

Syllabus

GSWS 0200: Sex, Race, and Popular Culture Fall 2017

Section: 1010

Schedule: Tues/Thurs 1-2:15pm

Classroom: Rm. 358

Professor: Dr. Natalie Kouri-Towe

Email: nataliekt@pitt.edu

Office: 402 Cathedral of Learning (middle cubicle in the hallway)

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30pm & Tuesdays 11am-12pm

Course Description

This course examines contemporary issues in popular culture, with a particular focus on sex, sexuality, gender, race, and class. Course materials and cultural sites will also pay special attention to questions of racism, colonialism, capitalism, and the body. The course combines key concepts and theoretical frameworks in critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory and cultural studies with analyses of media and popular culture sites and objects.

Course Objectives

- Define and critically read cultural theory as it relates to sex, sexuality, gender, and race in popular culture
- Compare, contrast, and critique popular culture
- Explain how popular culture reproduces, and is produced by, relations of gender, race, sexuality, and class
- Use feminist and critical theory approaches to analyze popular culture
- Analyze current events using critical, feminist, and queer analysis

Texts

All course readings are available on courseweb

Students should expect to read approx. 40-50 pages per week. Many of the readings will require students to read full texts, or a combination of excerpts of longer readings

Assignments

Critical Responses	20%
Group Presentation	25%
In-class Tests	30%
Critical Film Review	25%
Total	100%

Critical Responses (in-class/group work) (20%)

Critical Responses consist of individual writing exercises and in-class group assignments given periodically throughout the term. Students should arrive to each class having completed the reading and prepared to write short critical responses to the readings, followed by discussion. There are 2 types of Critical Responses:

- (1) written individually and submitted for grading, followed by small-group discussion related to the topics of the course that day (individual grade);
- (2) a short summary of group-based in-class discussion (shared grade).

Critical Responses are due in class and no extensions will be permitted. These assignments are open book and will be graded. It is necessary to connect to the readings in order to receive a passing grade on these assignments. The grade-value of each Critical Response will be announced in class; however, no single Critical Response assignment will be valued at more than 5 marks.

Group Presentation (25%)

Proposal: 5% Presentation: 20%

Students will be divided into groups of 4-6 during the first week of class and are expected to meet with the other members of their group and choose **one** of the following options for a 20-30 minute (5 min per student) in class presentation related to the class readings for the presentation date:

- (a) A media analysis of either a film, newspaper articles, a popular event, television show, advertising campaign, etc.;
- (b) An investigation and analysis of a social issue and a survey of the activist organizing in response, with particular focus on the cultural products of that activism (e.g. posters, videos, zines, etc.);
- (c) The production of a creative work by the members of the group (e.g. a zine, video, art project, etc.) with a detailed presentation on the reasons behind producing it and the process of creating it.

All members of the group are expected to participate in the development of the presentation, however not everyone is required to speak publicly. All presentations must include a brief summary of the readings assigned for that date and the theme of the presentation should relate to the topic from that day. Groups may also reference other class readings in addition to the assigned reading.

Due: Proposal due September 28

In-Class Tests (30%)

2 test x 15% each = 30%

Two in-class tests relating to the course readings, lectures and cultural sites will be held during regular class time. Students will **not** be permitted to bring in study aids or notes. Make-up assignments for missed tests will only be considered with prior approval of the professor or with relevant documentation if the test is missed.

Test dates: September 28 & November 16

Critical Film Review (25%)

Students can pick any movie of their choice to watch and write a Critical Film Review, focusing on a critical reading of a film using the theories and analytic frameworks from the class. Papers should be 1500-2000 words. Further instructions will be distributed in class along with a rubric.

Due: December 7

Instructions for Written Assignments

All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus, or prior. Missed in-class group work and late assignments will only be accepted with relevant documentation (e.g. doctor's note). Extensions or make-up tests will be granted at the discretion of the professor in advance of the date or within 48 hours of the missed test. If you anticipate not being able to complete the assignments for this course on time please speak with me or you will be penalized with grade loss.

All late assignments will lose 1 mark per day late (e.g. an assignment worth 10% of the final grade received a grade of 7/10, but was submitted 3 days late, therefore this assignment will only receive 4/10).

Assignments should be typed, and double-spaced. No cover page is necessary, and students are encouraged to double-side their papers. A standard font, such as Times New Roman, at size 12pt should be used. Margins should be a standard 1-1.25 inches. Students should submit all papers in MLA or Chicago style for citations and bibliographic references. All in-text citations should include Author name and page numbers. Guides are available online here:

MLA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Chicago: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Citation Style Chart: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20110928111055_949.pdf

Attendance Policy

Students must attend all classes having completed the readings. Missing class will result in missing important content and assignment information, as well as class participation. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they follow up with other students in the class to get access to missing information. Missing class will mean missing graded in-class coursework. No makeup assignments will be granted for missed in-class assessments.

