Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies 2230:
Gender, Sexuality, and Race in Popular Culture

Tu/Th 8:00-9:20 am
0131 Mendenhall Lab
Instructor: Amanda Rossie

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 10:00-12:00 pm
Office location: 308 Dulles Hall
By appointment via Skype: amanda.rossie

Contact Information:
rossie.4@osu.edu
Campus mailbox: 286 University Hall

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
Students who have verification from Disability Services are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 614-292-3307; 614-292-0901) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
Two of the basic assumptions of this course are that popular culture does something and representations have real consequences and effects. 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 identities in everyday life.

This class will explore the ways popular culture generates and articulates our understandings of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race and class. At the end of this course, students will be able to convincingly mobilize a variety of theories and methods used in contemporary feminist theory and cultural studies to analyze popular media texts.

FULFILLMENT OF GEC REQUIREMENT:
This course fulfills the GEC requirement for Arts and Literature: Visual/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 application of these theories to a popular text
- Critically analyze a popular text through close attention to structure, imagery, and generic components.
- Locate, through the above, the text’s treatment of issues of gender, sexuality, and race.
REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

- **Course Readings:** Everything you need to read and print for this class will be readily available on Carmen. I know books can be expensive, and I want to do my best to relieve some of that economic stress.

- **OSU Online Media Library:** You will use the university’s secured media library to access important documentaries not found online or on Netflix. These films can be streamed online. Visit https://drm.osu.edu/media/ and locate the playlist titled WGSS 2230 (Rossie) to access the viewing material.

- **WordPress blog.** In order to post your Pop Culture Projects for the class, you will need to sign up for a WordPress account. There is also a free app for WordPress available for iPhones/iPads that provides easy access.

RECOMMENDED COURSE MATERIALS:

- **Netflix Streaming Account:** Some of the films that you will need to view for the course are available through Netflix streaming at the price of $7.99 per month. I strongly recommend that you subscribe either personally or together with other classmates to help cut the costs. Along with providing access to required course screenings, your account will also provide a well of usable texts for your Pop Culture Projects and extra credit assignment. Along with providing you easy access to this material through your computers, there is also a free Netflix smart phone app (for iPhone and Android) that allows you stream media content on your phone for easy accessibility. [Note: If you can find the viewing materials elsewhere, that is fine; however, you will be held responsible for viewing the assigned materials from Netflix.]

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE?

- **Print out the essays from Carmen** and prepare for class by using a highlighter to mark significant passages and main ideas in the readings.

- **Bring the readings with you to class every day.** You will want to make notes based on our class discussion and it is important that you have the readings on hand so that you may refer to passages and points specifically.

- **Use the PowerPoint presentations for structure.** These will be available on Carmen by 10:00 p.m. the night before class. Please print them out in order to have an outline for your notes.

- **Take notes during class.** These insights will be invaluable to you as you study for your exams and complete the major projects for the course.

- **Be brave in your willingness to contribute to class discussions.** This class depends so much your input, your analyses, your open-mindedness to see new perspectives, and your eagerness to engage with one another.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN:

**Participation (10%)**

Even as I stress the importance of discussion to this class, I understand that speaking up in class can be a source of anxiety. Even though I would like everyone to feels safe contributing to class conversations, I also want to be receptive to those concerns. Thus, your participation grade will come from two different sources:
1. **In-class participation:** This course is dialogue-intensive. It is crucial that you come to class having read all assignments and prepared to participate meaningfully in class discussions. Class discussions are meant to encourage us to think critically about both the content of this course and the world around us. Together, we will be producing knowledge rather than merely consuming it. Therefore, the inclusion of multiple, and even contrasting, viewpoints will help us with this, and participation is expected from everyone. Attendance is also included as part of this grade.

2. **Mini-assignments:** Over the course of the semester, you will be responsible for supplying some of the cultural artifacts needed for discussion, whether that means bringing an advertisement to class for discussion, signing up for a Pinterest account, live-tweeting a television show, posting a reflection to a Carmen discussion board, or watching a film at home. Completing this tasks will allow you to fully participate in class discussion, provide spaces for you to apply what you have learned in class, and offer other forms of meaningful participation besides speaking up in class.

