

COLT 360: Gender and Film

# Star Gazing: Gender and the (Hollywood) Star System

Instructor: Audrey Vanderford  
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CRN: 40590  
M, T, W, Th – 12-1:50 – 201 Villard

What makes someone a star? How do stars function in our society? Why and how do stars give us pleasure?

This course will examine the history and ideology of the “star system,” the ways in which the film industry has promoted and the public has responded to certain celebrities. Paying particular attention to the ways in which stars perform gender, the course will also explore issues of sexuality, race, ethnicity, and genre.

## Required Reading:

Articles are available in PDF format on Blackboard. Materials are also on reserve at the Knight Library

## Course Requirements:

- Participation – 20%
- Response papers (2-3 p) – 3 @ 10%
- Presentation – 10%
- Final exam – 20%
- Term paper (6-8 p) – 20%

## Presentations:

On the first day of class, you will be assigned a star to give a presentation on during the last week of class. Your presentation should NOT be a biography. It should include some sort of visual material (a film clip, a photograph), and you will give a close reading of your star as a “text.”

## Schedule:

Readings must be done by the day assigned. Unless otherwise indicated on the syllabus, you are responsible for screening films outside of class. All readings and films are on reserve at the Knight Library.

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| Week 1 | M  | <u>Introduction—What is a star?</u>  |
|        | T  | Reading: Dyer, <i>Heavenly Bodies</i> , Introduction<br>Star: Robert DeNiro<br>Film (in class): Raging Bull            |
|        | W  | Film: <i>Meet the Parents</i>  |
|        | Th | <u>Women, the Gaze, and Film Spectatorship</u><br>Stars: Marlene Dietrich, Katherine Hepburn, Mae West, Marilyn Monroe |
|        |    | Reading: Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”  |

Weekend viewing: *Shanghai Express*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Bringing Up Baby*

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| Week 2 | M  | Paper 1 due<br>Film (in class): <i>She Done Him Wrong</i> |
|        | T  | Reading: Dyer, <i>Heavenly Bodies</i> , Ch 1              |
|        | W  | <u>Real Men</u><br>Star: John Wayne                       |
|        |    | Reading: Baker, Ch 7; Wills, Prologue                     |
|        | Th | Film (in class): <i>Stagecoach</i>                        |

Weekend viewing: *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *The Searchers*, *The Emporer Jones*

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| Week 3 | M  | Paper 2 due  |
|        | T  | <u>Racialized Bodies</u><br>Stars: Paul Robeson, Josephine Baker |
|        |    | Reading: Dyer, <i>Heavenly Bodies</i> , Ch 2                     |
|        | W  | Film (in class): <i>Zou Zou</i>                                  |
|        | Th | <u>Hollywood vs Bollywood</u><br>Reading: TBA                    |
|        |    | Paper 3 due  |

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| Week 4 | M  | Presentations |
|        | T  | Presentations |
|        | W  | Presentations |
|        | Th | Final Exam    |

Term paper due by noon on Monday August 20