



# Western Arts & Humanities

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

Winter 2021

*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 day(s)	Exam Period
January 4	February 13 - 21	April 5	April 6 and 7	April 8 - 30

**March 7, 2021:** Last day to drop a second-term half course without penalty

### 3. Contact Information



Course Instructor	Contact Information
<p><b>Dr. Nichole Edwards</b></p> 	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:nedwar7@uwo.ca">nedwar7@uwo.ca</a></p> <p><b>Twitter:</b> <a href="https://twitter.com/nicholekedwards">@nicholekedwards</a></p> <p><b>Virtual Office Hours:</b> Wednesdays 2-4pm (sign up on OWL, I will then send a Zoom link)</p>

Teaching Assistants	Contact Information	Virtual Office Hours

### 4. Course Description and Design

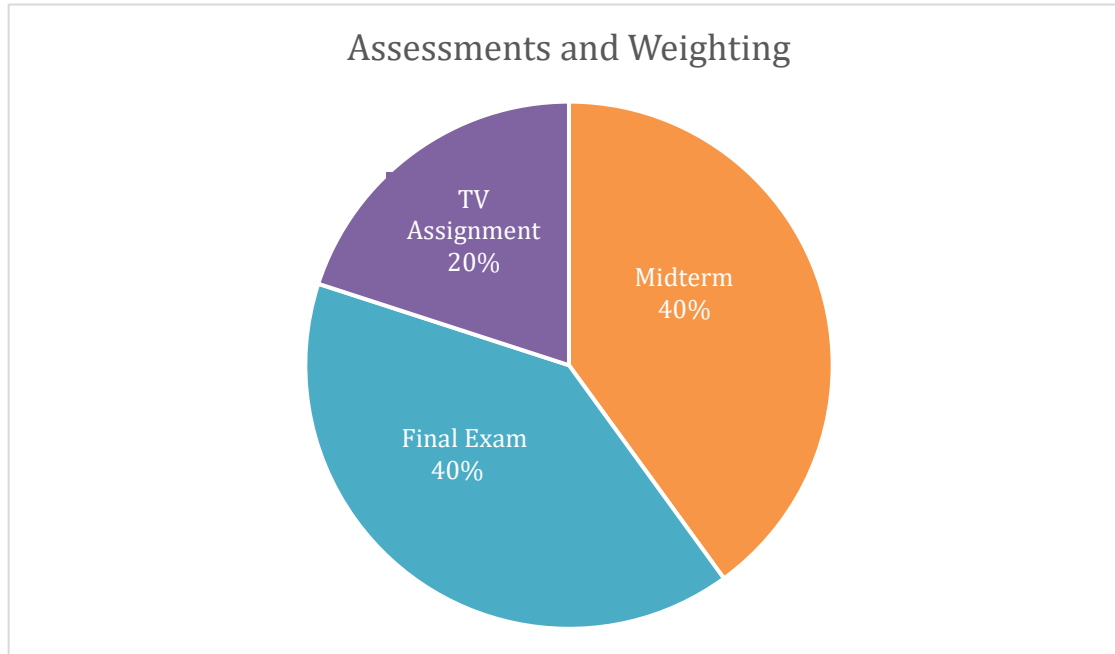
How is gender represented in popular culture? What messages do we receive about women from Reality TV? Disney films? Tampon commercials? Moreover, how do cultural understandings of what it means to be feminine become entangled in the way women are represented within popular culture, and what kind of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



Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Midterm	40%	Due by Feb 14 at 11:55pm EST
TV Assignment	20%	Due by Mar 14 at 11:55pm EST
Final Exam	40%	During formal exam period

