

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

Instructor: Kimberly McKee

Office Hours via Skype and/or in person: By appointment only

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**Accommodation of 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) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

**Course Description:**

This distance learning course explores how popular culture generates and articulates our understandings of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race and class. We will study a variety of theories and methods used in contemporary gender/sexual/critical race scholarship on popular culture, and we will examine a number of popular media texts. This course is based on the premise that popular culture is never solely an amusement or diversion. The images, sounds and stories in popular texts are also media through which we imagine and practice femininities, masculinities, and sexualities. These images and practices are also infused with class and racial characteristics (consider, for example, the whiteness of brides in bridal magazines). The norms sustained and contested by popular culture are evident in our constructions of ourselves – 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 think critically about the images, practices, and narratives that perpetuate and/or disrupt these norms. Course requirements include: (1) core content quizzes; (2) class participation; (3) lecture/reading quizzes; (4); personal reflection on popular culture; (5) methods of analysis paper; (6) film critique essay; (7) group project; and (8) midterm examination.

**Fulfillment of GEC Requirement:**

This course fulfills the GEC requirement for **Arts and Literature: Visual/Performing Arts**. At the completion of WGSS 230, students should be able to:

- evaluate significant works of popular culture in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment;
- interpret popular culture through critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing;
- understand the basic concept 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 the text's treatment of issues of gender, sexuality and race.

### **Required Texts:**

Dines, Gail and Jean M. Humez (Eds.) (2011) *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Third Edition.

*All additional reading and media assignments are available via Carmen or OSU Online Media Library. When applicable, there will be links to media also posted to Carmen.*

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **1. Core Content Quizzes (10%)**

Students must complete the following **five** quizzes: Academic Misconduct (2%); Adobe Connect (2%); Class Discussion (2%); Syllabus (2%); and Netiquette (2%). These five quizzes must be completed prior to the **third class** of the **semester (Wednesday, August 29)**. These quizzes are available on Carmen.

#### **2. Class Participation (10%)**

This is a distance-learning course and as a result, there will be moments of synchronous and asynchronous participation.

**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. This course is **dialogue intensive** and the instructor expects the students participate asynchronously/synchronously **after preparing for class**.

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. The inclusion of multiple, and even contrasting, viewpoints will help us with this, and participation is required from everyone.

**Class participation for this course is asynchronous participation only.**

**For asynchronous participation**, students will be required to participate online in our Carmen course. Students will be required to:

- 1) make two 500 word posts on a topic either discussed on the appropriate lecture page or on something interesting from the readings/media; **and**
- 2) respond to at least two student/instructor posts/replies.

**These posts must be completed by 8:30pm the day of the specified lecture.**

Under **Attendance** on Carmen, I will post your class participation “grade” for the day.

- **FULL** participation = The student demonstrates a high level of engagement with the material. It is clear based on their asynchronous posts that they have read and prepared for the class.
- **HALF** participation = It is unclear how adequately the student prepared for class. For example, based on reading the student’s posts it’s unclear if the student prepared for class.

### 3. Lecture Quizzes (10%)

There will be 20 quizzes throughout the quarter as listed on the syllabus. These quizzes will be about the readings assigned and may cover material not covered in class. These quizzes are not designed to stump you, but to reward you for staying current with the assigned course readings. **Quizzes may cover any material up to and including the date of the quiz.** Quizzes are automated through Carmen and **you may complete the quiz in advance.**

Quizzes will contain upwards of 10 questions, but some quizzes may contain as few as five questions.

**Quizzes are due at 7pm before the relevant class.** They cannot be made up. Students who receive permission from the instructor may have alternate arrangements made due to extenuating circumstances.

### 4. Pop Culture Reflection (10%)

You will be asked to critically reflect on your understanding of popular culture. This should be a 2-3 double-spaced page paper.

**This assignment is due Week 3, Lecture 5 (September 10) by 7pm in the Correct Carmen Dropbox Folder.**

***LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.***

**Questions to aid your 2-3 double spaced reflection:**

- Why did you enroll in this class?
  - How does this relate to your initial understandings of what constitutes popular culture texts?
- How has the first few weeks of the course changed your understanding of representations in pop culture?
  - For example, has this class made you reconsider how gender, sex, race, etc. are portrayed in pop culture?
- What do you hope to learn from this class?

