

Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies 2230  
**Gender, Sexuality and Race in Popular Culture**  
Enarson Classroom Building 0222, MWF 9:10-10:05am

Instructor: Alexandra (Alex) Anastasia

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Office: Dulles, Room 30

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm at the Wexner Cafe or by appointment

**Accommodation of students with disabilities:** Students who need to have an accommodation for disability are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307; 292-0901 TDD) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

**Course Description:**

This course explores how popular culture generates and articulates our understandings of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race, class and ability. We will study a variety of theories and methods used in contemporary feminist/cultural studies on popular culture, as well as examine a number of popular media texts.

This course is based on the premise that popular culture is never simply entertainment or a diversion. Instead, “pop” culture provides us with stories, images and scripts through which we imagine and practice femininities, masculinities, and sexualities. These images and stories are also infused with class and racial characteristics. The norms perpetuated and contested through popular culture are evident in our constructions of ourselves and society – from the look we aspire to and the clothes we buy to the ways we understand sex, love, and romance. This course allows us to critically analyze images, practices, and narratives that perpetuate and/or disrupt these norms. By the end of the course, you should have the skills and tools to perform such analyses on your own.

**Fulfillment of GEC Requirement:**

This course fulfills the GEC requirement for Arts and Literature: Visual/Performing Arts. At the completion of WGSS2230, students should be able to:

- Understand the basic concepts of major critical theories used in studies of popular culture;
- Make practical application of these theories to a popular text;
- Critically analyze a popular text through close attention to structure, imagery, and generic components;
- And locate, through the above, the text's treatment of issues of gender, sexuality, and race.

**Goals:**

Students evaluate significant works of art in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and

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writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant works of art.
2. Students engage in informed observation and/or active participation in a discipline within the visual, spatial, and performing arts.

**Required Texts:**

All required readings will be posted on Carmen. You are not required to purchase a text for this class. In place of purchasing a text you are responsible for obtaining access to view movies, TV shows and other media that are required for this class. Being able to view certain media may require a Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon account or the ability to rent a movie. When available, I will post links to media on Carmen. Media should be treated as a learning material, thus pay the same attention to it as you would to an article.

**Expectations:**

In order to earn **FULL participation points** in class you must contribute to the conversation during class. You are expected to be an active participant in your own learning, I have no intention of standing up in front of you and talking at you, rather I want you all to learn from one another. Each of you will have different experiences and backgrounds and some of you will be familiar with the materials while for others this will be brand new, either way, everyone has something valuable to contribute and it's a disservice to yourself and your classmates to not participate.

This class is meant to be a SAFE space in which an array of topics and ideas can be explored, many of which are often considered controversial and sometimes elicit feelings of discomfort. Due to the nature of the material you may find yourself having very strong opinions in relation to a topic -- you are encouraged to express your opinions in a RESPECTFUL manner.

You are expected to arrive to class on time each day and remain seated with materials out until the end of the class period. Late arrivals and early departures will be reflected in your grade.

**Email**

I will do my best to reply to emails as quickly as possible; you generally can anticipate a reply within 24 hours. When communicating with me via e-mail, you are expected to observe a degree of professional etiquette. This includes addressing your message with a proper salutation (ex. *Dear Alex*), using grammatically correct sentences and respectful language, and ending with a closing (ex. *Best, Sue*). Please note that, in order to promote the cultivation of professional skills, I will not respond to poorly crafted e-mails that do not adhere to appropriate decorum.

**Additionally, you are expected to regularly check emails as part of your time in this class. Changes in the syllabus, readings, assignments, etc. . . will be sent out via email and any information dispersed through email and/or via Carmen notifications is your responsibility.**

**Attendance and Participation – 20%**

Your attendance grade is a large part of your overall class grade and is based on your active participation within classroom discussions. You must show up to class on time and engage in order to

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receive full attendance points. You are allowed to miss **3 classes without penalty**, beyond that you will **lose 1 point from your FINAL class grade for each class you miss**.

