

**University of Western Ontario  
Department of Women Studies and Feminist Research  
Winter 2019**

**Women's Studies 2283G: Desiring Women  
Mondays, 4:30p.m.-7:30p.m.  
Course location: Somerville House 2316**

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Instructor: Dr. Andrea S. Allen  
Email: aallen65@uwo.ca  
Office Hours: Fridays 9:30-11:30  
Office Location: Lawson Hall 3249

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 Attendance and Participation	5%
In-Class Quizzes	20%
Short Paper (3-4 pages)	20%
Media Paper (5-6 pages)	25%
Final Exam	30%

**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.

**Prerequisites:**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**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. Participation in in-class group discussions is also an aspect of this component of the grade. Disruptive behavior (described in the Policies section) will result in deductions as well.

*In-class quizzes (20% of final grade/ 10% each):* Three short in-class quizzes will be given in the course throughout the semester. Of the three, the top two quiz scores will be counted. The tests will be based on the readings and/or visual media shown in class for that particular day. Quiz dates: January 28th; February 25th; March 18st.

*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. Due date: February 11th.

*Media 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. Due date: April 8th.

*Final exam (30% 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)  
Due date: TBA

## 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 2283G; you are also required to submit electronic copies of all written assignments (excluding tests/exams) through Owl.

Deadlines are registered as the date/time these assignments are submitted on Owl. Late penalties are assessed based on the submission time, so please don’t forget to upload your paper on OWL. 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 on OWL will receive a 0 until there is an OWL submission.**

### 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.uwo.ca/2011/pg117.html> and

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

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](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.

For assignments worth less than 10% of the final grade, please follow the same procedure for assignments worth more than 10% of the final grade.

**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 will 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>.

### **Appeals:**

Discussions about graded assignments may not take place within 24 hours after the grade is posted or the assignment returned. Questions about grades will be entertained for the following three weeks. No appeals or other grade requests will be considered outside of this period.

### **Recording Lectures:**

Lectures are the copyrighted intellectual property of the instructor...me. If you wish to record a lecture, please ask my permission in advance.

**Note for students with disabilities:** Please contact [ws-ugrad@uwo.ca](mailto: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](http://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 me through OWL, the course website. I 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 and include your course number in the subject line of the email 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 (e.g., Dear Dr. Allen).

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Module 1: Desire, Feminism, and Theory**

##### **Week 1 – January 7: Introduction**

Introduction

##### **Week 2 – January 14: Desire and Psychoanalysis**

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*.

##### **Week 3 – January 21: 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.

**Week 4– January 28: Third Wave Feminism, “Choice Feminism,” and Desire  
IN-CLASS QUIZ #1**

Shelley Budgeon (2015). "Individualized femininity and feminist politics of choice." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22(3):303-318.

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.

Rebecca Walker (2001). "Lusting for Freedom," *Listen Up; Voices From the Next Feminist Generation*. Barbara Findlen, ed. Seattle: Seal Press. 19-24.

**Module 2: Popular Culture, Representation, and Desire**

**Week 5 – February 4: Film and Media Theory 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.

**Week 6 – February 11: Feminism, Desire, and Pornography  
SHORT ESSAY DUE**

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

Sinnamon 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

Media: Classic pornography clip: Sinnamon Love interview: Belle Knox documentary

**February 18-22: READING WEEK**

**Week 8 – February 25: Film and Desire**  
**IN-CLASS QUIZ #2**

Media: *The New Girlfriend*

**Week 9 – March 4: Music and Desire**

Nick Levine (2016). "By the Bi." *Gay Times*. November, 2016.

Jessica Pressler (2016). "Lo, and Behold." *New York*. 49(22): 93-96, Oct. 31, 2016

Isabel Molina-Guzmán (2010). Excerpts from *Dangerous Curves: Latina Bodies in the Media*. New York: New York University Press.

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

**Media:** Nicki Minaj, Tove Lo, and Jennifer Lopez videos

**Week 10 – March 11: Television and Desire**

Gaylene Gould (2017). "A Lesson in Awkward." *Sight & Sound*. 27(1): 28-30.

Meredith Nash and Ruby Grant (2015). "Twenty-Something Girls v. Thirty-Something Sex And The City Women." *Feminist Media Studies* 15(6): 976-991.

Amita Nijhawan (2015). "Mindy Calling: Size, Beauty, Race in The Mindy Project." *M/C Journal* 18(6).

Media: *Insecure*, *Sex and the City*, and *The Mindy Project*

**Module 3: Desire and Topics**

**Week 11 – March 18: Medicalization and Desire**  
**IN-CLASS QUIZ #3**

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

Cristalle Pronier and Elizabeth Monk-Turner (2014). "Factors shaping women's sexual satisfaction: a comparison of medical and social models" *Journal of Gender Studies* 23(1): 69–80.

Judy Segal (2015). "The rhetoric of female sexual dysfunction: faux feminism and the FDA." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 187(12): 915-916.

Sonia Sodha (2015). "Feminists, stop lecturing women about 'female Viagra.'" *The Guardian* August, 2015.

**Week 11 – March 25: Religion and Desire**

Alia Imtoul and Shakira Hussein (2009). "Challenging the Myth of the Happy Celibate: Muslim Women Negotiating Contemporary Relationships." *Contemporary Islam* 3(1): 25-39.

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

Media: *Cure for Love*

### **Week 12– April 1: Gender, Sexuality, and Desire**

Andrea Allen (2015). Excerpt from *Violence and Desire in Brazilian Lesbian Relationships*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Nicola Brown (2010). "The Sexual Relationships of Sexual-Minority Women Partnered with Trans Men: A Qualitative Study" *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39(2): 561-572.

### **Week 13– April 8: BDSM and Desire**

#### **MEDIA 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*.

**FINAL EXAM DATE AND TIME: TBA**