**Concept Quizzes (15%)**
There will be 5 “surprise” concept quizzes given throughout the semester covering both the readings and the assigned screenings. The goal of these quizzes is twofold: to hold you accountable for the readings and to make sure that I am communicating the material clearly. Your lowest quiz grade, including zeros due to absence, will be dropped before averaging final grades.

**Pop Culture Projects (40%)**
You will be asked to complete two independent, written projects over the course of the semester. In order to receive full credit, you must engage all aspects of the paper prompt and cite course materials as evidence for your claims and critiques. Each project must be posted online at the start of class on the day it is due (dates are noted on the course schedule). Late projects will be deducted 10 points for each day late. [Note: Detailed prompts for each written project are available on Carmen under the “Assignments” tab.]

**Project 1: Pop Culture Playlist (20%)**
To complete this project, you must choose one of the major course themes and put together a “playlist” of 5 cultural artifacts (i.e., music videos, film clips, commercials, consumer ads, memes, etc.) that convey and/or disrupt that theme. Each playlist should include: 5 artifacts, a 1-2 paragraph critique of each artifact, and a 350-500 word feminist intersectional analysis of the playlist as a whole that incorporates course readings. The playlist should then be posted to the class WordPress blog by the deadline. [See Project 1 Guidelines for more detailed instructions and suggestions.]

**Project 2: Curating a Cultural Critique (20%)**
Part I: After choosing one of the weekly themes outlined in the course schedule, you will “curate” a media analysis of 750-1000 words that uses media 3 artifacts of your choosing (i.e., imbedded videos, hyperlinks, memes, imbedded images, etc.) to illustrate a feminist media critique. The complete critique should be posted to the class WordPress blog so
that others can view your “exhibit,” engage, and collaborate.

Part II. Along with submitting your own cultural critique, you are also responsible for posting one meaningful comment on one other classmate’s project from that same week. [See Project 2 Guidelines for more detailed instruction and suggestions.]

Midterm Exam (15%)
The midterm will cover all material from the first half of the class, including assigned readings, films, lectures, handouts, and any speakers. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice, True/False, short answer, and short essays.

Final Exam (20%)
The final exam will not be comprehensive; it will cover material presented after the midterm. Like the midterm, the final will cover screenings, readings, and class discussions, as well as definitions of terms and theories discussed in class. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice, True/False, short answer, and short essays.

HOUSE RULES:
Your presence is important: You have two “free” absences to be used for any reason. After you have used these excused absences, regardless of reason, your participation grade will go down one-third of a grade for each day missed after the free absences were used (for example, a B would become a B-). If you have a serious medical emergency that requires you to miss class for more than two days, please contact me immediately or as soon as possible to discuss a plan of action. Please note that for your attendance to be counted, you must attend the whole class, not a portion of it. It is your responsibility to get your name on the attendance sheet.

Engage only in respectful discussion: We represent a multitude of different personalities, and diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and opinions. Please do not attack your fellow students for voicing their opinions or experiences.

No laptops or cell phones allowed in the classroom: There will be times when I will ask you to bring in your laptop for an in-class activity, but generally, I know how distracting these devices can be to your undivided attention and participation (I was a student myself once, after all!). However, if you need your computer to take notes, please do not hesitate to see me individually. Also, cell phones are to be put on silent/vibrate when class begins. Absolutely no texting during class. If I catch you texting, you’ll be counted absent.

Please do not be late to class: If you have a class before/after this one and it is hard to make it to/from class on time, please let me know so that we can arrange an undisruptive mode of entry/exit. If you are accidentally late to class, please be as quiet and undisruptive as possible. If you are late to class during the day of a Concept Quiz, there will be no make-ups unless the absence is pre-arranged or there is an emergency.
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:
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.

• Always cite your sources (I can help you with this).
• Always ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism.
• Always make an appointment to see me during office hours if you are having difficulty with an assignment.

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<th>Grade Scale</th>
<th>B+ 87 – 89%</th>
<th>C+ 77 – 79%</th>
<th>D+ 67 – 69%</th>
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<tr>
<td>A 93 – 100%</td>
<td>B 83 – 86%</td>
<td>C 73 – 76%</td>
<td>D 63 – 66%</td>
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<td>A- 90 – 92%</td>
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<td>D- 60 – 6</td>
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