Students are responsible for getting class notes from others for missed classes, and missing a class period in which a pop-quiz is given will automatically result in a 0 on that day's pop-quiz grade. Additionally, in-class assignments (which will draw directly from the materials assigned for that day) will be counted towards your attendance and participation grade.

In the event of an extenuating circumstance (death of a family member, serious illness or injury, etc..) I may choose to excuse absences and allow assignments to be made up with the appropriate documentation, but you must contact me to discuss this.

**Part of your attendance grade requirement is to meet with me during office hours at least one time before the end of October.** We can use this time to discuss questions or comments you have about the subject area or specific course materials or, if you are further along in the discipline, to talk about your work more in depth. If you are unable to make my scheduled office hours, please email me so we can arrange an alternate time.

### **Essays – 20%**

You will be asked to write two course papers over the course of the term. There are four essay due dates listed on the syllabus – the choice is yours as to which ones you choose. Each essay must be 3-4 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins). Please note that failure to comply to these guidelines will result in a significant penalty in your grade. In order to receive full credit, you must engage all aspects of the paper prompt, relating your assertions to course materials. The essay prompts will be posted on Carmen and essays are due by 9:10am to the Carmen dropbox on their due date.

### **Feminist Re-mix and analysis – 15%**

For this assignment, you will work in teams to create a feminist “remix” of a pop culture artifact (song, music video, book, commercial, advertisement, tv show, film, etc). Each team will present/perform its feminist remix. Each individual team member will write a 1-3 page individual essay that reflects on why and how their group chose to create the feminist re-mix that they did.

### **Pop-Quizzes – 10%**

You will have 12 pop quizzes over the course of the semester. Your **ten highest** pop-quiz grades will be worth 10% of your final course grade, with the two lowest of your quiz grades being dropped (this includes quizzes you miss and therefore receive a zero on) The quizzes will ask you to answer questions about the work assigned during that week and thus may draw from ANY OR ALL of the materials (including movies, tv shows, ads, music videos, etc... ) during the week in which you are giving the pop-quiz. **Pop-quizzes cannot be made up.**

### **Carmen Posts – 10%**

You are required to **post a total of four times** throughout the semester on the Carmen discussion boards. In order to count towards your grade, posts must be at least 2-3 paragraphs in length, legible and contain few grammatical errors.

Posts should directly address the topics we are discussing in class **that week. Posts are expected to be a direct response to and/or analysis of the material you are assigned that week.** Posts cannot be done retroactively, nor can posts be submitted early (before the week has begun)

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While you are welcome and encouraged to post as much as you would like, you **MUST** post during four **separate weeks** in order to receive full credit (each post is worth 25 points for a total of 100 points). Thus, if you post multiple times in one week, only one of those posts will count towards your grade. These posts are meant to be a way for you to critically engage with and reflect on the material you are reading, they are a good opportunity to flush out ideas and questions about the subject matter --- you do not need to be “right” about anything in your posts, rather I am looking to see that you are trying to work through an idea and reflect on what you are learning.

There will be a discussion board set up for each week on Carmen (labeled as that week’s topic). Please make sure to post under the appropriate week, failure to do this may result in a lower grade.

### Late Assignments

Assignments are due by 9:10am to the Carmen dropbox on the due date listed on the syllabus. Assignments are graded on a 100 point scale and you will lose 5 points for each day an assignment is late. Assignments will NOT be accepted more than three days late unless prior arrangements have been made with me and we have agreed on an alternative. Handing in an assignment after the start of class on its due date will result in the assignment being graded as if it is a day late.

Requirement	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance and Participation	20%
Essays	20%
Feminist Re-mix and analysis	15%
Quizzes (10 highest)	10%
Carmen Posts	10%
Midterm	10%
Final	15%

### Plagiarism & Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is a very, very serious offense. Plagiarism includes direct copying *and paraphrasing* from another author without acknowledging your source. For your own protection, please take the time to understand OSU’s policy on 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.

