WST 338.01: Women and Popular Culture [HUM] [H,D]
Washington State University
(3 credit hours)
MTWTHF 11 A.M.- 1 P.M.
May 9 - Jun 3
CUE 318

Instructor: Leigh Gaskin
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Mailbox: Wilson 111
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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday 1:15 p.m. – 2 p.m. or by appointment

Required Text and Materials:
- Readings/text materials will be printed and provided in class AND posted on Blackboard.
- Access to Netflix or other film streaming service

Course Overview: This class focuses on the intersections of gender, race, class, dis/ability and sexuality, among others, in American popular culture. This course will build a theoretical and contextual foundation to understand how, why, and when popular culture both produces and reflects particular cultural ideologies. This will be done using a variety of media methods, including: film, television, music, video clips, art, and online formats, which will elaborate on the breadth and depth of popular culture and its influence. Overall, students in this class will gain an intersectional perspective of media and how it operates within our heteropatriarchal capitalist society, as analyzed through a feminist lens.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize and understand ways that gender functions as a social institution and is transmitted, shaped, and imagined in media
- Identify and explain how socially constructed categories of gender, race, class, dis/ability, and sexual identity function together to formulate the positionality that shape women’s lives and experiences in the context of film, media, television, music, art, and online mediums;
- Define and utilize basic terms and concepts central to women's studies, including sex, gender, agency, sexuality, feminism, patriarchy, intersectionalities and oppression;
- Apply concepts and theories important to the field of women’s studies to their individual life experiences and to the broader society, including how the concept of media literacy is critical to understanding the world we live in;
- The utility to imagine change as an intersectional possibility and to reconceptualize a socially just and equitable future, especially as related to media.

Women’s Studies Major and Minor: In addition to meeting the diversity/humanities [HUM] [H,D] general education requirement, this course can be used for the Women’s Studies Undergraduate Major and Minor. For more information, visit https://ccgrs.wsu.edu/undergraduate-studies/major-in-womens-studies/

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability/disabilities. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. For more information, visit http://accesscenter.wsu.edu, or e-mail at: Access.Center@wsu.edu
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Evaluation:** Students must satisfactorily complete the following requirements in order to pass this course. Please remember if you are having difficulties, make an appointment to discuss and resolve your concerns.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Total possible</td>
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**Attendance:** Class attendance is vital, so you will earn 10 points per class attended (meaning on-time and staying through the duration of class). You will earn an attendance grade based on 16 meetings (16 X 10 points = 160 points total). Class begins promptly 11 a.m., arriving late, leaving class, or leaving early is not tolerable. This includes departures to get a snack/drink, use the restroom, make a phone call, etc. Any two of these occurrences will constitute one absence. If your cell phone (or any other electronic) sounds or is used during class you will be counted absent for the day, regardless of physically being in class, if it happens a second time you will be asked to leave class indiscreetly. At no time should you feel entitled to openly disrespect any member of the class or any group of people. This includes verbal/nonverbal responses. Any student who has unacceptable conduct will be asked to leave class and be counted absent for the period. For more information, see the attendance policy below. [160 points]

**Participation/ In-class work:** This class functions as a forum in which participants can engage the texts and exchange ideas, interpretations, and insights with each other. The success of this format depends on everyone’s preparation and participation. Therefore, I expect you to participate in class activities and discussion. Successful participation requires that you prepare for class by completing the reading(s) prior to class, doing your assignments, and actively engaging the course material. Any in-class work will count toward your participation grade. I expect you to attend class and to be an active participant in class discussion. Assignments will be announced in class and will generally be due during class or at the next class meeting. [240 points]

**Assignments:** Question & Quote (Q & Q) for the assigned readings are due as noted in the syllabus. In the first paragraph, pick a quote from the essay that you feel is worthy of discussion (it’s arguable, shocking, confusing, etc.) and explain why you chose that quote.

- You will not receive points for the assignment if you simply choose a quote. You need to make a concerted effort to engage with the quote; merely saying "this quote is interesting" or "I like this quote" is not enough.

The second paragraph will consist of asking a question of the essay and then attempting to answer that question. Use this section to be political, to be critical of the text, and to analyze the text. To receive full credit for the assignment, all parts of the Q & Q must be answered at length. The question should relate to the overall theme of the reading. Questions such as, “What do other people think about [insert concept]?” are not acceptable. The assignment is due on the day we discuss the article -- no exceptions!

