

Comm 471: Gender and Media
Fall 2012

Meeting times

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:30 4151 USB

Information about the Instructor

Dr. Amanda Lotz (Amanda is fine)

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Office Hours: T 12:00-1:00; Th 3:00-4:00; and by appointment.

Office Location: North Quad #5445

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Course Description

In this class we will critically examine and evaluate the cultural construction and representation of gender and sexuality in contemporary American mass media and trace their development throughout the 20th century. We will focus on a variety of mass-produced commercial media texts, particularly surveying magazines, advertising, talk shows, news, and romance narratives. Although gender is the primary identity construction examined in this course, we will also pay close attention to other aspects of identity that define American women and men, such as ethnicity, class, and sexuality. We will investigate representational issues in relation to their political repercussions and draw from a broad range of academic literature, including feminist television criticism, film theory, cultural studies, and communication theory.

Reading Material

This course requires one textbook and readings on CTools. You will also need to buy some media (magazines, newspaper) to fulfill course assignments. The book is available at major area bookstores.
Rosalind Gill, *Gender and the Media*. Malden, MA; Polity, 2007. ISBN 0745619150

The following is subject to change at any time, particularly if measures are needed to help boost participation and reading. A comprehensive final exam may be given if performance is lacking.

Graded Course Activities	Due	Approximate Percent of Grade
Take Home Midterm	10/18	15%
Blog Post/Discussion Leading (Group)	Various	10%
Magazine Paper	10/30	10%
Romance Paper	11/13	10%
Advertising Project	11/27	10%
News Paper	12/4	10%
Final Paper (proposal due 11/20)	12/13	25%
Participation/Class Activities		10%

***Acceptable form for this class is one inch margins, double-spacing, with a font no larger than 12 (and preferably Times New Roman). Deviation from this may subject you to grade reductions.**

***Papers are due in class on the date posted. They will be penalized one letter grade each subsequent day.**

Blog Post/Discussion Leading

At one point in the semester, each student, in a group of 2 or 3, will be responsible for starting the day's conversation. They will do this by posting a blog prompt to the class (due by 10 pm the night before the class) and by leading a preliminary discussion on their day. A more detailed assignment is on the CTools site.

Magazine Paper (2-3 pages)

Analyze a magazine for evidence of the five characteristics Gill notes on page 184. Your paper should discuss at least 5 articles. See me for magazine "assignments" so we get a variety.

News Paper (2-3 Pages)

Select an issue relevant to this class (related to gender) and find five different print articles from the last five years about this issue. Write a 2-3 page paper that analyzes how the issue is presented. Some questions to consider: is

there a dominant news frame about the issue or does it vary? If so, how? How and why is it being presented as news? Does the coverage lead one to understand the complexity of the issue relative to gender politics?

Romance Paper (2-3 pages)

Analyze a recent popular romance narrative for the characteristics Gill mentions. How does the text advance or contain feminist ideas?

Advertising Project:

Find 5 ads that each use a different strategy Gill discusses on p. 84; find 5 more that use other remaining strategies or that are counter examples of the 5 you found (i.e. are more sexist).

- 1) Appeasement of women's anger
- 2) Use of more edgy, and authentic-looking models
- 3) Shift from sex objects to desiring sex subjects
- 4) Focus on being and pleasing ourselves
- 5) Articulation of feminism and femininity in advertisements
- 6) Eroticization of male bodies
- 7) Development of queer chic
- 8) Use of gender reversals in advertisements
- 9) Revenge themes
- 10) Attempts to re-eroticize gender differences

For each ad, write up a paragraph analyzing the ad and how it uses the strategy. Each student will present ads in class.

Final Paper (6-7 pages)

A close analysis of a text of your choice using one of the textual methods offered by Gill. Should include research and review of relevant literature. A more detailed assignment is available on CTools. Paper proposals (a one paragraph description) are required and due November 20.

Class Attendance and Participation

This class cannot succeed without participation. You are expected to come to class each day prepared by completing assigned readings and class blog discussion.

All unexcused absences will result in grade penalties, more than four will earn an F. Extensive excused absences may require additional assignments. Please inform me of absences due to religious observances or other excusable reasons, preferably both in-person and by e-mail. Students should provide documentation for absences due to illness, family emergency, or religious holy days in order to be excused. Illnesses must be verified by a doctor to be excused.

Also, if you miss any of the two lectures during the first week, I will assume that you are planning to drop the course and will give your spot to a student on the waitlist. If you have legitimate reasons for absence during the first week you must give prior notice to the instructor.