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Always cite your sources. **Always ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism.** Always see me if you are having difficulty with an assignment. To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!**

### **Week 1: Introduction to Feminism**

**8/27 (W):**

- Syllabus review and introductions

**8/29 (F):**

- *I'm Not a Feminist, But . . .* (Weiss)
- *Excerpt from Gaga Feminisms: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (Halberstam)

### **Week 2: Analyzing with a Feminist Lens: Gender, Sex and Race 101**

**9/1: NO CLASSES** (Labor Day)

**9/3:**

- *Not Your Mom's Trans 101* (Asher)
- *X: A Fabulous Child's Story* (Gould)

**9/5:**

- *Why Boys Don't Play with Dolls* (Pollitt)
- *Introduction to Gender Socialization* (Burack)

### **Week 3: Frameworks for Analysis: Power, Oppression and Privilege 101**

**9/8:**

- *Oppression* (Frye)
- *Assignment:* Define "oppression" in your own words, bring to class
- *Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference* (Lorde)

**9/10:**

- *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (McIntosh)
- *Heterosexual Privilege: Owning My Advantage* (Katz)
- *Assignment:* Define "privilege" in your own words, bring to class

**9/12:**

- *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (Pharr)

### **Week 4: Why Study Pop-culture?**

**9/15:**

- *Five Ways You Don't Realize Movies are Controlling Your Brain* (Wong)

**9/17:**

- *It's Just a Movie': A Teaching Essay for Introductory Media Classes* (Smith)

**9/19:**

- *Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture* (Kellner)

### **Week 5: Hegemony**

**9/22:**

- *Hegemony* (Lull)
- *Assignment*: Define “hegemony” in your own words --- bring definition to class

9/24:

- **ESSAY #1 DUE**
- Screen: *This Film is Not Yet Rated* (Netflix)

9/26:

- *If Ya Liked It Then You Shoulda Made a Video, Beyonce Knowles, YouTube and public spheres of images* (Pullen)

### **Week 6: Femininities and Masculinities in Pop Culture**

9/29:

- *Where My Girls At: Negotiating Black Womanhood in Music Videos* (Emerson)

10/1:

- *The More You Subtract, The More You Add: Cutting Girls Down to Size* (Kilbourne)
- *Body Image: Advertising and Magazines*
- *Assignment*: Find a copy of magazine or catalog and bring to class

10/3:

- *Beauty (Re)discovers the Male Body* (Bordo)
- Screen *Miss Representation* (OSU Media Library)
- *Assignment*: Define “representation” (of bodies) in your own words, and bring into class

### **Week 7: Representations of Disability in the Media**

10/6:

- *Toward a Theory of Disability* (Gerschick)
- *The Politics of Staring* (Garland-Thomson)
- Screen: *Switched at Birth, S1E1*(Netflix)

10/8

- *Homeland and Bipolar Disorder: How TV Characters Are Changing the Way We View Mental Illness*
- *Current Perspectives on Advertising Images of Disability* (Haller and Ralph)

10/10

- Screen *Frozen* (movie) – make sure to record your thoughts on what narratives you are seeing in the movie

### **Week 8: Pop Culture and Identity Formation**

10/13:

- *The End of White America*
- *Pic up the Mic* (in-class screening)
- *Assignment*: Define “identity formation” and look up and take notes on what “intersectionality” means (remember: Wikipedia and google definitions are NOT reliable or acceptable sources)

10/15:

- **ESSAY #2 DUE**
- *Not Just Pictures* (Bordo)
- *Gender Inequality in Film* (New York Academy)

10/17:

- *Introduction to Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism's Work is Done*

### Week 9: Depicting Racial Diversity and Class

10/20:

- *The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media* (Hall)
- *I know You're Tired of Hearing about Girls: but How about a Puzzling Piece of History* (Wanzo)

10/22:

- *Cybertyping and the Work of Race in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (Nakamura)

10/24

- *Ralph, Fred, Archie, Homer, and the King of Queens: Why Television Keeps Re-Creating the Male Working-Class Buffoon* (Butsch)
  
- *This is Why Poor People's Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense* (Tirado)

### Week 10: Queerness and Sexuality in the Media

10/27:

