

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
LONDON, ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
W2283G – DESIRING WOMEN - COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2022

INSTRUCTOR: DR. LAUREN AUGER

EMAIL: lauger3@uwo.ca

Class time: 4:30-7:30 Wednesdays P and A B 117

Office Hours:

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.”

COVID STATEMENT

The instructor reserves the right to move the course to an online delivery format due to safety concerns due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The instructor will try to give you 24 hours notice for any changes to the delivery of the course. Please wear face masks in-class and social distance from your colleagues. Please do not attend class if you feel ill.

MASKING GUIDELINES

Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation.

Students are not permitted to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

COURSE ABSENCES DUE TO DAILY COVID SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Missed assessments (e.g., presentations, essays, quizzes, tests, midterms, etc.) require formal [academic considerations](#) (typically self-reported absences and/or academic counselling). Methods for dealing with

missed work and course content are at the discretion of the instructor(s). Students should be aware that some learning outcomes cannot be easily made up and may need to be completed in a subsequent year. Your instructor will provide you with further information as to how this applies within this course.

Students who demonstrate a pattern of routinely missing coursework due to self-reported COVID symptoms, and therefore do not demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes of the course, will not receive credit for the course.

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR AN IN-PERSON CLASS PIVOTING TO 100% ONLINE LEARNING

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. In the event that online learning is required, a stable Internet connection with working microphone and webcam will be required. As has been the case in the past, the decision to pivot to online learning will be made by Western, and not individual instructors or departments (excepting temporary online instruction in the event of instructor illness)

DEPARTMENTAL 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 looks at 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 course will then turn to female desire, sexuality, and subjectivity in contemporary popular culture specifically television, music, fiction, and pornography. The final unit will explore desire in every-day 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 female desire? Which desires, sexualities, and identities are considered undesirable? How do societies react to these desires, sexualities, and identities?

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 polish 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.

COURSE EVALUATION* The syllabus may be subject to change with sufficient notice

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|------------------------------------|------------|
| Reading Response Assignment | 10% |
| Analyze an Event Essay | 15% |
| Young Adult Novel Study | 30% |
| Participation | 15% |
| Exam | 30% |

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Analyze an Event Assignment (15% of final grade) February 2, 2022 (1000-1400 words) 3-4 pages in-length due by the start of class in hardcopy and in the OWL Assignment folder

Drawing on **two readings** from our course, analyze a contemporary event impacting the ways in which female desire, sexuality, and subjectivity are experienced, understood, represented and/or theorized. You will need to conduct research on this event and provide a discussion in your paper contextualizing the event. Your sources can include popular sources. Your chosen event should have occurred in the last five years. The event could be any real-life event covered in the media. You must use proper MLA citation method and proper margins in your paper. You will be evaluated based on your ability to make a clear, well defended overarching argument about the event and how it sheds light on current understandings, representations, and experiences of women's desire, sexuality, and subjectivity. I would recommend that you use at least one foundational reading (from weeks one or two) as a basis for your analysis.

Young-Adult Novel Study (30% of final grade) March 9, (2000- 2400 words) 6-7 pages in-length due by the start of class in hardcopy and in OWL assignment folder

Read a Young Adult novel from the list below and write a paper analyzing this novel based on the following questions: What does your chosen Young Adult novel teach its readers about female desire, sexuality, and subjectivity? How may the book's message impact young readers' understandings of and feelings towards desire, sexuality, and subjectivity, as well as appropriate sexual behaviours and feelings? Your study should be organized and formatted as an essay and your thesis should be your answer to the above questions. You will be required to draw on two course readings to help support your argument. Proper MLA citation method and standard margins should be used in this assignment.

You may choose from the following novels: Any novel from Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* series, any novel from Jenny Han's *To All The Boys I've Loved Before* series, or Kody Keplinger's *The Duff* novel.

Participation (15% of final grade)

This class involves student engagement in the learning process through active contributions to class discussions. It is crucial to note that mere attendance is insufficient to warrant a good participation grade. Students will be evaluated based on the quality and regularity of their contributions to virtual class discussions. If students miss more than three virtual classes, they may be contacted by the professor.

