



Western Arts & Humanities

Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
2161B – Women and Popular Culture

Winter 2022

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



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

1. Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer

2. Course Overview and Important Dates

Mode	Dates	Time	Frequency
Virtual asynchronous	N/A	2-3 hours	Weekly



All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study days	Exam Period
January 3	February 19 - 27	April 1	April 2-3	April 4-30

3. Contact Information



Course Instructor	Contact Information
Dr. Nichole Edwards (she/her) 	Email: nedwar7@uwo.ca Twitter: @nicholekedwards Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm (sign up on OWL, I will then send a Zoom link)

Teaching Assistants	Contact Information	TA Office Hours
		You will be assigned a TA in the next couple weeks and they will reach out to let you know their office hours!

4. Course Description and Design

How is gender represented in popular culture? What messages do we receive about women from Reality TV? Disney films? Tampon commercials? Moreover, how do cultural understandings of what it means to be feminine become entangled in the way women are represented within popular culture, and what kind of impact might these messages have on us, as consumers?

This course explores several the themes listed above, and, how they relate to ideas, representations, and experiences of women in popular culture. Taught through an intersectional lens, this course focuses on elements of class, race and sexuality *alongside* gender. In doing so, students will be offered a nuanced understanding of the way in which women are represented, and valued, within popular culture (and the broader social world.) While we explore historical *and* contemporary figures, the majority of the course will focus on contemporary themes like the evolution of Beyoncé’s feminism, the representation of transgender folks in the media, the branding of feminism in mainstream media, and the representations of class and femininity that we see in reality TV.

This course is also designed so that it becomes clear how various technologies (magazines, the Internet, music videos, literature, reality TV, etc.) can play a direct role in how women are represented in popular culture and how we, as consumers, experience them through these technologies. As a result, this course hopes to gauge your interest when you are consuming pop culture inside as well as outside the classroom, where you perhaps become aware of some of the themes we’ve discussed when you’re Netflix-ing at home on a Saturday night (or, in the case of a pandemic, every night).

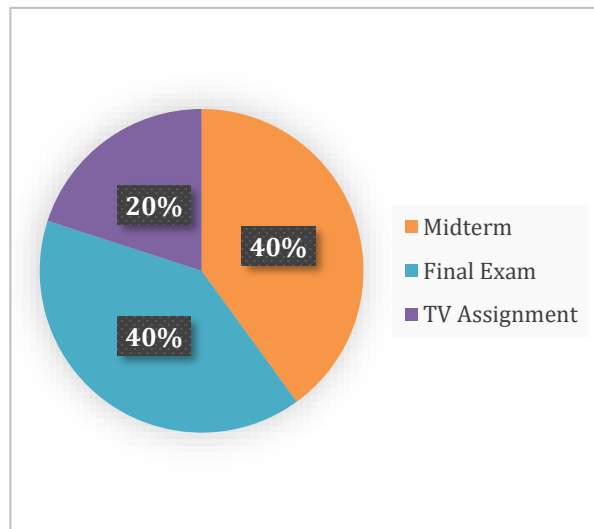
5. Evaluation

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.



Please note that:

- ☒ All assignments are due at 11:55 pm EST unless otherwise specified
- ☒ All assignments will be submitted to Turnitin to ensure academic integrity
- ☒ Detailed instructions will be posted for each assessment on OWL



Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Midterm	40%	Complete by Feb 18 at 11:55pm
TV Assignment	20%	Complete by _____
Final Exam	40%	During formal exam period

IMPORTANT: After an assessment is returned, students must wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator. Your TA should always be your first point of contact to discuss marks. If Dr. Edwards graded your work, you can contact her first.

Midterm – 40%

- The midterm will include T/F, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions
- Students will complete the midterm through the Tests and Quizzes tool on OWL
- The midterm will be timed and once a student begins the midterm, they will have 2 hours to complete and submit (if you are accommodated through Accessible Education you will complete the midterm with the extra time you are allotted)
- Each midterm will run through Turnitin software on OWL to ensure academic integrity
- More details to come in the first couple weeks of the semester!

TV Assignment – 20%

- In the first few weeks of the semester, you will have access to a short list of TV episodes that deal with themes that are related to the course. From this list you must choose one episode to analyze, using the knowledge gained in this course as your starting point for evaluating the episode
- The aim of the assignment is to examine the representation(s) of gender and gender issues within the episode you watch

- Some of the things you may want to consider for your analysis will be outlined in detail in the first few weeks of the semester
- Your analysis should be 1000 words (you are permitted to go 10% above or below this amount without penalty)
- The assignment must be submitted by _____ 11:55pm, where it will run through Turnitin to ensure academic integrity

Final Exam – 40%

- Even in remote courses exams must be registered with the Registrar's Office, and so we won't know when this exam is due until the university releases the exam schedule
- The exam is *not* cumulative and will only cover topics from the midterm onwards
- The exam format will be application-based, meaning students will receive a list of quotes, concepts, etc. and be asked to explain, critique, or expand on them. (Note: it's not as easy as it sounds!)
- More details will be discussed once the exam schedule is released by the Registrar's Office

IMPORTANT: Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Information about late or missed evaluations:

- ☒ Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty 5% per day
- ☒ Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 48 hours of submission of the last illness self-report
- ☒ An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; an alternate assessment will be assigned

6. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Offer critical reflections of mainstream films and TV shows in a way that speaks to ongoing debates about gender, femininity, masculinity, and sexuality
- Identify how intersections of race, class and sexuality impact the way women are represented in popular culture, and as a result, the broader social world
- Construct an argument around the negative and positive ways women are represented in popular culture, including the development of stereotypes and the ways women can resist them
- Recognize the importance of changing technologies and how this has impacted understandings and representations of women in popular culture throughout history
- Become critical consumers of popular culture!