It is your responsibility to make sure I know you are here—if you arrive late or leave early you may not receive credit for attending. You must be in class on days with class assignments in order to receive credit for participating.

Attendance and participation are not the same thing, nor is quantity of participation preferable to quality. In order to earn full attendance/participation credit, students must come to class on time with an understanding of readings and contribute to discussion with insight and questions.

Grading Policy/Statement on Grading

- As a discussion-based course, the success of this class, both for everyone and the individual, depends upon participation. Students are expected to come to class with readings completed, prepared to discuss the readings and listen to the perspectives of others. This is not a course with a body of knowledge that can simply be digested. Rather, the complex issues that we will raise require thoughtful, mature, and respectful examination and consideration.
- All papers and examinations must be completed and submitted on time to receive credit for the course. Late papers will automatically receive a grade one degree lower for every day of lateness.

● Following the standards of other professors in this department, your performance will be graded on the following scale:

A = Extraordinary. There may be few As in any given class. “A” work requires a full command of the material, a strong sense of purpose, clear and compelling thought, and skillful writing.

B = Good to very good. This is work that provides a very solid fulfillment of the assignment. Papers demonstrate clear argumentation and presentation.

C = Acceptable. This is work that fulfills the minimum required by the assignment. It might lack skillful argumentation, but show an understanding of the material. It might also suggest interesting approaches to the material, but falter in carrying them out.

D = A major deficiency in writing and argumentation.

F = Unacceptable. The paper does not satisfy the minimum required by the assignment.

Statement on Ability

I am happy to accommodate students with special needs whenever possible. Please feel free to discuss particular needs with me as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the first week of class in order to guarantee accommodation. If a crisis affecting your class performance arises, please notify me promptly.

Intellectual Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating are very bad and can result in course failure and expulsion. Don't even try me. Plagiarism is turning in any work that is not your own, this extends beyond papers to include take-home exam assignments. Scholastic dishonesty will result in failure of the assignment and notification of the Dean's office. Dishonesty on the final paper may result in failure of the class.

For more information, visit: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/>

Gender and Media Schedule

Tuesday September 4

Introduction

Reading: Gill: Introduction, 1-6; Kearney, Intro, pp 1-14 CTools

Thursday September 6

UCSB

Screening: *The Codes of Gender: Identity and Performance in Popular Culture* (2010, 72 min)

*Please respond to the screening questions with a blog post by 10 pm 9/10 and read over your classmates' contributions before class on 9/11

Tuesday September 11

Why Should/and How Do We Study Gender in Media?

Reading: Gill: 7-16; Gaye Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women in the Media." pp. 3-38 CTools
Blog/Discussion 1

Thursday September 13

Why Study Audiences?

Reading: Gill: 16-25; Janice A. Radway, "Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context" (67-78 CTools) Ann Gray, "Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home" (CTools, 11 pgs)
Blog/Discussion 2

Tuesday September 18

What is Feminism? What is Most Relevant to Studying Gender in Media?

Reading: Gill: 25-32, Peggy McIntosh, White Privilege and Male Privilege, pp 7-18 (CTools)

Thursday September 20

How Do We Do "Feminist Media Studies"?

Reading: Gill: 33-41; Go to <http://www.now.org/issues/media/> Read the 5 most recent stories/issues.

Tuesday September 25

How and Why to Use Content Analysis to Study Gender in Media

Reading: Gill: 42-45; Lisbet van Zoonen, Symbols of Reality: Content Analysis, pp. 68-74; CTools

Thursday September 27

How and Why to Use Semiotics to Study Gender in Media

Reading: Gill: 45-53; Lisbet van Zoonen, Symbols of Reality: Semiotics, pp.74-85; CTools

Tuesday October 2

How and Why to Use Ideological Analysis to Study Gender in Media

Reading: Gill: 53-72; Becker, "Becoming Bromosexual" CTools

Tuesday October 9

What the Heck is Postfeminism?

Reading: Gill: 249-71

Recommended Reading: Sarah Projansky, The Postfeminist Context, pp. 66-89; CTools

Blog/Discussion 3

Thursday October 11

What About Men and Masculinity?