### 5. Written Projects (25%)

You will be asked to complete two independent, written projects over the course of the term. The project will be due at the start of class on the day it is due. In order to receive full credit, you must engage all aspects of the paper prompt, relating your assertions to course materials.

**Detailed prompts for each written project are available on Carmen.**

#### a. Instructor meeting (5%)

Students are expected to meet via Skype with the instructor once during the quarter prior to completing either their Methods of Analysis Paper or Film Critique paper.

Please visit the following link (<http://www.doodle.com/z4exigfrpwf6pza4>) to make an appointment with the instructor. Appointments are available in the mornings on

the following dates: September 5, September 10, October 29, and November 12.

**b. Methods of Analysis (10%)**

For this written project, you will be asked to choose one print advertisement available on Carmen and complete a 3-4 page analysis using one of the following methods: ideological criticism, semiotics, genre, oppositional or queer gaze. [See handout for more specific information.]

**This assignment is due Week 5 on September 20, 2012 in the correct Carmen Dropbox by 7PM.**

**c. Film Critique (15%)**

You should analyze how the film you have selected draws upon hegemonic and/or counterhegemonic views on race, sexuality, gender, disability, class, etc. Please take this assignment as an opportunity to focus on theories discussed in class that you find interesting. This paper should allow me to see your understanding of a critical analysis of popular culture. This paper should be 3-4 pages in length.

**This assignment is due Week 14 on November 20, 2012 in the correct Carmen Dropbox by 7PM.**

All papers are expected to be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. All papers must adhere to the standard MLA research paper format and should include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page. Your papers should not merely repeat class discussion or consist of plot summaries or descriptions; your papers should argue a thesis from a definite position about a pop cultural text.

**Your papers must be saved in either Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format.** No other formats will be accepted. You must save your document in the following format: Last Name, First Name – Assignment Title.

Please note that **assignments are due on the dates designated in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted.** If an emergency arises and you make arrangements with me ahead of time, I may agree to accept a late assignment. **A computer malfunction is not an acceptable excuse for not turning a paper in on time.**

**6. Midterm Exam (15%)**

The exam will include **multiple-choice, short answer, and short essay** questions about the course readings and classroom discussions. This exam will be a **comprehensive** exam

Students have an option to take **Midterm One (Saturday, October 6) or Midterm Two (Monday, October 8).** **Students must inform the instructor by Week 5, Lecture 8 (Monday, September 17) on which date they intend to sit the examination.** This exam is take-home. Students will have 24 hours to complete the examination (ex. The exam will be available at 9am and is due by 8:59am the following day). Students will be required to submit their exam

in the correct Carmen dropbox folder. **Late exams will not be accepted.**

### 7. Final Digital Project (15%)

Working in groups of 2-3, groups will be expected to create a Glogster analyzing one of the following groups (listed below) are represented in the media.

- Representation of people of color (a specific racial/ethnic group is fine)
- Representation of femininity
- Representation of masculinity (hegemonic, complicit, or subordinated)
- Representation of LGBTQ
- Representation of sexuality

Your Glogster should be interactive and contain sound, images, and text. The Glogster should contain visual aids to guide the viewer around your page. Please see Carmen for more details concerning this assigning, **including** a rubric.

**The instructor will assign you to groups by the end of Week 3.**

**The assignment is due on Thursday, December 6 by 7PM.**

### **Academic Misconduct:**

All students are responsible for doing their own work and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. 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.

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!**

### **Resources:**

- **Your instructor:** Please feel free to contact me at any time over the course of the quarter if you are struggling with papers, course work, etc. I am willing to work with you. ***Email is the best way to contact me.*** I will respond to your email within 24-hours on weekdays, and by Sunday evening at the latest on weekends (beginning Friday evening). Also, I encourage you to use my office hours. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time.
- **The OSU Writing Center:** OSU Writing Center consultants are an excellent resource for

writers at any level or stage in the writing process. Take advantage of the free individual tutoring that you can receive there. The Writing Center is located in 485 Mendenhall Laboratory, on the south side of the oval. Phone: 614.688.4291 Website: <http://ctsw.osu.edu/>

- Please also check our Carmen site under Course Content > Resources and Course Content > Introduction

## Course Schedule

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule at any time.*

\*All media, unless otherwise noted will be available on the lecture page for students.

