***Boy Meets Girl*** *(2014)*

**Film background:** *Boy Meets Girl* was released in 2014. It was written and directed by Eric Schaeffer, who is a cisgender man. Schaeffer was adamant that the role of Ricky go to a transgender woman, explaining to Filmmaker Magazine, "Being an independent filmmaker, I had the latitude to cast a trans woman and not have to satisfy a studio (which would have ponied up a ton of money) by casting a famous cisgender man or cisgender woman, which likely they would have required. I felt it socially important that a trans woman play the trans part." Schaeffer cast Michelle Hendley, who was in cosmetology school and had never acted before, but who had a YouTube channel in which she spoke openly about her identity, her interests, and her transition. The film was nominated for many LGBTQ film awards, including a GLAAD Media Award.

**Plot summary:** The film follows a 20-year old transgender woman, Ricky (Michelle Hendley), who lives in Kentucky and dreams of moving to New York to become a fashion designer. chats with her best friend, Robby (Michael Welch) and expresses her frustration with dating men. Then she meets Francesca, (Alexandra Turshen), a wealthy cisgender woman who is engaged to David (Michael Galante), a cisgender man who is a Marine serving in Afghanistan. At Robby's urging, Ricky comes out as trans to Francesca; Francesca is not knowledgable about trans identity, but she is supportive. The two become friends and eventually lovers, despite Francesca's engagement. When David returns home early from Afghanistan, he is enraged by Ricky and Francesca's relationship, and it is later revealed that some of his anger stems from a past sexual encounter with Ricky, which he has kept secret. After deciding that she doesn't love Francesca, and perhaps that dating Francesca would be risky considering Francesca's conservative family's overtures, Ricky has a fight with Robby, who says cruel things to her about her identity despite his lifelong support. Ricky's younger brother, Sam (Joseph Ricci) shows Robby a video he found on her computer from seven years prior, in which she explained that her mother left the family because she didn't accept Ricky's identity, and that has led Ricky to acts of self-harm. Robby finds Ricky, and finally expresses to her that he was jealous of Francesca and he has romantic feelings for Ricky. The two begin dating. While Ricky gets rejected from a New York fashion school, Francesca and Robby start a crowdfunding campaign to help Ricky move to New York. She and Robby set off to pursue their dreams in the city, and Ricky posts the video from her childhood, which ends with an uplifting message. The film ends with a montage of many different people watching her video in support of her.

**Content warning:** *Boy Meets Girl* contains brief nudity, references to self-harm, transphobic comments, and frank discussion of sexual acts.

**Note:**

* I’ve provided 3 clips/trailers from films mentioned by Julia Serano in Chapter 2 of *Whipping Girl.* Because the reading for Day 2’s class is short, you may want to also assign students to watch these videos before class, as it may give students a sense of the archetypes that Serano addresses in her reading.

**Materials for this week:**

* Day 1: Trans 101 Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ZzpTxjgRw>
* Day 2: Video clips from *The Crying Game* and *Transamerica* (Watch before class) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0qVhhIfWr4>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z-o1RVdnHE>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9jz3uz8cqc>
* Day 2: Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity.* Seal Press, 2007. (Excerpt provided: Ch 2: "Skirt Chasers: Why The Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels")
* Day 3: Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity.* Seal Press, 2007. (Excerpt provided: Ch. 8: "Dismantling Cissexual Privilege")

**Lesson 1 – “Trans 101” and Close Reading:**

1. (7 min) Screening quiz.
2. (8 min) Watch Trans 101 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ZzpTxjgRw>

* *Defines key terms and concepts, such as gender, transgender, non-binary, transitioning, distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation, etc.*

1. (3 min) Jot down notes.
2. What key ideas did this video cover?
3. What questions do you have about the terms or concepts raised in the video?
4. (5 min) Discuss the questions above.
5. (15 min) Student-led scene analysis (see notes in *But I’m A Cheerleader* lesson plan and materials for details on this).
6. (3 min) Start teacher-led scene analysis with screening clip.
7. (4 min) Discussion prep.
8. (17 min) Whole class discussion. If time permits, have students share their responses with a partner before moving into discussion.

**Lesson 2:**

1. (5 min) Personal reflection. Choose one question to respond to.
   1. Did you enjoy watching *Boy Meets Girl?* Why or why not?
   2. Did you relate to any of the characters in the film? Why or why not?
   3. Consider other representations of trans people that you have seen in the media. What was similar or different about the character of Ricky, compared to other media representations you’ve seen?
2. (8 min) Discuss.
3. (5 min) Watch today’s scene.
4. (10 min) Discussion prep.
   1. Consider the reading you did by Julia Serano. What key arguments did she make?
   2. Consider the video clips from *The Crying Game* and *Transamerica* you watched prior to class. How did those clips illustrate Serano’s claims?
   3. Consider the scene we just watched from *Boy Meets Girl,* as well as other scenes in the film. Do you think *Boy Meets Girl* resists the stereotypes that Serano critiques, or does it play into these stereotypes? Explain your response with evidence from the film and from the text.
5. (25 min) Whole group discussion. If time permits, you may want to have students share their responses with a partner prior to discussion.
   1. Consider the reading you did by Julia Serano. What key arguments did she make?
   2. Consider the video clips from *The Crying Game* and *Transamerica* you watched prior to class. How did those clips illustrate Serano’s claims?
   3. Consider the scene we just watched from *Boy Meets Girl,* as well as other scenes in the film. Do you think *Boy Meets Girl* resists the stereotypes that Serano critiques, or does it play into these stereotypes? Explain your response with evidence from the film and from the text.