Reading: Gill: 29-32, David Greven; "Dude, Where's My Gender?: Contemporary Teen Comedies and New Forms of American Masculinity"; CTools

Recommended Reading: Robert Hanke, "Hegemonic Masculinity in *thirtysomething*"

Blog/Discussion 4

Tuesday October 16

Fall Break

Thursday October 18

Women's Magazines

Reading: Laurie Ouellette, "Inventing the Cosmo Girl", pp. 116-127 CTools; Linda Steiner, "Would the Real Women's Magazine Please Stand Up" (CTools, 10 pgs)

Blog/Discussion 5

* **Take Home Midterm Due**

Tuesday October 23

Estonia--Men's Magazines (Guest Lecturer)

Reading: Gill: 205-17

Gauntlett: "Men's Magazines and Modern Male Identities" pp. 152-180

Thursday October 25

Estonia—Day Off (Start watching Talk Shows)

Tuesday October 30

Reading: Gill: 180-204

Blog/Discussion 6

***Magazine Papers Due**

Women's Magazines

Thursday November 1

Reading: Gill 150-79

Blog/Discussion 7

Talk Shows

Tuesday November 6

Talk Shows

* Class assignment: Every student should watch one week (5) episodes of a talk show in the week before we begin the talk show unit. In class group work: using part of the class time, meet in assigned groups and develop a pitch for a new feminist talk show. You will present your show idea to the class in the second half of the class. Issues to consider: What type of show will it be (audience discussion; issue-oriented therapeutic; confrontation)? What are some of the topics or themes your show might deal with? What topics or themes would never be covered? Be sure to consider the existing feminist criticisms of talk shows and how your show would respond.

Thursday November 8

Reading: Gill: 218-40

Blog/Discussion 8

Romance: Books

Tuesday November 13

Reading: Gill: 240-8

Blog/Discussion 9

***Romance Papers Due**

Romance: TV/Film

Thursday November 15

Killing Us Softly 3 (34 min); *Advertising and the End of the World* (40 min)

ASA--Advertising Screenings

Tuesday November 20

Reading: Gill: 73-112; Gloria Steinem, "Sex, Lies and Advertising" pp. 223-229 CTools

Blog/Discussion 10

***Final Paper Proposals Due**

Advertising

Thursday November 22

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday November 27

Ad Presentations and Discussion

***Advertising Project Due**

Advertising

Thursday November 29

Reading: Gill: 113--49

Class assignment: Bring in an article or two about a public figure. Be prepared to present how the article makes use of the tendencies Gill notes on pages 117-20. Does it use other strategies that seem particularly gendered?

Blog/Discussion 11

News: Representations & Working in

Tuesday December 4

Reading: "Rock and Sexuality" by Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, CTools pp. 371-89

Blog/Discussion 12

***News Paper Due**

Music

Thursday December 6

Paper Presentations

Tuesday December 11

Paper Presentations

Thursday December 13, noon

***Final Papers Due**

Gender and the Media

Fa12 CTools Bibliography

- Kearney, Mary Celeste. "Introduction." In *The Gender and Media Reader*, edited by Mary Celeste Kearney, pp. 1-13 (New York: Routledge, 2012). ISBN #9780415993463
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- Gray, Ann. "Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home." In *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader*. Edited by Charlotte Brunson, Julie D'Acci, and Lynn Spigel. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. (235-246). ISBN # 0-19-871152-2
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- Radway, Janice A. "Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context." In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*, 2nd edition. G. Dines and J. M. Humez, eds. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003. ISBN #076192261X. pp. 67-78.
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- Projansky, Sarah and Leah Vande Berg, "Sabrina the Teenage...?: Girls, Witches, Mortals, and the Limitations of Prime-Time Feminism." In *Fantasy Girls: Gender in the New Universe of Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, edited by Elyce Rae Helford. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000. ISBN 0847698343 pp. 13-40.
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- Robert Hanke-"Hegemonic Masculinity in *thirtysomething*" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7(1990): 231-48
- David Greven; "Dude, Where's My Gender?: Contemporary Teen Comedies and New Forms of American Masculinity," *Cineaste*, 27 (Summer 2002): 14-21.
- Steinem, Gloria. "Sex, Lies and Advertising" In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*, 2nd edition. G. Dines and J. M. Humez, eds. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003. ISBN #076192261X. pp. 223-29.

- Ouellette, Laurie. "Inventing the Cosmo Girl." In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*, 2nd edition. G. Dines and J. M. Humez, eds. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003. ISBN #076192261X. pp. 116-28.
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- David Gauntlett, "Men's Magazines and Modern Male Identities" in *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 152-180 ISBN: 0415189594
- Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, pp. 371-89 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), ISBN 0394564758