- The assignment should be labeled with the author’s name, the title of the essay, and the date of
discussion on the right side of the page. Not including a label for the assignment will result in the loss of points for that assignment. [25 points each; total 300 points]

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be a take-home essay exam and requires that you recall and synthesize material from the assigned readings, lectures, media, and class discussions. The essay should be a minimum of six to seven (6-7) pages in length, include references from the text, media, and/or current events that effectively articulate a response to the given prompts. A works cited or reference page must be included, but does not count towards the page length requirement. The assignment and rubric will be handed out at least one week prior to the due date of June 3rd. The exam must be turned in email with an attachment in .pdf or .doc/x versions. [300 points]

**Format for Written Assignments:** All written assignments must be typed in a standard 12-point font (DO NOT use Times New Roman font*), double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. You may use APA or MLA format for incorporating and citing sources. Each written assignment must include: your name, course name and section, my name, assignment title, and date; this should appear in the upper right-hand corner—single spaced.

Example: Audre Lorde  
WST 338.01  
Gaskin  
In-class assignment 1  
5/13/16

Assignment pages should be numbered and stapled together prior to turning it in. All assignments should be submitted in paper copy at the beginning of class on the due date. Final papers must be typed; other assignments may be written in pen or typed—ask me if you are unsure.

* I will not grade typed assignments that are turned in written in Times New Roman font.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance:** This course is a combination of lecture, media showings, and class discussion, as a result, attendance is necessary. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet which will be sent around at the beginning of class. If you fail to sign in, it will be counted as an absence, regardless of whether you were actually present. Additionally, any student signing the attendance sheet for another student will forfeit all attendance points for the course and receive zero (0) points for attendance, as well as the person the student was signing in for—regardless of circumstance.

Students are allowed one (1) absence; missing more than one class will lower your final grade. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out the assignments you missed and be prepared for the next class. You should get the assignments from the reading list, email, blackboard, and/or contact a classmate. I will not provide a recap of the class if you are absent.

While I enjoy hearing from you all, it is unnecessary to let me know that you will be absent. If you have an extenuating circumstance that requires prolonged absences come by during my office hours to discuss the issue (including student athletes). If you would like to know about your absences, see me during office hours. I will not be answering questions about absences via e-mail. Excessive tardiness (meaning being late over 2 times) will also affect your grade by counting as one (1) absence per two (2) tardies.
Technology and Textbook: The use of electronic devices are not allowed in class, unless prior arrangements have been made. This includes, but is not limited to: cell phones, music players, computers, e-readers, tablets, etc. If you are found to be using a prohibited device while in class you will be asked to put it away and will be marked absent for that day; if a second occurrence happens, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

If you have a digital copy of your textbook, be sure to print out the materials prior to coming to class. **You are required to bring the printed readings to every class meeting:** failure to do so will result in a reduction in participation points.

Policy on Academic Honesty: You are expected to do your own work and ensure that you do not plagiarize or submit the work of someone else as your own. Together we must be committed to the highest ethical standards for our research and scholarship. For all writing assignments, be careful to properly document quotations and paraphrases from other sources. Plagiarism (from the Latin, meaning “kidnapping”) is a serious offense and includes presenting words or ideas from other sources as your own.

Plagiarism includes the following:

- Quoting directly from the internet, a book, an article, or writings (published or unpublished) of another person without placing quotation marks around the words of the other person and acknowledging your source. Quotation marks must be used even around short phrases.
- Presenting the ideas of another person without acknowledging your source, even if the ideas are explained in your own words. Even when you paraphrase another person’s argument or thought you must cite your source(s).
- Buying a paper from an internet source or another person and submitting the paper or portions of the paper as if it were your own.
- Deliberately falsifying your references.

You must always use quotation marks around words that are not your own and properly cite your sources according to a recognized style manual (e.g. APA or MLA Format). Even when you are summarizing someone else’s ideas in your own words, you must acknowledge your source through proper methods of citation.

Since academic dishonesty is a serious offense, **deliberate plagiarism will result in a failing grade on your assignment, may result in a failing grade for the course, and depending on the circumstance, referred to the Office of Student Standards and Accountability.** Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions. If I determine that an instance of plagiarism is the result of carelessness or sloppiness rather than deliberate intent, a student may rewrite an assignment for a grade no higher than a “C.” If you have any questions about how to document quotations and to use sources properly, I will be happy to speak with you at any time.

Commitment to Campus Safety: Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the Pullman campus. As part of this commitment, the university has prepared this Campus Safety Plan, containing a listing of university policies, procedures, statistics and information relating to campus safety, emergency management and the health and welfare of the campus community. See: [http://safetyplan.wsu.edu](http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/) and [http://oem.wsu.edu](http://oem.wsu.edu/).

Late Assignments: No late assignments will be accepted.
Email and Office Hours: I will use email and Blackboard to communicate with students outside of class. These communications will range from class announcements to supplemental readings. Students are responsible for ALL information sent via electronic communication to their WSU student email accounts and Blackboard. It is highly recommended that students check their WSU email prior to class.

In addition, there are two ways to contact me outside of class. Please feel free to come by my office during office hours or to email questions and concerns to me. I have listed my office hours and email addresses at the top of this syllabus. Understand, however, that I need at least 24 hours to respond to email. If you need to meet outside of office hours, I will gladly schedule an appointment at a time convenient for both of us.

