

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

University of Western Ontario
Department of Women Studies and Feminist Research
Winter 2016

Women's Studies 2283G: Desiring Women
Tuesdays, 10:30am-1:30pm
UCC-41

Instructor: Dr. Andrea S. Allen
Contact information: aallen65@uwo.ca

Course Description

What does it mean to desire women? What does it mean to be a woman who desires? This course uses feminist, queer and trans theory to interrogate how female sexuality and desire can be understood, both historically and within a variety of contemporary cultures. It will consider the impact that representation, socialization and medicalization have had on the way female sexual subjectivity is experienced and expressed.

Therefore, through an interdisciplinary approach, we will discuss the topic of desire using texts from the disciplines of women's studies, cultural studies, queer studies, and media studies. In addition, this interdisciplinary approach will also include the screening of films, television clips, and music videos. By discussing these texts, both written and visual, we will address the following questions: How do we define desire? Do women and men experience desire differently? What historical, social, cultural, and psychological factors influence the relationship between women and desire? What is the relationship between sexual pleasure, desire, race and class? How is desire represented in fiction, on film, on television, and in music? Overall, the primary objective of this course will be to encourage students to consider seriously the subject of desire from a variety of analytical perspectives and through an examination of women's diverse expressions of sexuality.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation	5%
Online Discussions	10% (5% each)
Short Paper (3-4 pages)	20%
Film Paper (5-6 pages)	25%
Final Exam	40%

Course Objectives:

- 1) Recognize and critically engage some of the major feminist approaches and debates to the study of women's sexuality and desire and the sexualization of women.
- 2) Understand how sexuality and desire are shaped by the intersecting axes of race, class, gender, religion, and culture.
- 3) Develop nuanced awareness of how socio-political and historical factors influence perceptions and experiences of women's sexuality and desire and the sexualization of women.
- 4) Reflect, both personally and analytically, on the implications of the study of women's sexuality and desire and the sexualization of women in relation to our gendered material and everyday realities.
- 5) Augment proficiency in critical thinking, research, and analytical skills.
- 6) Improve oral and written communication.

Course Website:

All course information, including assignments will be posted on the course OWL Sakai website:
<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

Course Evaluation Details:

Class participation (5% of final grade): Attendance will be recorded. An excessive number of absences (i.e., more than two) will result in a deduction from your participation grade. Regular lateness to class may also result in deductions. Disruptive behavior (described in the Policies section) will result in deductions as well.

Online discussion (10% of final grade; 5% each): The class will be split into groups (groups will be assigned). You are required to respond TWICE during the semester. Starting the second week of class, members of the assigned groups will engage in an online discussion about the readings for that week. The discussions will be open only to group members. For each group, discussions will take place prior to the assigned class, and all contributions should be posted by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. Guidelines for engaging in the online discussion and a grading rubric for this discussion will be posted on OWL.

One short essay (three-four pages each) (20% of your grade): The essay should cover only the readings that were assigned on or before the assignment is due. The essay must have a thesis. Thesis must be italicized in essay. The essay should address an interesting theme that struck you from the readings, a short critique, or a comparison of an aspect of the readings. The essay must be double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with no extraneous spaces between paragraphs. Papers are to be handed in at the beginning of class. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class and on the course website.

Film paper (25% of final grade): five-six page critique of a film or television show that focuses on one of the themes and topics that have been discussed in class. This paper should have a thesis, be double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and with no extraneous spaces between paragraphs. Papers are to be handed in at the beginning of class.

Final exam (40% of your grade): test will involve short answers, identifications, and essays. The final will cover all course material, e.g., required texts, lectures, and films, and it is expected that students will know the material. (Further guidelines will be posted on OWL and discussed in class)

Course Policies

Attendance Policy:

As UWO Senate requires, “Students whose absences from classes and/or tutorials are deemed excessive by the instructor can be debarred from writing the final exam in the course, according to the procedures established under “Academic Policies/Regulations” in the 2014 Western Academic Calendar:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg93.html>

Please note the attendance policy of the Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research: “In classes without final examinations, persistent absenteeism (defined by the Department as three [3] weeks in half courses, and six [6] weeks in full courses) may be rendered grounds for failure in the course (after due warning is given).”

Submitting Assignments:

Please hand in hard copies of all written assignments in WS 2283F; you are also required to submit electronic copies of all written assignments (excluding tests/exams) to Turnitin.com through the course Owl Sakai links.