Reading Response Assignment (10%) (500-700 words) 1.5-2 pages due at the start of class in hardcopy form as well as in the OWL Assignment folder when your reading is scheduled.

In the first week of class, students will choose one reading that they will summarize and then critically engage with in their reading response assignment. This response should summarize and explain the significance of the reading. You should have a clear thesis statement at the beginning of the response and then support that argument in this response. Students should draw on key course questions to help them

develop their thesis statement. You should also connect the reading to key course themes and other readings in the course.

Take-Home Exam (30%) Two Essays (15%) each. No more than 1000 words per essay.

Students will write two short essays for their open-book take-home exam. Each essay will be worth 15% percent of the final grade. There will be a choice of four essay questions. Students will be graded based on the quality of their argument, their ability to make sophisticated and nuanced connections between key course concepts and questions, course themes, and content. I will provide access to the examination 24 hours prior to the beginning of the examination slot. Papers will be due by the end of the assigned examination slot.

COURSE CONTENT

Reading List and Schedule

Unit 1 Theorizing Desire

Week 1: Defining and Understanding Desire – Wednesday, January 5

Clark, Anna. Introduction Sexuality and the Problem of Western Civilization. *A History of European Sexuality*. London, Routledge, 2019.

Pickens, Chelsea. and Virginia Braun. Stroppy Bitches Who Need to Learn How to Settle? Young Single Women and Norms of Femininity and Heterosexuality. *Sex Roles*. 79, 2018. 431-448.

Week 2: Feminists Unpack Desire and Sexuality- Wednesday, January 12

Friedan, Betty. The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton, 2001. 103-126.

Rudnick, Lois P. and Heru, Alison M. The ‘secret’ source of ‘Female Hysteria’: The Role that Syphilis Played in the Construction of Female Sexuality and Psychoanalysis in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. *The History of Psychology*. 28(2), 2017.195-208.

Thorne, Barrie. Warren, Carol. and Rabbi Laura Geller. A Feminist Regrounding of Sexuality and Intimacy : Options for Intimacy, Bonding, Caring, and the Relationship between Sexuality, Power, and Equality. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 37 (8), 1994. 1042-1057.

Unit 2: Desire, Sexuality and Subjectivity in History

Week 3: Witches, Witch Trials and Social Reactions to Desire in Legend and History- Wednesday, January 19

Garratt, Julia M. Witchcraft and Sexual Knowledge in Early Modern England. *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*. 13 (1), 2013. 32-72.

Roelans, Jonas. A Woman Like Any Other: Female Sodomy, Hermaphroditism, and Witchcraft in Seventeenth Century Brugge. *Journal of Women's History*. 29 (4), 2017. 11-34

Week 4: Modern Witches; Desire, War, and Femme- Wednesday, January 26 Analyze an Event Essay due in hardcopy form at the start of class as well as in the OWL Assignment Folder

Wheelwright, Julie. Poisoned Honey the Myth of Women in Espionage. *Queen's Quarterly*. 100 (2), (Summer 1993). 291-309.

Olmstead, Kathryn S. Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War. *Intelligence and National Security*. 19 (1), March 2004. 78-94.

Pattinson, Juliette. The best disguise': Performing Femininities for Clandestine Purposes. *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing, and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. 136-153.

Unit 3: Desiring Women and Women's Desire in Popular Culture

Week 5: Desiring and Desirable Television; Celebrating Desire, Awakening Desire, and Stereotyping Desire – Analyze an Event Essay due in hardcopy form at the start of class as well as in the OWL Assignment Folder

Wednesday, February 2

Monetmorro, Beth, and Lisa V. Chewning. Aging Hot: Images and Narratives of Sexual Desirability in Television. *Sexuality and Culture*. 22(2), 2018. 462-478.

Symes, Katerina. Orange Is the New Black: the Popularization of Lesbian Sexuality and Heterosexual Modes of Viewing. *Feminist Media Studies*. 17(1), 2017. 29-41.

SandercocK, Tom. Transing the small screen: loving and hating transgender youth in Glee and Degrassi. *Journal of Gender Studies*. 24(4), July 2015. 436-452.

