

## **Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies 2230: Gender, Sexuality, and Race in Popular Culture**

Spring 2016  
Tues/Thurs 2:20-3:40 PM  
Thurs 3:50-5:30  
Enarson Classroom Bldg 243  
[denise.fuller12@gmail.com](mailto:denise.fuller12@gmail.com)

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### **Course Description**

This course explores how popular culture generates and articulates our understandings of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race and class. We will study a variety of theories and methods used in contemporary gender/sexual scholarship on popular culture, and we will examine a number of popular media texts. This course is based on the premise that popular culture is never simply diversion or entertainment. Instead, pop culture provides us with the stories, images, and scripts that enable us to imagine and practice femininities, masculinities, and sexualities. These images and practices, in turn, are imbued with class and racial values and characteristics (e.g. the whiteness of brides in bridal magazines). The sex and gender norms generated by popular culture are evident in the clothes we buy, the "looks" we aspire to, and the ways we think of love and romance. We absorb these norms from the ads we see, the movies/television we watch, and the celebrity stories we see on the news. This course enables us to do critical thinking about these images, practices, and stories. The point is to enable

### **Accommodations of Students with Disabilities:**

Students who have verification from Disability Services are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies. Contact the ODS at 614.292.3307, TDD 614.292.0901, <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

## Fulfillment of GEC requirement:

This course fulfills the GEC requirement for *Visual and Performing Arts*. At the completion of WGSS 2230, students should be able to

- Understand the basic concepts of major critical theories used in studies of popular culture
- Make practical applications of these theories to popular texts
- Locate, through the above, the text's treatment of issues of gender, sexuality, and race

## Texts

No textbooks are required for this course. I will post all reading assignments on Carmen under the **content** tab. If you have any problems accessing these texts, please email me. PowerPoint slides will also be made available on Carmen. You should print out the articles and PowerPoints and bring them to class for discussion.

## Grade Breakdown

### **Attendance and Participation = 50 pts.**

Please note, in order to receive full points for participation, you must contribute to class discussion at least once a week, have read the assignments, and you must have the articles on the day of discussion. I allow two (2) absences and two (2) late arrivals before it begins to negatively impact your grade. If you miss more than four classes, you automatically fail the course.

### **Reading Assignments (20 pts. each, 10 papers, drop lowest) = 180 points**

Beginning January 21<sup>st</sup>, every Thursday students must turn in a page where they answer the following questions about the week's readings:

- ARGUMENT: What are the author's main arguments? Do you agree or disagree with the author's argument? Why or why not?
- CONNECTIONS: How does the author's argument relate to earlier/other texts we've read or films we've watched?

\*\* The reading assignment must be submitted to dropbox before class in order to receive points.

### **Advertising Scrapbook = 50 points**

For this project, you must collect five (5) advertisements that utilize the following identity categories or stereotypes to sell a project: race/ethnicity/nation, gender, class, (dis)ability, and/or sexuality. Respond to each advertisement with a two (2) paragraph critical analysis that utilizes the theories and ideas you've learned in the course thus far. Be creative! This digital scrapbook can be in form of a Powerpoint or PDF. This assignment must be submitted on the due date before class begins to the dropbox. I will accept late scrapbooks for up to 24 hours after its due date (remember: it's late once class begins), but I will take off 25%.

### **Music Video Analysis Short Paper = 80 points**

For this written project, you must analyze a music video. You should analyze how the music video draws upon hegemonic and/or counterhegemonic views on race, sexuality, gender, (dis)ability, class, etc. Please take this assignment as an opportunity to focus on theories you find interesting. This two to three (2-3) page paper should allow me to see your understanding of a critical analysis of popular culture. Make sure you cite the relevant course readings within your paper. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. All papers must adhere to the standard MLA research paper format and should include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page. Your thesis statement must be underlined. Your papers should not merely repeat class discussion or consist of a summary or description; your paper should argue a thesis and take a position about the text. Papers should be submitted to the appropriate dropbox and must be in Microsoft Word format. I will accept late Music Video Analysis papers for up to 24 hours after its due date (remember: it's late once class begins), but I will take off 25%.

### **Feminist Fan Creation = 100**

For this assignment, you will use our discussions and readings to change an existing piece of media into a feminist version of itself.

|                       |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Grading Scale:</b> | A 93-100% | A- 90-92% |           |
|                       | B+ 87-89% | B 83-86%, | B- 80-82% |
|                       | C+ 77-79% | C 73-76%  | C- 70-72% |
|                       | D+ 67-69% | D 63-67%  | D- 60-62% |
|                       |           |           |           |

**Plagiarism:**

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is "the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas." Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

Cite your sources, ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, and see me if you are having difficulty with an assignment. Do not plagiarize!

**Resources:**

The Writing Center offers free, ungraded assistance with assignments and writing concerns. Even strong writers can benefit from this service, and I encourage you to schedule an appointment with a trained tutor. For more information about available services, call 614-688-4291 or explore the website at <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/about.cfm>

Please feel free to contact me at any time over the course of the quarter if you are struggling with papers, course work, etc. I am more than happy to assist you! E-mail is the best way to contact me. If you have concerns about the course or find yourself struggling with content or assignments, it is your responsibility to seek help from me as soon as possible.

