

The University of British Columbia
Final Examination – English 232.001
Approaches to Media Studies: Media and Popular Culture
Prof. Kevin McNeilly
18 December 2017

Write an essay of **approximately 2000 words** (7-8 typed double-spaced pages) on **ONE** of the following four prompts. Your essay must have a well-focused argument, and must engage in direct analysis of any texts or media artifacts you cite. Your essay must make reference to material drawn from **all three** of the media figures on the course syllabus: Harry Potter, Bob Marley, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Your essay must be submitted to me before or during the scheduled examination period for our class: in BuchA203 from 12:00 noon to 2:30 pm on December 18, 2017.

1.

Even when, wizard-cloaked and wand in hand, he is defeating monsters, Harry Potter is a contemporary boy. He therefore shops. Gazing at the latest broomsticks in the Diagon Alley shop windows, Harry desires the pleasures of retail therapy at least as much as he yearns for the lost love of parental contact. The library is important to all the stories; so is the bookshop. (Andrew Blake, *The Irresistible Rise of Harry Potter* [2002], 71-72)

With direct reference to material drawn from **all three** of the media figures on the course syllabus (Harry Potter, Bob Marley, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), discuss the consumption of media in the contemporary world. How do these three figures put acquisition or consuming at issue?

2.

Indigenous peoples had systems that were complete unto themselves and met their needs. Those systems were dynamic; they changed over time and were capable of continued change. Taken as a whole, the colonial process relied for its justification on the sheer presumption of taking a specific set of European beliefs and values and proclaiming them to be universal values that could be imposed upon the peoples of the world. (*Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary*, 49)

With direct reference to material drawn from **all three** of the media figures on the course syllabus (Harry Potter, Bob Marley, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), discuss the relationship(s) between media and globalization and/or decolonization.

3.

Lillian Allen, the Canadian-based Jamaican dub poet, likes to speak of the 'University of Bob Marley.' What she means is that in his heart there is so much that can be studied and so much that can be learned about history, human emotion, politics and about the deep inner workings of the imagination. . . . This book has forced me to work through this more complex figure, whose art and life offer contradictory expressions that make for the most beautiful and meaningful of creations. . . . There is something inadequate about this book and that is how it ought to be. (Kwame Dawes, *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*, 346)

With direct reference to material drawn from **all three** of the media figures on the course syllabus (Harry Potter, Bob Marley, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), discuss the ways in which engaging with media can produce new forms of knowledge and new kinds of pedagogy – practices of teaching, learning and study in the world. What kinds of work does media enable or require?

4.

The role of a critical student of media will be to weigh up . . . an argument in the face of evidence, and to consider alternative opinions. The key word is representation – of the public interest, of the people, of a plural society, and in a democracy, the question is always, how democratic is the media? . . . media images and messages carry values[;] they are loaded, and the critical media student has the theoretical toolkit to deconstruct them. (Julian McDougall, *Media Studies: The Basics*, 63, 65)

With direct reference to material drawn from **all three** of the media figures on the course syllabus (Harry Potter, Bob Marley, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), discuss the various forms of representation that emerge through the study of media. How does engaging with the circulation of signs and images help us to think critically about the production of meaning in everyday life?