

Women's Studies WMST339 L01
Gender in Popular Culture
Winter 2014
M/W/F 14:00-14:50 ST139
(no classes February 17-21 Reading Week)

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Office Hours: M 12:30-1:45 or by appt.

Course Description

Popular culture is not only entertainment, but also a powerful force in society, providing representations, messages, images, and ideas about gender identities. In this course, we will think critically and analytically about alternative constructions of femininity and masculinity, drawing from a variety of cultural forms, including film, video, popular music, television, advertising, and the internet. Through lectures, discussions, written assignments, presentations, and class activities we will work to critique the popular representations that shape our beliefs about gender.

Objectives of the Course

- To develop strong critical thinking and analytical skills in order to assess popular culture.
- To gain a historical perspective on popular culture and on representations of gender.
- To examine the ways popular culture simultaneously establishes, reinforces and challenges gender stereotypes.

WARNING

Some of the materials and topics in this class may include explicit written or audio-visual content (violence, sexuality, objectionable or illegal conduct). If these materials make you uncomfortable, you are encouraged to speak with the professor. You will not be exempt from any assigned work but we will work together to accommodate your concerns. This class respects difference and diversity while welcoming thoughtful, critical debate and discussion.

Textbook and Readings

There is no required textbook to purchase for this course.

At the start of the term, a schedule of topics to be discussed will be posted to Blackboard, along with links to online articles, blogs, and other texts dealing with those topics, which students will be expected to read by the assigned date. Weekly announcements will be posted to Blackboard with reminders about assignments and class activities. Students should make a habit of checking Blackboard at least once a week.

Assignments and Evaluation

Personal Essay	Feb. 7	20%
Quizzes (3 @ 10% each)		30%
#1	Jan. 27	
#2	Feb. 24	
#3	March 17	
Group Presentation	March 26-April 11	20%
Research Paper	April 18	30%

All written assignments will be submitted through Digital Dropbox on Blackboard. No assignments will be submitted in hardcopy, whether handed to the instructor, dropped at the main office, or slid under office doors, nor will assignments be accepted through email attachment. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment, and to check email regularly for notices of missing assignments. All assignments must be submitted, or a grade of F may be assigned at the instructor's discretion. No assignments will be accepted for grading after the first day of the exam period for Winter term. There is no registrar-scheduled final exam for this course.

Personal Essay: This assignment is an essay of 750-900 words, requiring no use of sources other than the student's life experience, reflecting on how one or two works of popular culture construct and reflect one aspect of their gendered identity. The personal essay will be evaluated on content (a narrow and deep analysis of the texts considered), on structure and organization, on grammar, sentence construction, and expression, and on citation of the primary texts using either APA or MLA citation style.

Quizzes: On three dates – January 27, February 24, and March 17 – students will write a quiz assessing their understanding of assigned readings and course concepts. The questions will be a combination of short answer responses, definitions, and multiple choice. Students will not have access to notes or other resources for the quizzes. Students who provide supporting documentation for missing a quiz will not be allowed to write the quiz but will be allowed to complete an alternate form of assessment at the instructor's discretion. This may include writing an essay on the concepts covered by the quiz. The quizzes will be evaluated on a demonstration of comprehensive mastery of course material.

Presentation: Students will be assigned into small groups of 4-6 members based on topics as discussed in class, with the aim of exploring the topic in more depth and detail, and ensuring a variety of perspectives are considered. Each group member should expect to speak for 3-4 minutes; all group members will share in the grade for the presentation unless another assessment is deemed necessary as a result of expressed group concerns or the instructor's observations. The presentation will be evaluated on content (connection of material to course concepts and class discussion) and on clarity (visual and verbal articulation of concepts).

Research Paper: This assignment is a researched essay of 1250-2000 words, requiring research into 5-8 secondary sources on theories and topics discussed in class. In their research, students will be expected to go beyond the readings in order to develop a fuller understanding of a particular topic, and to illustrate that understanding using one to three examples of popular culture texts. The research paper will be evaluated on content (explanation of concepts and analysis of examples), on structure and organization, on grammar, sentence construction, and expression, and on integration and citation of primary and secondary texts using either APA or MLA citation style.

COURSE POLICIES

Policy for Late Assignments or Extensions

Assignments are due through Digital Dropbox on the stated due date. Students may email the instructor before the due date to request a brief extension of up to 48 hours with no penalty. Students may request a longer extension of up to one week on the understanding that the work will receive only a letter grade but no feedback. Assignments submitted after the due date (whether original or extended), will be considered late and will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- reduced to B+) for each day late.

Writing Skills Statement

All written assignments (including written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented, using either MLA or APA style correctly and consistently.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

Grading System

In this class, you will receive grades in the 4-point GPA scale *rather than* percentages.

	Grading Scale	GPA
A+	96-100	4.0
A	90-95.99	4.0
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3.0
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2.0
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1.0
F	0-49	0

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. Instances of plagiarism will be reported to the student's home faculty.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students may use laptops to take notes, but not to do any other personal work (such as Facebook or checking email) in order not to distract other students. At no time may students use cell phones for any reason whatsoever.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see the University of Calgary Research Ethics site: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link; <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Academic Accommodation Policy

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course. For further information, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/node/46>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

Please note the evacuation points for this particular classroom. All classrooms on campus exit to specific places in case of emergency. The emergency assembly points differ depending upon where your classroom is located. For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 403-220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by using their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam.

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.