Deadlines are registered as the date/time these assignments are due to Turnitin, and late penalties are assessed based on the submission time to the Turnitin site – so please don't forget to load your paper to Turnitin on time! Again, we also need hard copies to mark, so assignments not handed in during class must be deposited in the WS essay drop box, located outside the WSFR Main Office doors, Lawson Hall 3260.

Essays not submitted to Turnitin will receive grades converted to 0.

Policy on Missed/Late Assignments:

Regarding the University's medical policy, UWO Senate requires that "Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

see: <http://www.westerncalendar.u4999wo.ca/2011/pg117.html> and

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>." See also

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

and the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) at

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>)

Requests for accommodation must be made as soon as possible and, according to A&H requirements, no later than within 28 days from the missed assignment.

Students who submit assignments late without making a prior agreement with the Instructor or without a valid medical certificate will be penalized 2% for every 24-hour period past the assignment deadline.

Turnitin:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Note for students with disabilities: Please contact ws-ugrad@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

Expectations & Responsibilities:

Learning occurs in a social environment and is a collaborative experience that requires the active participation of all those involved – teachers, teaching assistants and students. Successful learning happens when the professor, the assistants and the students uphold their respective roles and responsibilities. In this sense, learning is a co-responsibility that depends on the instructor, teaching assistants *and* the students coming to class prepared. It is the responsibility of the professor to come to class prepared to lecture on course material. It is also the professor's responsibility to address and respond to student's questions about course material in class and during specified office hours. It is the responsibility of the teaching assistants to assist the professor in the preparation and grading of exams and papers, and to address students' questions about course material during the year and before the final exam. It is the responsibility of students to prepare for class by completing required course readings before class, to attend class regularly, listen to the lectures, take notes in class, and ask questions about

course material in class and on OWL. Students are expected to purchase a dictionary or use an online dictionary (e.g. www.dictionary.com) if they need help understanding the required course readings.

Classroom Etiquette: Creating and maintaining a respectful and productive learning environment

In order to maintain a respectful and productive learning environment, it is essential that students arrive at class ready to listen and attend to lectures and films. Disrespectful and disruptive behaviour during class will not be tolerated and will affect one's participation grade. Disrespectful and disruptive behaviour includes the following: texting or talking on mobile phones, chatting on or browsing Facebook or other social media sites, persistent talking during lectures or films, wearing headphones, emailing, and/or surfing the Internet for non-class purposes. Students observed to be engaging in this behaviour during class will be asked to stop. If disruptive behaviour persists, the professor will use her discretion and judgment in deciding how best to deal with the situation. For example, the participation grade may be adversely affected for those individuals who are found using their notebook computers for non-academic purposes during class.

Email Policy: If you have any questions or concerns related to the course, feel free to contact the TA or me through OWL, the course website. We will try to respond within 48 hours. If there is an emergency, please contact me at aallen65@uwo.ca. Please use your Western email account in order to reduce the chance that your email will be labelled as spam. In addition, I will send out emails regularly in this course. I expect that you will check your email and the course website at least once a day. Failure to check your email regularly will not be considered an excuse for failing to complete an assignment or for failing to do so according to specified directions. Finally, if you email me, please follow proper letter-writing etiquette.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Desire, Feminism, and Theory

January 5

Week 1: Introduction

Introduction

January 12

Week 2: Desire and Theory

Sigmund Freud (1997), "Female Sexuality" *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*. New York: Touchstone. 184-201.

Betty Friedan (1974). "The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud," *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton.

Lewis A. Kirshner (2005). Excerpt from "Rethinking desire: the *objet petit a* in Lacanian theory." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.

Film: The Technology of Orgasm (clip)

January 19

Week 3: Second Wave Feminism, Womanism, and Desire

Simone de Beauvoir (1989). Excerpts from *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.

Germaine Greer (2008). Excerpts from the *The Female Eunuch*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Patricia Hill Collins (1996). "What's in a name? Womanism, black feminism, and beyond" *Black Scholar* 26(1): 9-17.

Film: Clips

January 26

Week 4: Third Wave Feminism, Hip-hop Feminism, “Choice Feminism,” and Desire

Soraya Chemaly (2013). “Miley Cyrus joins the boys’ club.” *Salon*. August 26, 2013.

Tressie McMillan Cottom (2013). “Brown Body, White Wonderland.” *Slate*. August 29, 2013.

Joan Morgan (1999). “hip-hop feminist,” *When chickenheads come home to roost : my life as a hip-hop feminist*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 47-62.

Jessica Valenti (2007). “Feminists do it better (and other sex tips).” *Full frontal feminism: a young women's guide to why feminism matters*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press. 19-40.

