

Western University
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
GSWS 2283G Desiring Women
Winter 2024

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Land Acknowledgement

“Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.”

Department Course Description

This course looks at how female sexuality and subjectivity is experienced, understood, represented and theorized across a range of disciplines; these may include art, literature, media, psychology, anthropology, sociology, biology and medicine. It explores how female sexual desires, practices and identities are shaped in relation to individual, cultural and social meanings of female sexuality. No prerequisites. 3 hours, 0.5 course

Detailed Course Description

This course examines how female desire, sexuality, and subjectivity are experienced, understood, represented and theorized historically as well as in contemporary society. The course will explore how female sexual desires, experiences, and identities are shaped in relation to society and culture. Students will unpack women's desire in four units: the first unit will draw on interdisciplinary theory to understand desire. Concepts such as discourse and hegemony will be used to help navigate desire. The second unit will explore desire, sexuality, and subjectivity in history. The third unit will unpack female desire, sexuality, and subjectivity in contemporary popular culture specifically television, music, fiction, and pornography. The final unit will explore desire in everyday life through examining sex education, current sexual trends including hookup-culture, as well as women writing about their desire and sexuality. Core course questions include: What is desire? What does our interdisciplinary approach reveal about the nature of desire, sexuality, and subjectivity? How do people experience desire and articulate their sexual selves? How have social perceptions of desire changed over time? How do axes of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, culture, religion, location, and time impact women's desire? Which desires, sexualities, and identities are considered undesirable? How do societies react to these desires, sexualities, and

identities? How do folks challenge dominant discourses regarding desire?

Course Objectives

The objectives of our course are as follows:

1. to engage with theory and research from sexuality studies, feminist theory, gender theory, cultural studies, history, and psychoanalysis to understand how social understandings and representations of desire, sexuality, and subjectivity impact people's lived experiences and subjectivities.
2. to gain a nuanced and thorough understanding of how race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, culture, religion, location and time in combination impact how people articulate their sexual selves and view themselves as individuals.
3. to facilitate an understanding of how cultural perceptions impact one's own experiences.
4. to develop students' analytical skills in course assignments and in discussion making connections between core course questions, themes, and content.
5. to enhance students' written and oral communication skills specifically their ability to clearly articulate, support, and organize arguments.
6. to develop students' written communication skills particularly focusing on organizing essays, developing a clear writing style, and accurate use of grammar.
7. to help students become more comfortable articulating thoughtful analysis, summary, reflections, and observations to their peers.

Evaluation Breakdown The syllabus may be subject to change with sufficient notice

Young Adult Novel Study	30%
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Participation Journal/Classroom participation	30%
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Exam	40%
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