

## Gender and Popular Culture

<b>Professor Stella Oh</b> <b>Phone: (310) 338-4553</b> <b>e-mail: soh@lmu.edu</b> <b>Office: University Hall 4416</b>	<b>Course Number:</b> <b>Time:</b> <b>Room:</b> <b>Office Hours:</b>
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the relationship between gender and popular culture in the United States. This course is highly interdisciplinary and is situated at the intersections of Women's Studies, media studies, cultural studies, and literary studies. Cultural images help shape our view of the world and our values. This course will investigate gender, race, and sexuality in advertising, film, television, video and music and focus on the ways that popular culture shapes our understanding of individual and collective identities. We will also investigate how media and popular culture demonstrates who has power and who is powerless and how such power is legitimated and naturalized. We will also look at how media and technology shapes cultural memory and multicultural representations. This is a First Year Seminar under the theme of Culture, Art, and Society.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Students will be introduced to cutting edge interdisciplinary literature on cultural studies, Women's Studies, literary studies, and film studies. They will learn to read critically and engage with literary and visual texts. Students will analyze film, advertising, and literary forms of popular culture and their depictions of gender and sexuality.

Students will critically engage and reflect on the scholarly articles they will read. Students are also required to critically analyze a specific film, literary work, or advertising in oral presentations and written assignments.

Students will learn to read carefully and reflect upon what they have read in their journals.

Students will learn to exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing. Students will prepare and present an oral presentation on a topic chosen by the student and approved by the professor. Participation in class discussions is also part of the course grade. Students will also engage in rigorous debate on how women's bodies are represented in popular culture.

Students will learn to evaluate sources for quality. Students will be required to do an annotated bibliography for the specific topic chosen for the oral presentation. The annotated bibliography assignment will require students to evaluate sources for quality and differentiate between scholarly and popular sources pertinent to the student's chosen topic.

Students will acquire research skills through their annotated bibliography assignment through which they will need to engage with the electronic library database to retrieve books and articles.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Gail Dinez and Jean Humez, eds. *Gender, Race, and Class in Media* (2002)

Additional Readings will be on reserve in the library through ERES.

**COURSE GRADE:**

Your course grade will be based on the following straight percentage scale:

94-100 A	78-79 C+
90-93 A-	74-77 C
88-89 B+	70-73 C-
84-87 B	60-69 D
80-83 B-	<60 F

**COURSE POLICIES:**

You must attend all class meetings, and you must be on time. Arriving late and leaving early are disruptive and will affect your participation grade negatively. In addition to attending class, you are responsible for doing all the reading and being ready to participate in discussions. **Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and is grounds for an “F” in the course and possible dismissal from the University.** Be sure to document all sources which you use in your papers. For any questions regarding plagiarism, please refer to the LMU General Catalog or Schedule of Classes. Both contain detailed definitions of plagiarism, and both outline the University’s policy on plagiarism.

**Use of Technology:**

The course will make use of Smart Classroom media, Powerpoint and Electronic Library resources. Students are encouraged to make use of any technology they may have to enhance the learning experience. However, students using laptop computers or tablets must sit in the first two rows of the class if the class cannot be organized in a circle. All smart phones and cell phones must be turned off during the class period. Accepted use of technology in the classroom DOES NOT INCLUDE: checking email, facebook, twitter, myspace, IMing, internet chatting, internet shopping, or doing work for other classes. If a student is caught using technology in the above inappropriate methods, that student will receive a warning the first time, be banned from bringing technology into the classroom the second time, and the student’s grade will be negatively affected if such misuse of technology in the classroom continues.

**COURSE WORK /EXPECTATIONS:**

Students are expected to attend classes, read all assignments, and contribute to class discussions. The course grade will be based on attendance and participation (5%), midterm exam (25%), group presentation (20%), and final paper (25%).

**\*\*Response Paper Blogs (for a 4 unit model)**

Response Paper assignments are weekly and will in blog format.

**Attendance and Participation**

The professor will take role every class meeting. The success of this course depends on active class participation. This includes regular attendance, preparation (completion of reading assignments *before* class) and regular discussion. If you have more than 3 unexcused absences your grade will be adversely affected. Absences will only be excused with acceptable documentation such as a doctor’s note. If you have more than 3 recorded absences during the semester your final grade will be adversely affected by at least a half-grade and at most a full grade (ie. A → A- or A → B).

### **Midterm and Final Papers**

Students will write a midterm paper and a final paper of 8-10 pages in length each for a total of 16-20 pages. The midterm paper will be 25% of the grade and the final paper will be 35% of the total grade. Each paper will have multiple drafts for revisions and editing. The instructor will give feedback on each paper assignment. Detailed instructions and prompts for the papers will be given later on in the class.

### **Oral Presentation on Popular Culture or Current Events**

Students are required to give an oral presentation on a topic that addresses current challenges women in the world face today. The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes. Detailed instructions regarding the presentations will be given later on in the class.

### **EXTRA CREDIT:**

Students can attend up to three events outside the classroom for extra credit. In addition to attending these events, students must turn in a one-page single spaced response paper which addresses what they learned from the event. Students must receive professor's approval prior to attending the events for extra credit. Three thoughtful and well-written extra credit responses can amount to a fractional increase in your overall course grade.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

#### **I. Icons and Representations**

- Week 1** Judith Lorber, "Social Construction of Gender"  
Sut Jhally, "Image Based culture"
- Week 2** Allan Johnson, "Patriarchy, the System"  
James Lull "Hegemony"
- Week 3** Angela McRobbie "Postfeminism and Popular Culture"  
bell hooks, "Mock feminism, Waiting to Exhale"  
Stuart Hall, "Representation, Meaning, and Language"  
\*Bring in fashion magazine to class

#### **II. Marketplace of Bodies**

- Week 4** Douglas Kellner "Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Studies"  
Gloria Steinem "Sex, Lies, and Advertising"  
Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System"  
Documentary: *Killing Us Softly* (2007)

**Week 5**

Documentary: *Barbie Nation* (1997)  
Jacqueline Urla and Alan C. Swedlund, "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture"  
Judith Halberstam "Pimp My Bride"  
Susan Bordo "Never Just Pictures"  
Jean Kilbourne "The More You Subtract, the More You Add"

**Week 6**

Film Screening: *Good Hair* (2009)  
Kobena Mercer, "Black Hair / Style Politics"  
Dorinne Kondo, "Orientalizing: Fashioning Japan"  
Susan Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology"  
Mary Celeste Kearney, "Producing Girls: Rethinking the Study of Female Youth Culture"

**Week 7**

Paper Clinics  
Midterm Papers Due

**Week 8**

Paper Clinics  
Midterm Papers Due

**III. Panoptican and the Gaze**

**Week 9**

Jackson Katz "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity"  
Bell hooks, "Gangsta Culture"  
Gail Dines "King Kong and the White Woman"  
Film Screening: *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

**Week 10**

Diane Raymond, "Popular Culture and Queer Representation"  
Ron Becker, "Guy Love: A Queer Straight Masculinity for a Post-Closet Era?"  
Hennessey, "Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture"  
Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public"  
Martin Manalansan, "Speaking of AIDS: Language and the Filipino Gay Experience in America"  
Film Screening: *Sex, Love, and Kung-fu* (2000)

**IV. Cyberspace and Representation**

**Week 11**

Umberto Eco, "Travels in Hyperreality"  
Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"

**Week 12**

Shannon McRae, "Coming Apart at the Seams: Se, Text, and the Virtual Body"

**Week 13**

Oral Presentations

**Week 14**

Oral Presentations

**Week 15**

Paper Clinics and Final Review

[The professor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus.]