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

**\*After an assessment is returned, students should 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
- You must choose one episode to analyze, using the knowledge gained in this course as your starting point in evaluating the episode
- Your analysis should be approximately 1000 words (+/- 10%)  
The aim of the assignment is to examine the representation(s) of gender and gender issues within the episode you watch.
- Some of the questions you may want to consider for your analysis will be outlined in detail in the first few weeks of the semester
- The assignment must be submitted by Mar 14 at 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 will be the same format as the midterm, with the same time limit and rules for submission
- 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 24 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 4 – 10	Gender, Celebrity, and Pop Culture
2	Jan 11 – 17	Feminism and Advertising
3	Jan 18 – 24	Trans Representation Matters
4	Jan 25 – 31	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity
5	Feb 1 – 7	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood in Television
6	Feb 8 – 14	<b>Midterm</b>
7	Feb 15 – 21	<b>Reading Week</b>
8	Feb 22 – 28	Politics, Periods, and Pop Culture
9	Mar 1 – 7	Girls and the Sexualization Debate
10	Mar 8 – 14	To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before
11	Mar 15 – 21	Patriarchy and Princesses
12	Mar 22 – 28	The Evolution of Beyonce
13	Mar 29 – Apr 3	Catch up Week!



## 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 for this course are as follows:**

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Jan 4 – 10	Gender, Celebrity, and Pop Culture	No reading for first week!
Jan 11 – 17	Feminism and Advertising	
Jan 18 – 24	Trans Representation Matters	
Jan 25 – 31	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity	
Feb 1 – 7	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television	
Feb 8 – 14		Midterm
Feb 15 – 21		<b>Reading Week</b>
Feb 22 – 28	Politics, Periods, and Pop Culture	
Mar 1 – 7	Girls and the Sexualization Debate	
Mar 8 – 14	To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before	
Mar 15 – 21	Patriarchy and Princesses	
Mar 22 – 28	The Evolution of Beyonce	
Mar 29 – Apr 3		Catch up Week!

## 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 daily 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
- Students are invited to create an account for [National Film Board of Canada](#) – if assigned documentaries from this site, they will be free to stream

## 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.

## We are (still) living through a pandemic.

### It's okay to not be okay.

Health & Wellness  
University Community Centre  
Tel: (519) 661-2111  
Email: [health@uwo.ca](mailto:health@uwo.ca)

[www.uwo.ca/health](http://www.uwo.ca/health)

Twitter: @WellnessWestern  
Facebook: Wellness Education Centre

Canadian Mental Health Association

For London-Middlesex: [www.cmha.middlesex.ca](http://www.cmha.middlesex.ca)

Canada-wide: [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

\*Search your location for local services and contact information

I know how easy it is to get stuck in the cycle of “I have so much to do, I don’t have time to \_\_\_\_\_!”

You, as a human being, are more important than the degree you are working towards at Western.

Taking care of yourself first should always be your priority.

Dr. Edwards



Good2Talk

Confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario and Nova Scotia

[www.good2talk.ca](http://www.good2talk.ca)

Tel (Ontario): 1-866-925-5454  
Text: GOOD2TALK on 686868

## **Western Academic Policies and Statements**

### **Absence from Course Commitments**

#### [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

In the interest of the health and safety of students and health care providers, you are no longer required to seek a medical note for absences this term. If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness you should use the [Illness Reporting Tool](#). This tool takes the place of the need to submit a medical note and the Self-Reported Absence System formally used by undergraduate students.

You are required to self-report every day that you are ill and unable to complete course commitments. Details about when you should submit missed work, the format of the missed work can be found in



the Section 7. Evaluation above. Students should communicate promptly with their instructor and use this tool with integrity.

### **Accommodation for Religious Holidays**

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

### **Special Examinations**

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

### **Academic Offenses**

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

### **Accessibility Statement**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Correspondence Statement**

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

### **Turnitin and other similarity review software**

All assignments 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. Students will be able to view their results before the final submission. 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 Western University and [Turnitin.com](#).

## **14. Arts and Humanities Academic Policies and Statements**

### **Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement**

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

### **Rounding of Marks Statement**

Across programs, we strive to maintain high standards that reflect the effort that both students and faculty put into the teaching and learning experience during this course. All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. **Final grades** on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer, e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g. a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

## 15. Support Services

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Academic Counselling \(Science and Basic Medical Sciences\)](#)

[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)