

**The University of Western Ontario
London Canada
Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research**

January 2012- April 2012

WS 3305F: Gender, Sexuality and Cultural Resistance: Making Culture Jam

Day, time and place of lectures: Monday 1:30 - 4:30, UCC 61

Instructor: Susan Knabe

Office hours: Monday 4:30 - 6:30 (LaH 3235)

Wednesday 11-12 (NCB 215)

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**Gender, Sexuality and Cultural
Resistance: Making Culture Jam**

While popular culture operates to naturalize and distribute dominant discourses about gender and sexuality, it is also a fertile space through which resistance can be enacted. This course examines “common sense” representations of gender and sexuality within Western popular culture and the ways these representations have been confronted and contested-- a process which is increasingly known as “culture jamming.” Precisely because of the public and often commercial nature of popular culture, the course will consider some of the issues raised by the relationships circulating among popular culture, consumption and resistance, including, for example, the increased corporatization of visual, virtual and physical space. The course will provide theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding the fraught relationship between cultural production (understood very broadly) and cultural resistance. The ambivalent nature of this relationship will be explored across a range of texts and practices of resistance and will necessarily require students to be self-reflexive about their own relationship to the kinds of cultural production which reinforces normative ideas about gender and sexuality. This self-reflexivity will be facilitated through both interactive assignments and class discussions.

The course will enable students to

- acquire a complex understanding of the relationship between popular culture, gender and

- sexuality
- describe the role of popular culture in reproducing societal norms associated with gender and sexuality
- become familiar with some of the historical, theoretical and conceptual issues related to the analysis of popular culture as a potential site of resistance in relation to gender, sexuality, race, class and ability
- investigate how the different technical, institutional and aesthetic elements present within popular culture operate to produce affective and intellectual responses
- explore the limitations and possibilities inherent in cultural production as a site of political and social resistance
- critically explore the relationship between cultural and political resistance
- identify and explore some specific historical and contemporary examples of cultural resistance in relation to gender and sexuality, both locally and globally: suffrage movements, HIV/AIDS activism, reproductive rights movements, domestic violence, trans and homophobic violence etc.
- be self-reflexive about their own relationship to popular culture and cultural resistance in relation to gender and sexuality

The course will allow students to develop

- critical and analytical thinking skills
- an ability to analyze non-text based forms of cultural production
- oral and written communication skills
- research skills
- an ability to apply theoretical knowledge to assignments which are creative, self-reflexive and have practical applications

Required Texts:

Course Readings will be available by EZ- Proxy link via WebCT

Prerequisite: Women's Studies 1020E and one of WS2256E or WS2257E OR registration in the Gender, Sexuality, Culture Minor OR permission of the department. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites and that they have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If the student is not eligible for a course, she may be removed from it at any time and will receive no fee adjustment. These decisions cannot be appealed. See also 2009-10 UWO Calendar on-line.

Assessment:

Participation and Preparation: 5 %

Based on the student's in-class **participation**

Online Discussion Posts: 10 %

Students will participate in on-line group discussion prior to each class. Each student will be assigned two weeks during which they must post a

discussion question based on the coming week's readings. The remaining students in the group are asked to respond to the questions their peers post on WebCT. Both questions and responses are judged on how well they are able to engage with the readings, the depth of understanding of the material covered and their ability to draw out similarities between the readings and other material being covered in the course. Questions must be posted by **noon on Saturday** prior to the class. Responses must be posted by **noon on Monday**. Students are encouraged to engage each other in discussion and may respond to both the original questions and the responses their peers post. Posts should be approximately 100 to 200 words.

Individual Project: 15%

Popular Culture and Identity Exercise

Production of a magazine cover which speaks to your own issues/concerns/identity and a brief (1000 word maximum) analysis in which you situate your magazine cover within a cultural and critical context.

Due: February 13, 2012

Group Project: 25 %

Sites of Resistance Group Project

Multifaceted project in which group collaborates to produce an analysis of specific representations within popular cultural production related to gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, ability or nationality etc and then develop potential interventions which begin to address some of the misconceptions produced by these representations. Group members will submit a dossier containing images or tapes, a written analysis of the representation material, a written rationale for the types of interventions proposed, examples of possible interventions, website addresses etc. Discussion of group exercise will take place in class on **March 5**. Attendance at this class is mandatory.

Material will be presented to the class as a research poster during the class.

Due: April 9, 2012

Group Project Self and Peer Assessment: 10 %

Essay Thesis Statement and Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Students will identify a topic related to activism and gender or sexuality to explore in more detail. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor or teaching assistant to discuss their proposed topic.