- *Gay Characters in Conventional Spaces: Will and Grace and the Situation Comedy Genre* (Kathleen Battles and Wendy Hilton-Marrow)
- *Performing Glee: Gay Resistance to Gay Representations and a New Slumpy Class* (Miller)
- Screen: Any TWO episodes of *Modern Family* (hulu plus) (amazon \$)

10/29:

- **ESSAY #3 DUE**
- *Queering Black Female Heterosexuality* (Springer)
- *Sex and the City: Carrie Bradshaw's Queer Postfeminism* (Gerhard)
- Screen: Any episode of *Sex and the City* (amazon\$)
- Assignment: Look up the difference between "sexuality and sexual orientation", find an explanation of what "queer theory" is / wants us to look at.

10/31:

- *Popular Culture and Queer Representations* (Raymond)
- *Coming Out Stories: On Frank Ocean* (Summer M.)
- Screen: *Grey's Anatomy: Season 7, Episode 13 (Don't Deceive Me)* (hulu plus)

### Week 11: Prison Culture

11/3: MIDTERM

11/5: Readings TBA (Guest lecturer)

11/7: Readings TBA (Guest lecturer)

### Week 12: Socializing Youth and Future Implications

11/10

- Reading TBA
- Screen one of the following: *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* or *Sleeping Beauty*

11/12

- Reading TBA

- Screen: *Merchants of Cool*  
(available here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/>)

11/14

- Groups 1 and 2 present

**Week 13: Disrupting Hegemony and Challenging “ideals”**

11/17:

- **ESSAY #4 DUE**
- *The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators* (hooks)
- *Can We Stop Fighting Over Beyonce’s Feminism Now?* (Crosley)
- Assignment: define “oppositional gaze”

11/19:

- *For White Girls Only? Postfeminism and the Politics of Inclusion*
- *Rethinking Subcultural Resistance: Core Values of the Straight Edge Movement* (Haenfler)
- Assignment: Define “postfeminism”

11/21:

- Groups 3 and 4 present

**Week 14: TBA / Thanksgiving**

11/24: Group 5 presents

- Reading TBA

11/26: Thanksgiving Break

11/28: Thanksgiving Break

**Week 15: Feminist Re-mix Presentations**

12/1:

- NO CLASS

12/3:

- Groups 6 and 7 present

12/5:

- TBA/Final Review?

**Week 16: Final Exam**

12/8:

- Final Exam



## **Counseling & Support Resources:**

### *General*

OSU Counseling & Consultation Service.....	(614) 292-5766
OSU Student Wellness Center.....	(614) 292-4527
Student Health Services.....	(614) 292-4321
Multicultural Center.....	(614) 688-8449

### *Crisis/Suicide Prevention Services*

OSU Campus Suicide Prevention Services.....	(614) 688-5829
Suicide Prevention 24-hr Hotline (Columbus).....	(614) 221 5445
Suicide Prevention 24-hr Hotline (National).....	1-800-273-8244
Trevor Project (LGBTQ-specific).....	1-866-488-7386

### *Rape & Sexual Violence*

CAP (Campus Advocacy Program for survivors of rape and sexual violence).....	(614) 292-4527
Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio.....	(614) 267-7020

### *LGBTQ Hotlines*

National LGBTQ Help Center (anonymous, confidential counseling, info on safer sex/sexual health, and referral to local resources).....	1-888-843-4564
Trevor Project (suicide prevention).....	1-866-488-7386

## **Sexual Health & Safer Sex Resources**

### *To ask questions about safer sex and sexual health*

Ohio HIV & STD Prevention Hotline.....	1-800-332-2437
San Francisco Sex Information (national hotline).....	(415) 989-SFSI (7374)

### PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)

- PEP is an emergency medication for anyone exposed to HIV, the most serious sexually transmitted disease (see <http://aids.gov>). If you're ever concerned that you've been exposed to HIV, you must begin PEP within 72 hours. After that, PEP won't work. This is the only window when HIV is curable. PEP is available at most hospital ERs.
  - PEP is a one-month course, and has many unpleasant side effects, but it is a lifesaving tool and important to know about. Since many people don't know about PEP, please consider sharing this information with your friends.