This course considers superhero movies and television as a contemporary genre that reveals current trends in American culture. We will analyze this genre as a reflection of society and as an influence on it. By introducing some of the most basic themes crucial to Superhero film and TV, this course is designed to encourage perceptive and critical viewing of the types of mass marketed movies which are all too often derided as “only entertainment.” Topics will include how live-action superheroes represent: gender ideals, sexualities, ethnicity, patriotism, and post-9/11 fears.