

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
LONDON, ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S
STUDIES
W2283G – DESIRING WOMEN - COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2023

INSTRUCTOR: Dr Lauren Auger

EMAIL: lauger3@uwo.ca

DAY AND TIME: Wednesdays 4:30-7:30

LOCATION: SH 3345

OFFICE HOURS: TBD

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.”

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 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 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 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 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 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.

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

Analyze an Event Essay	15%
Young Adult Novel Study	30%
Participation Journal	15%
Take-Home Exam	40%

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Analyze an Event Assignment (15% of final grade) 3-4 pages in-length due by Wednesday, February 1, by 11:30 pm 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) 6-7 pages in-length due Wednesday March 8, by 11:30 pm in the 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 reading 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, Kody Keplinger's *The Duff* novel, or Michelle L. Teichman's novel *The Space Between*.

Participation Journal (15% of final grade) (two submissions days: Thursday, February 16, by 9:00 am and Thursday, April 6, by 9:00 am) in the OWL assignment folder

Students will write weekly participation journal entries (approx. 1 paragraph each in length) discussing key themes from that week, the readings, and/or key topics that were discussed in class. Students will submit their participation journal twice during the term. Weeks 1-6 will be submitted on Thursday February 6, by 9:00 am and Weeks 7-12 by Thursday, April 6, by 9:00 am. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of their participation discussion, the level of analysis in the comment, and their ability to connect the week's content to multiple weeks of content and/or key course themes.

Take-Home Exam (40%) Two Essays (20%) 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 20% 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. You will have twenty-four hours to complete the take-home exam. The exam will open at the exam time and you will have twenty-four hours to complete the assessment.

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. 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. You will not be permitted to use electronics during the examinations. 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 question is more appropriately handled in-person, please feel free to make an appointment during my office hours or see me after class.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Your self-reflection paper must be submitted at the beginning of class in the OWL assignment drop box. I will apply a penalty of 2% per day for late assignments. Submit late papers to the late

assignment OWL drop box for that assignment.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

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 the online Academic Calendar; information can also be found here: (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

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.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

“Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).”

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism constitutes a serious academic offense.

“Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking” (U.W.O. Senate statement on plagiarism)

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact your instructor. You cannot submit assignments in GSWS 2283G completed for other courses.

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 currently between the University and 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>

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION

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

COURSE CONTENT

Reading List and Schedule

Unit 1 Theorizing Desire

Week 1: Defining and Understanding Desire- Wednesday, January 11

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

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

Week 2: Feminists Unpack Desire and Sexuality- Wednesday, January 18

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

Rudnick, Lois P. and Heru, Alison M. (2017). 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). 195-208.

Thorne, Barrie. Warren, Carol. and Rabbi Laura Geller. (1994). 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). 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 25

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

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

Week 4: Modern Witches; Desire, War, and Femme Fatales- Wednesday, February 1 **Analyze an Event Essay due in the OWL folder at 11:30 pm**

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

Olmstead, Kathryn S. (March 2004). Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War. *Intelligence and National Security*. 19 (1). 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 – Wednesday, February 8

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

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

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

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

Week 6: Singing their Desire; Desire in Music- Wednesday February 15

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

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

564.

Straus, Laurie. (2019). "Brave New Ideas Begin; Disability, Gender, and Life Writing In Twenty-First Century Pop." In *Popular Music and the Politics of Hope Queer and Feminist Interventions*. 85-105

Reading Week

Week 7: Desire, Harlequin Romance, Sexism and Racism- Wednesday, March 1

Guest Column. (February 2019). Not Your Grandmother's Harlequin: Writing Romance in the 21st Century. *Writers Digest*. <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. (June 2016). Forever After: Desire in the 21st Century Romance Block Buster. *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 49(3). 604-626.

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

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

Week 8: Desiring Feminist Pornography Wednesday, March 8 **Novel Study Assignment due in the OWL folder by 11:30pm**

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

Muise, Amy. Herold, Edward, S. and Melanie Gillis. (June 2010). Bare'ing it all for the Camera: Women's Experiences of Having Erotic Photographs Taken. *Sexuality and Culture*. 14(2). 126-B143.

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

Unit 4: Desire in Everyday Life

Week 9: Experiencing Desire; Relationships, Society, and Sex Education-
Wednesday, March 15

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

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

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

Week 10: Molding A Desirable Body; Body Image and Plastic Surgery-
Wednesday, March 22

Week 10: Molding A Desirable Body; Body Image and Plastic Surgery
Wednesday, March 22

Drenten, Jenna., & Gurrieri, Lauren. (2018). "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. 49-70.

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

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

Week 11: Desire on Campus; Contemporary Hook-Up Culture- Wednesday,
March 29

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

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

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

Week 12: Articulating her Experiences of Desire and Sexuality Wednesday,
April 5

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