### Week 1

Wednesday, August 22

Lecture 1: *Course Introduction, Syllabus, and Expectations*

**Students are expected to attend one of four online sessions to meet with the instructor. The four sessions are scheduled for August 22 at: 9am – 10am, 12pm – 1pm, 3pm – 4pm, and 7pm – 8pm. Nine slots are available for each online session. Please sign up here: <http://www.doodle.com/4rkb3q88xgd5d6f3>.**

### Week 2

***Begin asynchronous/synchronous participation***

Monday, August 27

Lecture 2: *Intersectionality Part I: Race and Gender*

**CORE CONTENT QUIZZES MUST BE COMPLETED**

Readings:

- Stuart Hall, “The Whites of Their Eyes” in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*
- bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze” in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*
- Wise, Tim. (2002, June 30) “Honky Wanna Cracker? Examining the Myth of ‘Reverse’ Racism.” *TimWise.org* <http://www.timwise.org/2002/06/honky-wanna-cracker-examining-the-myth-of-reverse-racism/>

Wednesday, August 29

Lecture 3: *Intersectionality Part II: Class, Sexuality, and Ability*

**LECTURE QUIZ #1**

Readings:

- Barr, “And I Should Know” <http://nymag.com/arts/tv/upfronts/2011/roseanne-barr-2011-5/>
- Diane Raymond, “Popular Culture and Queer Representation” in *Gender, Race and Class*
- Ability Privilege checklist

### Week 3

Monday, September 3

Lecture 4: **NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)**

Wednesday, September 5

Lecture 5: *Racialized/Gendered Bodies Online* Part I

**LECTURE QUIZ #2**

Readings:

- Brookey, R. A., and K. Cannon. 2009. "Sex Lives in Second Life". *Critical Studies in Media Communication : CSMC : a Publication of the National Communication Association*. 26 (2): 145-164.
- Lewis, Helen. (2012, July 6) "This is what online harassment looks like." *The New Statesman*

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/internet/2012/07/what-online-harassment-looks>

Media: *Gamers* (Available via Hulu: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/215576/gamers>)

**Week 4**

Monday, September 10

Lecture 6: *Racialized/Gendered Bodies Online* Part II

**LECTURE QUIZ #3**

**Pop Culture Reflection Due**

Readings:

- <http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2011/07/syrian-lesbian-bloggers-fake-geishas-and-attractions-identity-tourism>
- Nakamura, Lisa. "Head-Hunting on the Internet: Identity Tourism, Avatars, and Racial Passing in Textual and Graphic Chat Spaces" (Chapter 2 in *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity and Identity on the Internet*)

Wednesday, September 12

Lecture 7: *Why Study Pop Culture?*

**LECTURE QUIZ #4**

Readings:

- Douglas Kellner, "Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*
- Jhally, "Image-Based Culture" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*

Media: *The Ad and the Ego* documentary (OSU Media Library)

**Week 5**

Monday, September 17

Lecture 8: *Hegemony and Ideology*

**LECTURE QUIZ #5**

**Last day to notify the instructor if you will be taking Midterm One (10/6) or Midterm Two (10/8).**

Readings:

- James Lull, "Hegemony" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*
- Walton, Shayna and Alexandra Jaffe. "'Stuff White People Like': Stance,

Class, Race, and Internet Commentary” in Thurlow, Crispin and Kristine Mroczek (Eds.) *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*

Media:

- The London School of Economics podcast “Stuff White People Like – How to find social success with the urban-dwelling middle classes” (<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/channels/publicLecturesAndEvents/player.aspx?id=456>)

Wednesday, September 19

Lecture 9: *Counterhegemony*

**LECTURE QUIZ #6**

Readings:

- Jamie Warner, “Political Culture Jamming: The Dissident Humor of *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*” in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*

Media: *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* (selected clips)

Thursday, September 20

- **Written Assignment #1 (Methods of Analysis) Due by 7pm in the correct Carmen Dropbox folder**

**Week 6**

Monday, September 24

Lecture 10: *Consuming Pop Culture*

**LECTURE QUIZ #7**

Readings:

- Caputi, Jane. “The Pornography of Everyday Life.” In *Gender, Race and Class in Media* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Media: *America the Beautiful* documentary (available on Hulu)

Wednesday, September 26

Lecture 11: *Producing Pop Culture*

**LECTURE QUIZ #8**

Readings:

- Gill, Rosalind. “Advertising and Postfeminism” (Chapter 3) in *Gender and the Media* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Media: The Most Sexist Ad in America from *Bitch* magazine; *Killing Us Softly 3*

**Week 7**

Monday, October 1

Lecture 12: *Racialized in our Daily Lives: The Construction of Black Women in the Media*

**LECTURE QUIZ #9**

Readings:



- Springer, Kimberly. (2007) “Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women: African American Women in Postfeminist and Post-Civil-Rights Popular Culture” in Tasker, Yvonne and Diane Negra (Eds.) Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 249-276.