Due: February 6, 2012

Essay: 25%

2500 words

Due: March 19, 2012

Notes:

- Each student has a **total of 4 days of late credits** each semester, which she or he can distribute among the written assignments required for the course (Individual Project, Annotated Bibliography, Final Essay) at their own discretion. **If the student exceeds their late credits and a) has not spoken to the instructor prior to the original due date or b) does not have a valid medical certificate lodged with the relevant Dean's office, she or he will be penalized at the rate of 2 % per day.**

- **Women's Studies Essay Drop Box:**

Assignments not submitted in class must be deposited in the essay drop box, located outside the Main Office doors, Lawson Hall 3260.

Please note the drop box protocol: papers received between

8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday will be stamped with the current day's date;

4:00 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. Monday to Friday will be stamped with the previous day's date;

3:30 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. Monday will be stamped with Friday's date.

No essays will be stamped with the previous day's date after 8:30 a.m.

- Assignments submitted by email will NOT be accepted.
- **Attendance Requirement:** Please see the "Information for Students" sheet distributed by the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research. Circumstances requiring academic accommodation should be addressed with the Academic Counselor in the student's faculty of registration.
- **Laptop Policy:** Laptop computers will be permitted in class for class purposes, BUT I reserve the right to revisit this policy if I find that people are abusing this privilege.
- **The final grade for any assignment may be dependent on the result of an individual interview with the instructor.**

Scholastic 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> ." (see <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf>)

Specifically on Plagiarism:

"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage 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 the '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 written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking." --- U.W.O. Senate statement on plagiarism

In English, this means do not plagiarize, do not even think about plagiarizing. If you do, bad things will happen. If you are confused about what might constitute plagiarism, or the sorts of bad things that might happen to you if you do plagiarize, please see me.

Turnitin:

"All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under licence 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>)

(<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf>)

In fact, students in WS 3305 F will be required to submit their formal written work to www.turnitin.com via WebCT.

Weekly Reading List for Culture Jam

Jan 9: Introduction: What's At Stake?

Film: *Culture Jam: Hijacking Commercial Culture*

Recommended Reading: Jason Grote, "The God that People Who Do Not Believe in God Believe In: Taking a Bust with Reverend Billy." *Cultural Resistance Reader*. 358- 369

16: Theorizing Culture Jamming I: Media Culture Jamming

Required Reading: Jennifer Sandlin and Jennifer Milam, "Mixing Pop (Culture) and Politics: Cultural Resistance, Culture Jamming and Anti-Consumption Activism as Critical Public Pedagogy" *Curriculum Inquiry* 38.3 323-250.
Mark Dery, "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs"
Stephen Duncombe, "A Woman's Place" *Cultural Resistance Reader*. 240.

Recommended Reading: Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, "Consumer Culture and the Manufacturing of Desire" *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 189-236 Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System." *The Cultural Studies Reader* 320-336.
Stephen Duncombe, "Introduction" *Cultural Resistance Reader*
Naomi Klein, "Culture Jamming." *No Logo* (309-342)
Michel de Certeau, "From *The Practice of Everyday Life*." *The Visual Culture Reader*, 148-152 Thomas Frank, "Why Johnny Can't Dissent" *Cultural Resistance Reader*. 316-327 Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding" *The Cultural Studies Reader* 90-103.

Film: *Cultural Criticism & Transformation*

23: Theorizing Culture Jamming II: Identity, Politics and Activism

Required Reading: Augusto Boal, "Invisible Theatre" *Radical Street Performance: An Anthology*, 121-24
John Downing, "Popular Theater, Street Theater, Performance Art, and Culture-Jamming" *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* 130-142.
Michael Giardina and Norman Denzin, "Acts of Activism<=>Politics of Possibility" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 11(4) 319-327.

Film: *Novela, Novela*

30: Theorizing Culture Jamming III: Emotion, Affect and Making the Personal

Political

Required Reading: Jennifer Sandlin and Jamie Callahan. "Deviance, Dissonance and Detournment: Culture Jammers' Use of Emotion in Consumer Resistance" *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 9 (1) 79-115.

Recommended Reading: Asa Wettergren. "Fun and Laughter: Culture Jamming the Emotional Regime of Late Capitalism." *Social Movement Studies* 8 (1) 1-15.

