

**Department:** WS

**Course No. :** 3XXX/W

**Credits :** 3

**Title :** Gender Representations in US Popular Culture

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**WQ:** W

**Catalog Copy:**

WS 3XXXW and WS 3XXX. Gender Representations in US Popular Culture. Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 1010, 1011, or 3800. Forces in the US that shape and reshape gender in popular culture.

**RATIONALE FOR ACTION REQUESTED**

- a. The emerging, dynamic field of popular culture is widely appealing to students from all fields of study and are underrepresented in University course offerings, including our own in WS. Courses of this type are interdisciplinary in nature and add significantly to students' intellectual breadth and versatility. A critical examination of US popular culture can provide students with a powerful method of analysis that they will be able to apply to other contexts.
- c. For W section: 19 students as per university requirement. For non-W section: 35 in order to allow for regular class participation by all the students enrolled.
- e. none
- f. English
- g. course may be offered at regional campuses.

**FOR ALL GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES**

- a. This course will build on and enhance knowledge and skills gained in many Liberal Arts introductory courses, as well as the required Freshman English course. Central to this course will be an understanding in how to use theoretical perspectives to examine popular culture for its structure and values. This presents opportunities for critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.
- b. Course requirements: Three 5-7-page analytical papers (each to be revised), midterm and final (both of which will be in essay format). Weekly readings from course texts.
- c. Major topics: key concepts in cultural studies and popular culture; theoretical approaches; historical analysis; cultural construction; marketing; advertising; representation of identities; violence and popular culture; the political economy of popular culture; negotiation, opposition, resistance; media literacy.
- d. The revisions will afford students an opportunity to work on and enhance their writing skills (clarity of prose, organization, analysis, argumentation).

### Meets Goals of Gen Ed:

1. The regular opportunities for expressing oneself through writing, as well as orally encourage students to articulate their ideas clearly and persuasively.
2. The course teaches students to engage in intersectional analysis, which takes into account the interplay of such forces as race, class, gender, and sexuality. This kind of analytical work teaches students to exercise intellectual breadth and versatility, since the interplay of the above forces is never uniform.
3. Students will be introduced to the methods of social science research, including quantitative and qualitative approaches. Students will be introduced to several different methods of textual analysis including descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations comparing each magazine (a quantitative approach) and critical discourse analysis (a qualitative interpretive approach). We will also discuss the limits and possibilities of textual analysis for assessing the constructions of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Examples chosen from academic articles using textual analysis will be included in the course syllabus to further demonstrate the research process.
4. The course's emphasis on race, class, gender and sexuality teaches students to recognize and counter ongoing systems (including representational systems) of oppression.
5. With its focus on US popular culture, this course allows students to acquire an awareness of their era and society;
6. The course's reliance on intersectional analysis promotes students' consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience.

### CA2 Criteria

1. Introduce students to theories and concepts of the social sciences: Students will consider the effects of constructions of gender, race, class, and sexuality on representations in popular culture. They will also be introduced to the basics of queer theory. Special attention will be paid to forces of globalization and the changing of messages and meanings, as given gendered images and texts circulate within and across local, national, and international, and transnational contexts.
2. This course will teach students to engage in historical, feminist, and intersectional analysis. It will teach students to consider how hidden and not so hidden social biases shape popular representations. individuals, groups, institutions, or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment.  
More specifically, students will be introduced to the methods of social science research through the textual analysis assignment (essay #2). Students will be instructed on the following: sampling frames for identifying the magazines to be used and the articles and advertisements to be chosen; a coding scheme will be developed for analysis of the chosen texts; and analysis and presentation of findings. Students will also be introduced to several different methods of textual analysis including descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations comparing each magazine (a quantitative approach) and critical discourse analysis (a qualitative interpretive approach). We will also discuss the limits and possibilities of textual analysis for assessing the constructions of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Examples chosen from academic

articles using textual analysis will be included in the course syllabus to further demonstrate the research process. Since textual analysis does not require IRB approval or raise ethical issues, we will address this issue by discussing other methods of researching constructions of gender, race, class, and sexuality that would include human subjects.

3. This course introduces students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment within the context of US popular culture. This is particularly evident in the course's consideration of marketing/advertising strategies, the perpetuation as well as challenge of and resistance to various cultural stereotypes.

4. The course provides students with analytical tools to consider social, political, or economic groups/organizations (such as families, communities, or governments), and to examine social issues and problems at the individual, cultural, societal, national, or international level. Particular emphasis is placed on an understanding of the interplay of gender, race, class, and sexuality within and across dominant and minority communities within the US. Also of importance is the representation of non-US individuals and communities and societies within the US. (A case in point might be an examination of the popularity of the movie "Slum Dog Millionaire.")

#### **W Criteria:**

1. Describe how the writing assignments will enable and enhance learning the content of the course. Describe the page requirements of the assignments, and the relative weighting of the "W" component of the course for the course grade. Each assignment, an analytical essay, 5-7 pages in length, is coordinated with the readings for a section of the course; so students will have an opportunity to synthesize via their writing the material that they have been studying. The writing assignments comprise 50% of the course grade.

2. Describe the primary modes of writing instruction in the course:  
individual conferences and written feedback on essays, drafts, and revisions.

3. Explain how opportunities for revision will be structured into the writing assignments in the course. Students may submit draft versions of their papers for early feedback. Once the final paper has been submitted, they will in general receive a response and grade within a wk of submission. Students must revise the paper within 1-2 wks of receiving the paper. The revision process remains open until the final day of class. So students may submit multiple versions of a given paper.

4. The syllabus will inform students that they must pass the "W" component of the course in order to pass the course.

#### **Role of Grad Students:**

#### **Supplementary Information**