Media: *Shit White Girls Say to Black Girls*

Wednesday, October 3

Lecture 13: *Interrogating Sexuality: What a Differences a Decade Makes?*

**LECTURE QUIZ #10**

Readings:

- McCarthy, Anna. 2001. "Ellen: Making queer television history". *GLQ: a Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 7 (4): 593-620.
- Meyer, Michaela. 2010. "Representing Bisexuality on Television: The Case for Intersectional Hybrids". *Journal of Bisexuality*. 10 (4): 366-387.
- Miller, Taylor Cole. (2011, July 6) “Performing *Glee*: Gay Resistance to Gay Representations and a New Slumpy Class.” *Flow TV*  
<http://flowtv.org/2011/07/performing-glee/>

Media: clips from Ellen; clips from Glee

Saturday, October 6

- **Midterm Option One: Released at 9am EST and is due on Sunday, October 7 by 8:59am EST in the correct Carmen Dropbox folder.**

**Week 8**

Monday, October 8

Lecture 14: **NO CLASS**

- **Midterm Option Two: Released at 9am EST and is due on Tuesday, October 9 by 8:59am EST in the correct Carmen Dropbox folder.**

Wednesday, October 10

Lecture 15: *The Violent Normalization of Sex*

**LECTURE QUIZ #11**

Readings:

- Boyle, Karen. ““That’s So Fun; Selling Pornography for Men to Women in *The Girls Next Door*.” In Gender, Race and Class in Media 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- Rose, Tricia. “There are bitches and hoes.” In Gender, Race and Class in Media 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Media: Analyze the Dr. Dre song “Bitches Ain’t Shit”; *Hip Hop: Beats and Rhymes* documentary (Google Video)

**Week 9:**

Monday, October 15

Lecture 16: *Locating the Autism Spectrum Disorder in Popular Culture*

**LECTURE QUIZ #12**

Readings:

- Jennifer L. Stevenson, Bev Harp, Morton Ann Gernsbacher. (2011) "Infantilizing Autism." *Disability Studies Quarterly* Vol. 31, No. 3. <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1675/1596>
- Sarrett, Jennifer C. 2011. "Trapped Children: Popular Images of Children with Autism in the 1960s and 2000s". *Journal of Medical Humanities*. 32 (2): 141-153.

Media: clips from *Parenthood*; "Need to Know: Adult Autism"

(<http://video.pbs.org/video/2074757213>); "Need to Know: A generation with autism, graduating into the unknown" (<http://video.pbs.org/video/2073284516>)

Wednesday, October 17

Lecture 17: *American Families*

**LECTURE QUIZ #13**

Readings:

- Stacey, Judith "The Making and Unmaking of the Modern Family" (Chapter 1 in *Brave New Families*)
- Collins, Patricia Hill. (1998) "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation." *Hypatia* 13(3): 62-82.

Media: clips from *Desperate Housewives*, *Pleasantville*, *Family Matters*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Modern Family*

**Week 10**

Monday, October 22

Lecture 18: *Black, Yellow and Red Face*

**LECTURE QUIZ #14**

Readings:

- What is racebending? <http://www.racebending.com/v4/about/what-is-racebending/>
- Johnny Depp as Tonto <http://www.racialicious.com/2012/05/02/johnny-depp-as-tonto-im-still-not-feeling-honored/>
- Ashton Kutcher in Brownface for popchips advertisement <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/popchips-responds-criticism-ashton-kutcher-brownface-ad-319583>
- "We're a culture not a costume" Campaign <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-pacific-heart/201110/we-re-culture-not-costume-campaign-pushes-the-issue-racist-halloween-c>

Wednesday, October 24

Lecture 19: *Recreating the Past*

**LECTURE QUIZ #15**

Readings:

- Feministe, "Mad Men" <http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2008/09/11/mad-men/>

- Aviva Dove-Viebahn, "Feminism in a Mad World." *Ms. Magazine*. June 2010
- Perlman, Allison. (2011) "The Strange Career of *Mad Men*: Race, Paratexts and Civil Rights Memory" in Edgerton, Gary R. (Ed.) *Mad Men: Dream Come True TV*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 209-225.