Film: *The Naked Civil Servant*

Feb 6: Sights/Sites/Cites of Resistance I: Looking at Visual Culture

Required Reading: David Darts, "Visual Culture Jam: Art, Pedagogy, and Creative Resistance." *Studies in Art Education*. 45 (4) 313-327.
Kathleen Keys, "Contemporary Visual Culture Jamming" *Art Education*, 62(2) 98-101
Anne Teresa Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion," *Women Studies in Communication*, 133-156

Recommended Reading: Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image." *The Visual Culture Reader*, 70-73.
Robert Belton, "Visual Poetics" *Sights of Resistance: Approaches to Canadian Culture*. 7-18
Nicholas Mirzoeff, "What is Visual Culture?" *The Visual Culture Reader*, 3-13.

Film: *Exit Through the Gift Store*

Annotated Bibliography Due

Activity – February 9,10, 11, Emergence Queer Film Festival 2012, Conron Hall

13: Sights/Sites/Cites of Resistance II: Re-Writing (Hi)Story

Required Reading: TBA

Identizine Due

Film: *Indigenous Women in Action: Voices From Vancouver; It Starts With a Whisper*

Activity – February 14, 2012, March for Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women, Downtown London.

27: Sights/Sites/Cites of Resistance III: Embodied Resistances

Required Reading: Jose Munoz. "Gesture, Ephemera and Queer Feeling: Approaching Kevin Aviance *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 65- 81.
Amy Jo Goddard. "Staging Activism: New York City Performing Artists as Cultural Works" *Social Justice*. 34 (1) 97- 116.

Film: *Paris is Burning*,

Mar 5: Collective Action: Activism

Required Reading: Anna Feigenbaum, "'Now I'm a Happy Dyke!': Creating Collective Identity and Queer Community in Greenham Women's Songs" *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22.4 367-388.

Sara O'Shaughnessy and Emily Kelly. "Relational Activism: Reimagining Women's Environmental Work as Cultural Change." *Canadian Journal Of Sociology* 35 (4) 551-572.

Recommended Reading: Barbara Epstein, "The Politics of Prefigurative Community: The Non-Violent Direct Action Movement" *Cultural Resistance Reader*, 333-346.
Laware, Margaret. "Circling the Missiles and Staining them Red: Feminist Rhetorical Invention and Strategies of Resistance at the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common." *NWSA Journal* 16.3: 18-41.

Film: *The Naked Option*

Activity – March 8, International Women's Day

12: Activism and Intervention: Case Study I -- Reproductive Justice

Required Reading: TBA
Guest Lecturer: Jen Chisholm

Film: *Jane: An Abortion Service*

Activity – March 16, Flaunting It 8: Undergraduate Conference on Gender and Sexuality, TBA

19: Activism and Intervention: Case Study II – AIDS

Required Reading: Douglas Crimp and Adam Roulston, "AIDS Activist Graphics: A Demonstration" *AIDSDemographics*, 13-26
Susan Pietrzyk, "Artistic Activities as Responses to HIV/AIDS in Harare, Zimbabwe" *African Journal of AIDS Research* 8 (4) 481-490.

Recommended Reading: Douglas Crimp and Adam Roulston, "Nine Days of Protest" *AIDSDemographics*, 53-69 Ann Cvetkovich, "Legacies of Trauma, Legacies of Activism: Mourning and Militancy Revisited" *An Archive of Feeling*. 205-238.
Richard Meyer, "This is to Enrage You: Gran Fury and the Graphics of AIDS Activism" *But Is it Art?* 51- 83.

Film: *ACT-UP: The First 15 Years, The AIDS Epidemic*

Essay Due

26: Collective Action: Art

Required Reading: Patricia C. Phillips, "Peggy Diggs: Private Acts and Public Art" *But Is it Art?* 283-308
Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance" *The Visual Culture Reader* 363- 371
Paula Goldman, "'Imagining Ourselves': Cultural Activism for Women Through Technology and New Media." *Museum International*. 59 (4) 80-88

Recommended Reading: Elizabeth Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power: Why the Art World Needs a Conscience" *But Is it Art?* 309-331

Alisa Solomon, "Parody and Parity: The Guerrilla Girls"
Theatre

2: Art and Intervention: Case Study - Queer Art

Required Reading: Deborah Kelly and Tina Fiveash, Hey Hetero! Campaign
<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/design/stories/s455304.htm> Shawna
Dempsey and Lorri Millan,
excerpts from *Lesbian National Parks and Services Field Guide to
North America: Flora, Fauna & Survival Skills*
TBA

Film and Artist Talk: Anthea Black

9 Course Wrap Up – Sites of Resistance Group Project Poster Display

Sites of Resistance Group Project Due