Class Modifications: This syllabus and the course schedule are subject to change as designated by the professor; you will receive notice should any modifications be made to the course and/or reading schedule. Your continued enrollment in the course signifies your acceptance of the terms of the syllabus.

READING SCHEDULE: You are expected to complete the reading(s) scheduled for the day prior to the start of class. I reserve the right to make additions, amendments, or changes to this schedule/syllabus. *Please note that you are responsible for all class meetings, assignments, and any announced changes that occur, even if you are absent from class. Be sure to check your e-mail daily, as you are responsible for changes, which will most often be announced in class and via e-mail.

Week 1: Introduction to Gender and Women’s Studies, Media Literacy, and

5/9 First Day! Welcome and introductions to the class and each other
Readings: none
Film: Miss Representation (2011). Directed by: Jennifer Siebel Newsom and Kimberlee Acquaro
In-class writing: Take notes of the film for participation points [20 points total]

Assignment due 5/10 (see syllabus guidelines for writing standards):
Pick 3 films and 3 television shows you would like to be shown and analyzed in class, write 2-3 sentences per choice to explain how you think it might relate to gender. This is a brainstorming assignment, there are no right or wrong answers. Use the readings for 5/10 to help you figure out how. The films/television shows will be tallied for all class members to be shown during “student choice” designations in the syllabus. This counts as the Q & Q [25 points total]

5/10 Gender, Women’s Studies, and Media Literacy
Readings: Chapter 1: Untangling the “F” Word
Media Representations and the Creation of Knowledge
Film: Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising’s Image of Women (2010). Directed by: Sut Jhally; featuring Jean Kilbourne
In-class writing: Take notes of the film for participation points [20 points total]
Assignment due: NONE

5/11 Gender, Women’s Studies, and Media Literacy
Readings: Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender”
Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”
Clips: Various YouTube clips related to gender, media, and the gaze
Assignment due 5/11 (see syllabus guidelines for information): Q & Q [25 points total]
5/12  Gender, Capitalism, and Media
Readings: Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism”
Acker, “Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?”
Film: The Mask We Live In (2015). Directed by: Jennifer Siebel Newsom
Assignment due 5/12 (see syllabus guidelines for information): Q & Q [25 points total]

5/13  Gender, Capitalism, and Media
Readings: Jhally, “Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse”
Film: TBD--Student Choice
Assignment due 5/12 (see syllabus guidelines for information): Q & Q [25 points total]

Week 2:

5/16  Capitalism, Racism, and Class in Gendered Media
Readings: Acker, “Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?”
Film: Requiem for the American Dream (2015). Directed by Kelly Nyks, Jared P. Scott, Peter D. Hutchison.*** Some of the film will be watched in class, the rest is assigned for homework***

Assignment due 5/17 (see syllabus guidelines for writing standards): In place of Q & Q 4, watch the remainder of Requiem for the American Dream, which can be found on Netflix, if you don’t have a subscription, you can sign up for a free 30 day trial. Then write a 3 paragraph personal response to the film, including how it relates to the Acker article. [25 points total]

5/17  The Scandal of Government
Readings Brandon Maxwell, “Olivia Pope and the Scandal of Representation”
Film: Selected episodes/scenes from Scandal, written by Shonda Rhimes
Rubric for updated Q & Q responses hand out

5/18  Continuing Gender & Government: House of Cards
Readings: NONE
Film: Selected Episodes/Scenes from House of Cards, written by Beau Willimon
Assignment due 5/18 (see syllabus guidelines for writing standards): Q & Q 5, *** Use the Maxwell reading and the episodes of Scandal and House of Cards to complete the assignment. [25 points total]

5/19  Tropes of Women in Media
Readings: Grigg, “19 Female Character Stereotypes”; Brown, “Six Annoying Women Character Tropes in Black Romantic Comedies”; review the list of 90 tropes on Blackboard
Film: Selected clips
Assignment due 5/19 (see syllabus guidelines for writing standards): Q & Q 6 [25 points total]

5/20  Understand the Disney Princess: Deconstructing Femininity and Gender
Readings: Artz, “Monarchs, Monsters, and Multiculturalism”

Assignment due 5/20 (see syllabus guidelines for writing standards): Q & Q 7

[25 points total]

Since this a student centered class: THIS SCHEDULE WILL BE UPDATED ONCE STUDENTS’ CHOICES FOR MEDIA HAVE BEEN DECIDED.

**Weeks 3:**

5/23 TBD
5/24 TBD
5/25 TBD
5/26 TBD
5/27 TBD

**Weeks 4:**

5/30 Memorial Day—No class!
5/31 TBD
6/1 TBD
6/2 TBD
6/3 TBD