Media: *Mad Men* Season 1 Episode 1 (OSU Online Media Library)

### **Week 11**

Monday, October 29

Lecture 20: *Contemporary Femininities*

#### **LECTURE QUIZ #16**

Readings:

- Gerhard, Jane. "Sex and the City" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*
- McRobbie

Wednesday, October 31

Lecture 21: *Contemporary Femininities*

Media: *Bridesmaids*

### **Week 12**

Monday, November 5

Lecture 22: *Contemporary Masculinities*

Readings:

- Connell, R.W. and James W. Messerschmidt. (2010) "Hegemonic Masculinity" in Lorber, Judith (Ed.) *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 218-225.
- Jackson Katz, "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity" in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*

Media: *The Bro Code*

Wednesday, November 7

Lecture 23: *Contemporary Masculinities*

Film Screening: *Fight Club*

#### **LECTURE QUIZ #17**

### **Week 13**

Monday, November 12

Lecture 24: *The Wedding Industrial Complex*

#### **LECTURE QUIZ #18**

Readings:

- Blakely K. 2008. "Busy brides and the business of family life: The wedding-planning industry and the commodity frontier". *Journal of Family Issues*. 29 (5): 639-662.

- Engstrom, Erika. “Unraveling The Knot: political economy and cultural hegemony in wedding media.” In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*.

Media: *The Wedding Planner*

Wednesday, November 14

Lecture 25: *mascuLINity*

**LECTURE QUIZ #19**

Readings:

- Chan, Jachinson. (2001) “American Inheritance: Chinese American Male Identities” and “Epilogue: Contemporary Asian American Men’s Issues” in *Chinese American Masculinities: From Fu Manchu to Bruce Lee* (2001, New York: Routledge)
- Freeman, Hadley. (2012, February 21) “Jeremy Lin row reveals deep-seated racism against Asian Americans: The racist language directed at the NBA Asian American basketball player has been quite something to behold.” *The Guardian*  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/feb/21/jeremy-lin-racism-asian-americans>
- Park, Terry K. (2012, February 14) “Happy VaLINTine’s Day.” *Hyphen Magazine* <http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2012/02/happy-valintine%E2%80%99s-day>

Media: “Not Just a Game – Preview” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Jp09hFJZXI>)

PBS News Hour: “The Jeremy Lin Phenomenon” (<http://video.pbs.org/video/2196933007>)

**Week 14**

Monday, November 19

Lecture 26: **Writing Day!**

**NO CLASS: Please use this time to write and edit your film analysis.**

Tuesday, November 20

- **Writing Assignment #2 (FILM ANALYSIS) DUE by 7pm in the correct Carmen Dropbox**

Wednesday, November 21

Lecture 27: **NO CLASS**

**Week 15**

Monday, November 26

Lecture 28: *Gender, Race and Sexuality in Music*

Readings:

- Andsager, Julie, and Kimberly Roe. 2003. “WHAT’S YOUR DEFINITION OF DIRTY, BABY?”: SEX IN MUSIC VIDEO”. *Sexuality & Culture*. 7 (3):

79-97.

- Turner, Jacob S. 2011. "Sex and the Spectacle of Music Videos: An Examination of the Portrayal of Race and Sexuality in Music Videos". *Sex Roles*. 64 (3-4): 3-4.
- Balaji, Murali. (2009) "Owning Black Masculinity: The Intersection of Cultural Commodification and Self Construction in Rap Music Videos." *Communication. Culture & Critique* 2: 21-38.

Wednesday, November 28

Lecture 29: *Film Screening: Dreamworlds 3: Desire, Sex, and Power in Music Videos*

**LECTURE QUIZ #20**

**Week 16**

Monday, December 3

Lecture 30: **NO CLASS:** Use this time to work on your group project.

**FINAL DIGITAL PROJECT DUE: Thursday, December 6 by 7pm.**