Dionne, Yvette. We are more than tragedy: Fat Girls Deserve Better than 'This is Us'. *Bitch Media*, October 18, 2017. <https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/this-is-us-warped-depiction-of-fat-women>

Week 6: Singing their Desire; Desire in Music- Wednesday February 9

Brown, Evette Dionne. BDSM, Gazes, and Wedding Rings: The Centering of Black Female Pleasure and Agency in Beyoncé. *The Beyoncé Effect: Essays on Sexuality, Race and Feminism*. Edited by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek. McFarland and Company, 2016. 155-177.

Jackson, Sue, Goddard, Sarah, and Sophie Cossons. The Importance of [Not] Being Miley: Girls Making Sense of Miley Cyrus. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 19(6), 2016. 547-564.

Straus, Laurie. "Brave New Ideas Begin; Disability, Gender, and Life Writing in Twenty-First Century Pop." *Music and the Politics of Hope: Queer and Feminist Interventions*, edited by Susan Fast and Craig Jennox, Routledge, 2019. 85-105

Week 7: Desire, Harlequin Romance, Sexism and Racism- Wednesday, February 16

Guest Column. Not Your Grandmother's Harlequin: Writing Romance in the 21st Century. *Writers Digest*. February 2019. <https://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-genre/romance-by-writing-genre/not-your-grandmothers-harlequin-writing-romance-in-the-21st-century>

Thierauf, Doreen. Forever After: Desire in the 21st Century Romance Block Buster. *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 49(3), June 2016. 604-626.

Altenburger, Lauren, E. Carotta, Christin, L. Bonomi, Amy E. and Ansatasia Snyder. Sexist Attitudes Among Emerging Adult Women Readers of Fifty Shades Fiction. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*. 46 (2), February 2017. 255-264.

Jarmakani, Amira. Desiring the Big Blade: Racing the Sheikh in Desert Romances. *American Quarterly*. 63(4), December 2011. 895-923.

Week 8: Desiring Feminist Pornography Wednesday, March 2

Liberman, Rachael 'It's a really great tool' Feminist Pornography and the Promotion of Sexual Subjectivity. *Porn Studies*. 2(2-3), 2015. 174-194.

Muise, Amy. Herold, Edward, S. and Melanie Gillis. Bare'ing it all for the Camera: Women's Experiences of Having Erotic Photographs Taken. *Sexuality and Culture*. 14 (2), June 2010. 126-143.

Mondin, Allesandra. 'Tumbler Mostly, Great Empowering Images:' Blogging, Reblogging, and Scrolling Feminist, Queer, and BDSM Desires. *Journal of Gender Studies*. 26 (3), 2017. 282-292.

Unit 4: Desire in Everyday Life

Week 9: Experiencing Desire; Relationships, Society, and Sex Education- Wednesday, March 9 – Novel Study Assignment due in the OWL Assignment folder by 11 pm

Miyazawa, Kaoura. The Abstinence Only Until Marriage Program and Girl (Dis) Empowerment. *Girlhood Studies*. 10 (1), March 22, 2017. 4-21.

Kelly, Marguerite. et. al. Performing (Heterosexual) Femininity: Female Agency and Role in Sexual Life and Contraceptive Use- a Qualitative Study in Australia. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*. 19 (2), February 1, 2017. 240-255.

Leher, Riva. "Golem Girl Gets Lucky." *Sex and Disability*. Edited by Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow. Durham, Duke University Press, 2012. 231-355.

Week 10: Molding A Desirable Body; Body Image and Plastic Surgery- Wednesday, March 16

Drenten, Jenna., & Gurrieri, Lauren. Crossing the #Bikini Bridge: Exploring the Role of Social Media in Propagating Body Image Trends. *The Dark Side of Social Media* First Edition Volume 1. Edited by Angeline Close Scheinbaum, New York: Routledge. 2018. 49-70.

Ashikali, Eleni-Marina., Dittmar, Helga, and Susan Ayres. Adolescent Girls' Views of Cosmetic Surgery: A Focus Group Study. In *Journal of Health Psychology*. 21 (1), 2016. 112-121.

Schick, Vanessa R., et al. Genital Appearance Dissatisfaction: Implications for Women's Genital Image Self-Consciousness, Sexual Esteem, Sexual Satisfaction, and Sexual Risk. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34 (3), 2010. 394-404.