7. Course Content and Schedule



Week	Dates	Topic
1	Jan 3 - 7	Gender, Celebrity, and Pop Culture
2	Jan 10 - 14	Feminism and Advertising
3	Jan 17 - 21	Trans Representation Matters
4	Jan 24 - 28	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity
5	Jan 31 - Feb 4	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood in Television
6	Feb 7 - 11	Politics, Periods, and Pop Culture
7	Feb 14 - 18	Midterm Week
8	Feb 21 - 25	Reading Week
9	Feb 28 – Mar 4	Girls and the Sexualization Debate
10	Mar 7 – 11	To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before
11	Mar 14 – 18	Catch up Week!
12	Mar 21 - 25	Patriarchy and Princesses
13	Mar 28 – Apr 1	The Evolution of Beyonce

8. Online Participation and Engagement



Although this is a large class, you will be invited to engage with lesson content on OWL.

You are not required to do so (as in, there is no graded participation component to this course), but you will be invited to participate and engage in the course material when prompted on OWL.

Consider this to be like in-class discussions, where I might ask for opinions on a certain topic, feedback on films we watch, or a 'just for fun' multiple choice question to see what you know about a topic before a section of the lesson content.

Much like an in-person class, not everyone will feel comfortable participating/engaging, and that's fine. I'm hoping you'll blow my expectations out of the water 😊

9. Required Readings



All course readings are available in OWL via EZproxy Library Link. All you have to do is click the reading link provided on each week's overview page, and you will be redirected to a downloadable copy via the Western libraries database. Remember to login using your UWO ID to access the full library database off-campus.

Please note that if you click the reading link and it does not automatically open the reading in a new window, you may have to allow your browser to accept pop-ups from OWL or update your browser.

In chronological order, the required readings are as follows:

TOPIC	READING
Gender, Celebrity, and Pop Culture	No reading for first week back
Feminism and Advertising	Zeisler, Andi. 2017. Fast Feminism, Cheap Talk . <i>Bitch Media</i> .
Trans Representation Matters	Lovelock, Michael. 2017. "‘I Am...’: Caitlyn Jenner, Jazz Jennings, and the cultural politics of transgender celebrity." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 17(5), pp. 737-754.
Reality TV, Class, and Femininity	Pickering, Jo. 2014. "Class looks and classifactory gazes: The fashioning of class on reality TV." <i>Film, Fashion, & Consumption</i> , 3(3), pp. 195-209.
Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television	Pallister, K. 2016. "Modern Fathers in <i>Modern Family</i> : The Impact of Generational Differences on Fatherhood Styles." In Podnieks, E (ed.) <i>Pops in Pop Culture: Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the New Man</i> . Palgrave McMillan US. Pp. 233-249.
Politics, Periods, and Pop Culture	Merskin, D. 1999. "Adolescence, Advertising and the Ideology of Menstruation." <i>Sex Roles</i> . 40(11/12), pp. 941-957.
Girls and the Sexualization Debate	Reading TBA
To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before	Jenkins, T. 2005. "'Potential Lesbians at 2 O'Clock:’ The Heterosexualization of Lesbianism in the Recent Teen Film." <i>Journal of Popular Culture</i> , 38(3), pp. 491-504.
Patriarchy and Princesses	Watch one Disney animated movie that features a princess/classic fairytale narrative – From <i>Snow White</i> to <i>Moana</i> , your choice!
The Evolution of Beyonce	Tinsley, Omise’eke. 2018. "Family Album: Making Lemonade out of Marriage, Motherhood, and Southern Tradition. In <i>Beyonce in Formation: Remixing Black Feminism</i> . University of Texas Press, Pp. 21-66.

10. Communication:

- ☒ Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- ☒ A weekly update will be provided on the OWL announcements
- ☒ Students should email their instructor(s) and teaching assistant(s) using email
- ☒ Students should receive an email response in 48 – 72 hours (excluding weekends / holidays)
- ☒ Students should use the OWL forum entitled "Café" for general class chat, questions, concerns, and all course-related content. Also, movie and TV suggestions 😊
- ☒ The "Café" will be monitored on a regular basis by Dr. Edwards



11. Resources



- ☒ All resources will be posted in OWL
- ☒ Required readings will be posted via EZProxy Link in OWL.
- ☒ Students are invited to login to [Kanopy](#) – sign in with your Western ID to access documentaries that will be required to watch in this course

12. Professionalism & Privacy:

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:



- ☒ All course materials created by Dr. Edwards are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- ☒ Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- ☒ Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- ☒ Students will be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- ☒ All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

13. How to Be Successful in this Class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.



1. Invest in a planner or app to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes (highly recommend this over typing them) Notes will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.
5. Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.