Andi Zeisler (2014). “The crisis of bad feminism is worse than you think.” *Salon*. September 1, 2014.

Music Videos: Miley Cyrus’s VMA performance 2013; Lily Allen’s “Hard Out Here” music video; Beyoncé’s “Flawless” music video.

February 2

Week 5: Feminism, Desire, and Pornography

SHORT PAPER DUE

Andrea Dworkin (1981). Excerpts from *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. New York: Perigee Books.

Catharine Mackinnon (1985). Excerpts from *Pornography, Civil Rights, and Speech*.

Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood (2013). “Emotional truths and thrilling slide shows: the resurgence of antiporn feminism.” *The feminist porn book: the politics of producing pleasure*. Tristan Taormino, Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Constance Penley, and Mireille Miller-Young, eds. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 41-57.

February 9

Week 6: Feminism, Desire, and Pornography cont.

Sinamon Love (2013). “A Question of Feminism.” *The feminist porn book: the politics of producing pleasure*. Tristan Taormino, Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Constance Penley, and Mireille Miller-Young, eds. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 97-104.

Alex Morris (2014). “The Blue Devil in Miss Belle Knox: Meet Duke Porn Star Miriam Weeks.” *Rolling Stone*. April 23, 2014

TBA

February 16

Week 7: Medicalization of Desire and Sexuality

Ehrenreich, B. & English, D. (1990). The sexual politics of sickness. In Conrad, P. & Kern, R. (Eds.), *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives (3rd edition)*. St. Martin’s Press: New York. 270-284.

Hartley, Heather & Tiefer, Leonore (2003). Taking a Biological Turn: The Push for a “Female Viagra” and the Medicalization of Women’s Sexual Problems. *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 31(1/2), 42-54.

Film: Labiaplasty Clips; Orgasm, Inc.

February 23

Week 8:

READING WEEK

Module 2: Desire and Popular Culture

March 1

Week 9: Representation and Desire

Laura Mulvey (1995). "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" *Feminist film theory* (ed.) Susan Thornham, New York: New York University Press. 58-69.

Ann Kaplan (1983). "Is the Gaze Male?" *Women in Film: Both Sides of the Camera*. London and New York: Methuen. 23-35.

bell hooks (1992). "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators." *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 115-131.

Media: Sexual stereotypes in the media

March 8

Week 10: Film and Desire

Film: Imagine Me & You

March 15

Week 11: Television and Desire

Catherine Moore (2007), "Getting Wet: The Heteroflexibility of Showtime's *The L Word*" *Third Wave Feminism and Television*. Merri Lisa Johnson, ed. London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 119-146.

Astrid Henry (2004). "Orgasms and empowerment: Sex and the City and the third wave feminism," *Reading Sex and the City*. London: New York: I. B. Tauris. 65-82.

Television Clips: "Sex and the City," "The L Word," and "Girls"

March 22

Week 12: Music and Desire

Tiffanie Drayton (2014). "Frisky Rant: The Real Problem With Nicki Minaj's 'Anaconda' Cover Art & Her 'Black Jezebel' Brand." *The Frisky*. July 28, 2014.

Savannah Shange (2014). "A king named Nicki: strategic queerness and the black femmecce." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 24(1): 29-45.

Music Videos: Nicki Minaj and TBA

Module 3: Desire, Religion, Power, and Pleasure

March 29

Week 13: Religion and Desire

Katie Barrow and Katherine Kunalanka (2011). "To Be Jewish and Lesbian: An Exploration of Religion, Sexual Identity, and Familial Relationships." *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 7(5): 470-492.

Shereen El Feki (2013). "Interview with Terry Gross" *Fresh Air*. March 19, 2013.

Lauren Winner (2005). Excerpts from *Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

Biblical passages from: Song of Songs

April 5

Week 14: Desire and BDSM

FILM PAPER DUE

Stacey May Fowles (2008), "'The Fantasy of Acceptable 'Non-Consent': Why the Female *Sexual Submissive* Scares Us (and Why She Shouldn't)," *Yes means yes!: visions of female sexual power & a world without rape*. Jaclyn Friedman & Jessica Valenti, eds. Berkeley: Seal Press. 117-126.

David M. Ortmann and Richard A. Sprott (2012). Excerpts from *Sexual outsiders: understanding BDSM sexualities and communities*.

Film: Our America with Lisa Ling: Shades of Kink; Rihanna's S/M (Video)

(FINAL EXAM TIME AND LOCATION: TBA)