Week 11: Desire on Campus; Contemporary Hook-Up Culture- Wednesday, March 23

Wade, Lisa. How Sex Became Fun. In *American Hook-Up: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017. 50-70.

James-Kangal, N., Weitbrecht, E.M., Francis, T.E. et al. Hooking-Up and Emerging Adults' Relationship Attitudes and Expectations. *Sexuality and Culture*. 22(3), 2018. 706-723.

Lamont, Ellen, Roach, Teresa, and Sope Kahn. Navigating Campus Hook-Up Culture: LGBTQ Students and College Hook-Ups. *Sociological Forum*. 33(4), 2018. 1000-1022.

Week 12: Articulating her Experiences of Desire and Sexuality Wednesday, March 30

Auteri, Steph. *The Dirty Word*. Jersey City: Cleis Press, 2018. 145-166.

COURSE POLICIES

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND EMAIL POLICIES

Participants enrolled in this class are expected to complete the required course readings, attend all class sessions, respectfully contribute to classroom activities and discussions, and complete course assignments on time. Please bring your readings to class in hardcopy or digital form. Electronics such as computers and smartphones are permitted. However, please be respectful and refrain from using your electronics for

outside activity during class. Please have your telephones set to silent. Our learning environments (including online) will be respectful spaces. I will try to reply to emails within twenty-four hours. Please do not expect an immediate response. Put the course code in the subject line of the email. Be as specific as possible with your questions. Specific questions receive specific answers. I may not respond to emails on weekends or during the evenings. However, I will check my email every twenty-four hours during the work week. If your questions is more appropriately handled in-person, please feel free to make an appointment during my office hours or see me after class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please notify your professor if you are unable to attend lecture. Persistent absenteeism could be grounds for failure in the course. I will contact you indicating your absence if you are absent from three classes.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Assignments (the analyze an event essay, Young Adult Novel Study, and the Reading Response) must be submitted at the beginning of class in person and in the OWL assignment drop box. I will apply a penalty of 2% per day for late assignments. For late essays, submit a copy to the late assignment drop box for that assignment on OWL.

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 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 licencing agreement currentlybetween the Universityand Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>.). (<https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>)

ACADEMIC OFFENCES:

Scholastic offences 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>

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>”

NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please contact gswsugchair@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. You may also contact aew@uwo.ca to find out the full range of services available to you.

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION

Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment

ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING TESTS AND EXAMS

Our exam is an open-book take-home exam.

WOMEN’S STUDIES GRADING CRITERIA

A+ (90 to 100)

One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

A (80 and up)

Superior work which is clearly above average

- Challenging and specific thesis that is clearly developed
- Correct and interesting sentence structure
- Sophisticated writing style
- Appropriate documentation
- Quotations well integrated into the text, with proper documentation
- Evidence of originality or independence of thought
- Provision of strong analysis
- Complexity, and subtlety in approach to subject
- Well-organized with a logical development of the argument

B (70 to 79)

Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory

- Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Correct sentence structure
- Adequate documentation
- Allowance for some (minor) problems such as:
 - errors in factual content or interpretation
 - some minor errors in terminology or general writing skills
 - occasional lapses in clarity, including vagueness, incompleteness, flaws in structure
- Provision of some analysis

Note: A grade in the range of 75-79 indicates an essay that borders on an A but has some significant flaw that prevents giving out the higher grade.

C (60 to 69)

Competent work, meeting requirements

- Generally correct but tends to provide more description than analysis
- Tends to be too general or superficial in the handling of material
- Weaknesses in argument including a descriptive thesis, a mechanical approach, lack of adequate evidence, documentation, or support
- Problems with grammar or matters of style
- Simplicity of thought, structure, or expression

D (50 to 59)

Fair work, minimally acceptable

- Does not provide an argument or a line of thought
- Major difficulties with logical structure, and expression of ideas
- Topic has not been thought through
- Errors of grammar and diction interfere with understanding
- Over-generalization with inadequate support, evidence, or documentation

F (49 and down)

Fail

- Assignment submitted does not apply to course
- Basic requirements of the assignment are not met

Plagiarism with intent to deceive to be handled by the department chair.