*I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule at any time.*

**Course Schedule****INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS**

**January 12: Syllabus and icebreaker**

**January 14: Introduction to the class and feminism, discuss reading**

Read: Kellner, "Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture"

Lull, "Hegemony"

**January 19: Lecture on Advertisements, discuss readings**

Read: Berger, "Ways of Seeing"

Hooks, "Oppositional Gaze"

**ADVERTISEMENTS**

**January 21: Discuss readings, screen *Miss Representation***

Read: Jhally, "Image-Based Culture"

Schor, "The New Politics of Consumption: Why Americans Want So Much More Than They Need"

**January 26: Finish screening *Miss Representation* , discussion of film**

Cover Advertising Scrapbook assignment

**January 28: Discussion of *Killing Us Softly 4* and article**

Watch: Killing Us Softly 4 <http://vimeo.com/73446465>

Read: Gill, "Advertising and Postfeminism"

**February 2: Discussion of readings**

Read: Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity"

Katz, "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity"

**February 4: Discuss readings**

Read: Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory"

Haller and Ralph, "Current Perspectives on Advertising Images of Disability"

**MUSIC**

**February 9: Lecture on section**

Cover Music Video Analysis Short Paper

\*\* Assignment due: Advertising Scrapbook

**February 11: Discuss readings**

Read: Wallis, "Performing Gender: A Content Analysis of Gender Display in Music Videos"

<https://theconversation.com/lets-hit-the-target-when-we-take-aim-at-sexist-music-videos-20326>

**February 16: Screen *Dreamworlds 3***

**February 18: Discuss Screen *Dreamworlds 3***

No reading assignment

### **February 23: Discussion of film and articles**

Watch: *Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

[http://www.disclose.tv/action/viewvideo/66186/HIPHOP\\_Beyond\\_Beats\\_amp\\_Rhymes/](http://www.disclose.tv/action/viewvideo/66186/HIPHOP_Beyond_Beats_amp_Rhymes/)

Read: Stephens & Few, "The Effects of Images of African American Women in Hip Hop on Early Adolescents' Attitudes Toward Physical Attractiveness and Interpersonal Relationships"

Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media"

### **February 25: Continue discussion of film and articles**

### **March 1: Group activity in-class**

### **SPORTS**

#### **March 3: Discuss film and lecture**

Watch: *Not Just a Game* on DRM

No reading assignment

\*\* Assignment due: Music Video Analysis Short Paper

#### **March 8: Discuss readings**

Read: Cahn, "Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women's Sport"

Lavelle, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Black Masculinity in NBA Game Commentary"

Freeman, "Jeremy Lin row reveals deep-seated racism against Asian Americans"

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/feb/21/jeremy-lin-racism-asian-americans>

### **March 10: Continue reading discussion**

### **March 14-18: Spring Break**

### **THE BODY IN POP CULTURE**

#### **March 22: Lecture and discuss readings**

Read: Walton and Jaffe, "'Stuff White People Like'"

Wise, "Honky Wanna Cracker? Examining the Myth of 'Reverse' Racism"

<http://www.timwise.org/2002/06/honky-wanna-cracker-examining-the-myth-of-reverse-racism/>

Harris, "Not Everyone's Laughing at 'Shit White Girls Say to Black Girls'"

<http://www.clutchmagonline.com/2012/01/not-everyones-laughing-at-shit-white-girls-say-to-black-girls/>

**March 24: Discuss readings**

Read: Schooler et al, "Who's That Girl: Television's Role in the Body Image Development of Young White and Black Women"

Kilbourne, "The More You Subtract, the More You Add: Cutting Girls Down to Size"

Gallagher and Pecot-Hebert, "You Need a Makeover!": The Social Construction of Female Body Image in *A Makeover Story*, *What Not to Wear*, and *Extreme Makeover*"

**March 28: Discuss readings**

Read: Clarkson, "The Limitations of the Discourse of Norms: Gay Visibility and Degrees of Transgression"

Serano, "Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Dresses the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels"

**March 30: Group in-class activity**

Cover Feminist Fan Creation Assignment

**GAMING AND FAN CULTURE**

**April 5: Lecture on section and in-class activity**

**April 7: Discuss readings and clips**

Watch: Feminist Frequency, "Damsel in Distress: Part 1" and PBS Game/Show "Are Games Racist?" \*\* No writing assignment for these clips

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r\\_Q&list=PLn4ob\\_5\\_ttEaA\\_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q&list=PLn4ob_5_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brnpRhjJl8w>

Read: Cross, "The New Laboratory of Dreams: Role-playing Games as Resistance"

Bertoizzi, "'You Play Like a Girl!' Cross-Gender Competition and the Uneven Playing Field"

**April 12: Discuss readings**

Read: Sanbonmatsu, "Video Games and Machine Dreams of Domination"  
Schut, "The Bias of Computer Games in the Presentation of History"

**April 14: Discuss fanculture a.k.a fandom**

Busse, "Geek Hierarchies, Boundary Policing, and the Gendering of the Good Fan"

Gosling, "Girls Allowed? The Marginalization of Female Sports Fans"

TBD

**April 19: Group in-class activity**

**April 21: Final class period - Closing thoughts**

No reading assignment

\*\* Assignment due: Feminist Fan Creation