • Commander and Geek: Obama as the First Fanboy President**

Monday, 10/10: Speaker: Cleve Jones (Thorne Hall)
Wednesday, 10/12: (Hyper)white and Nerdy: Race and Geek Culture
Friday, 10/14: Discussion of readings and screenings
**Read:**
- Lori Kendall, “Nerd Nation: The Images of Nerds in US Popular Culture”
- Henry Jenkins, “From Participatory Culture to Participatory Democracy (I and II)”
  http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/from_participatory_culture_t.html
  http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/from_participatory_culture_t_1.html

**Screen:**
John Hodgman’s Radio & TV Correspondents Dinner speech (2009, 14 min)

**Outside Screening:** *Revenge of the Nerds* (Jeff Kanew, 1984, 90 min.) [Prior to Monday, 10/10: Screening time/location TBD]

**Due:**
- Friday, 10/14 @ 11am: Take-home midterm (PDF via email). NOTE: this will be handed out in class and made available on the blog on 10/12.
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 10/16 at 6pm)

**Week 8 • Fandom’s Gift Economy**

Monday, 10/17: Fall break [No Class]
Wednesday, 10/19: Fannish gift economies and their significance
Friday, 10/21: Term paper primer; Vidding partners assigned
**Read (by 10/19):**
- Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (ch. 4, 5)
- Karen Hellekson, “A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture”
- Henry Jenkins, et. al., “If It Doesn’t Spread, It’s Dead” parts III (“The Gift Economy and Commodity Culture”) and IV (“Thinking Through the Gift Economy”)
  http://henryjenkins.org/2009/02/if_it_doesnt_spread_its_dead_p_2.html
  http://henryjenkins.org/2009/02/if_it_doesnt_spread_its_dead_p_3.html
- Suzanne Scott, “Repackaging Fan Culture: The Regifting Economy of Ancillary Content Models”

**Outside Screening:** *Galaxy Quest* (Dean Parisot, 1999, 102 min.) [Time/location TBD]

**Due:**
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 10/23 at 6pm)

**Week 9 • Vidding lab time (oMac Lab, ground floor @ the Academic Commons)**

Monday, 10/24: Introduction to iMovie and audiovisual resources
Wednesday, 10/26: Work on vidding project with your partner
Friday, 10/28: Work on vidding project with your partner

**Due:**
- Monday, 10/24 by 8pm: Term paper proposals due via email
- Friday, 10/28 by 8pm: Term paper conference sign up via googledoc
- Sunday, 10/30 by 6pm: Co-authored email that briefly summarizes what you and your vidding partner are attempting to argue and how you plan to execute that argument (approx 500 words) due.

**Week 10 • The Politics of Professionalization**

**Monday, 10/31:** Commercializing fan culture in context

**Wednesday, 11/2:** Discussion of readings and professionalization debate

**Friday, 11/4:** Term paper workshopping: FanLib as test case

**Read:**
- Abigail De Kosnik, “Should Fan Fiction Be Free?”
- Rebecca Tushnet, “Copyright Law, Fan Practices, and the Rights of the Author”
- Henry Jenkins, “Transforming Fan Culture Into User-Generated Content: The Case of FanLib”
  
http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/05/transforming_fan_culture_into.html

**Due:**
- Term paper conferences during office hours this week
- Friday, 11/4 by 8pm: Sign up for term paper presentation slots via googledoc.
- Sunday, 11/6 by 8pm: Upload your vid to Kaltura

**Week 11 • Student vid presentations**

**Monday, 11/7:** Student vid screenings and discussion

**Wednesday, 11/9:** Vidding project postmortem

**Friday, 11/11:** Speaker: Lula Washington (Thorne Hall)

**Due:**
- Monday, 11/7: be prepared to screen and discuss your vid in class.
- Friday, 11/11 by 8pm: individual blog posts responding to vidding questionnaire due

**Week 12 • Comic Fanboys Save the Box Office/Twilight Fangirls “Ruin” Comic-Con**

**Monday, 11/14:** Twihate in context

**Wednesday, 11/16:** Screening and Discussion

**Friday, 11/18:** Term paper thesis/outline/works cited peer review

**Read:**
- Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, “Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun”
- Melissa Click, “‘Rabid,’ ‘Obsessed,’ and ‘Frenzied’: Understanding Twilight Fangirls and the Gendered Politics of Fandom”
  

- Popular press on the “Twilight Ruined Comic-Con” movement:
  

**Screen:**

*Twilight parodies*
The Cleveland Show, “Hot Cocoa Bang Bang” (Ian Graham, 2011, 30 min.)

Due:
- Friday, 11/18 by 11am: email me your term paper outline AND bring a hard copy in to class for peer review
- Weekly video blog response (by Sunday, 11/20 at 6pm)

Outing:
- We will be attending a screening of Twilight: Breaking Dawn as a class on the evening of Friday, 11/18. Details will be sent via email, but keep 5-10pm free for the time being.

Week 13 • Discussion of Presentations and Final Paper
Monday, 11/21: Prezi demo, bring in questions/concerns about presentations and term papers
Wednesday, 11/23: Thanksgiving Break [No Class]
Friday, 11/25: Thanksgiving Break [No Class]
Due: - Work on your presentations and term papers over the holiday.

Week 14 • Prezi Term Paper Presentations
Monday, 11/28: Presentation Group I
Wednesday, 11/30: Presentation Group II
Friday, 12/2: Presentation Group III

Week 15 • Prezi Presentations Redux and Course Wrap-Up
Monday, 12/5: Presentation Group IV
Wednesday, 12/7: Course Coda
Due: - Friday, 12/9: term papers (PDF via email by noon)