Email Communication Policy

Emails to your professors should include a polite greeting (e.g. Dear Prof. Kouri-Towe or Hello Natalie) and outline clearly your question or request. Please ensure that you first check the syllabus before emailing your professor. If the answer is available in the syllabus, but you need clarification, be specific about what you need further information on. Please allow at least 24hrs for responses to emails during weekdays.

Accessibility

In addition to the resources and support of Disability Resources and Services office, students are invited to communicate with me any accessibility needs they might have in attending lecture, participating in group-work, or completing the assignments. In recognition of the diverse ways that accessibility is experienced and understood, I will approach accessibility on an individual basis to better accommodate each student and context. Students are strongly encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible to discuss alternative forms of accessibility beyond the officially offered services for this class.

University and GSWS Program Policies and Statements

Disability resources and services:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>.

Academic integrity and plagiarism:

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html.

Violation of the Academic Integrity Code requires the instructor to submit an Academic Integrity Violation Report to the Dean's Office.

Classroom recording policy:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

E-mail policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Cell phone and laptop policy:

All cell phones and other electronic communication devices are to be turned to the off setting during class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking only.

Non-discrimination policy:

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin,

ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit <http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf>

Gender-Inclusive language guidelines:

Aspiring to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives to academic discourse, the University of Pittsburgh Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program provides guidelines and resources regarding gender-inclusive/non-sexist language (gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432). Following these guidelines fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthens academic writing, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (e.g. first-year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html>.

Content warning and class climate:

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political and personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Sexual misconduct, required reporting, and Title IX:

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware: A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

- * Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

- * SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0>

Course Schedule & Readings

Note: Complete all the readings for Tuesday's class. Discussion will continue on Thursday's class.

Week 1: Introducing Sex, Sexuality, Gender and Race in Popular Culture

Tuesday 29 August

- No readings

Thursday 31 August

- Hall, Stuart. 2000. Who Needs Identity? Identity: A Reader. Eds. P. Gay, J. Evans and P. Redman. Sage Publications.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2000/2011. The Five Sexes Revisited. Gender Through the Prism of Difference. Eds. M. Baca Zinn, P. Hondagneu-Sotelo & M.A. Messner. New York: Oxford University Press. (p.13-18)

Week 2: Central Concepts and Theories in Cultural Analysis and Mass Media

Tuesday 5 September

- Macey, David. The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory. London: Penguin Books. 2000: 240-242, 257-260, 305-307, 309, 347, 364-366.
 - Semiotics 347
 - Modernism 257-259
 - Modernity 259-260
 - Marxism 240-242
 - Structuralism 364-366
 - Postmodernism 305-307
 - Poststructuralism 309

Thursday 7 September

- Cultural Subjects: A Popular Culture Reader. Eds. Allan J. Gedalof, Jonathan Boutler, Joel Faflak, and Cameron McFarlane. Toronto: Thomson Nelson. 2005: 51-63, 74-86, 93-100.
 - Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry, Enlightenment as Mass Deception"
 - Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
 - Baudrillard, Jean. "The Precession of Simulacra"

Week 3: Reading Pop Culture Through Imperialism and Colonialism

Tuesday 12 September

- Said, Edward. "Empire, Geography, and Culture" in Culture and Imperialism. New York: Vintage Books. 1993: 3-14.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen. 2003. Colonialism. Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts. London: Routledge. (p. 45-51)

Thursday 14 September

- Burton, Antoinette. 1994. The intellectual origins of the feminist other. Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. (p. 75-89)

Week 4: Reading Pop Culture Through Feminism

Tuesday 19 September

- Haraway, Donna. "The Persistence of Vision" in Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury. New York: Colombia University Press. 1997: 283-295.

Thursday 21 September

- Rubin, Gayle. 1984(2011). Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. (Read p.137-171)

Week 5: Media Framing

Tuesday 26 September

- Ott, Brian & Aoki, Eric. "The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy: Media Framing of the Matthew Shepard Murder" in Rhetoric & Public Affairs. 5(3). 2002: 483-505.

Thursday 28 September

Test #1 & Presentation Proposal Due

Week 6: Bodies in Production: the Gendered Body

Tuesday 3 October

- Bordo, Susan. "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" in Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury. New York: Colombia University Press. 1997: 90-110.

Thursday 5 October

- Namaste, Vivane. "Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender, and the Regulation of Public Space" in Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. 2000: 135-156.

Week 7: NO CLASS Tuesday 10 October or Thursday 12 October

Week 8: Bodies in Production: the Makeover

Tuesday 17 October

- Ringrose, Jessica & Walkerdine, Valerie. "Regulating the Abject: The TV Make-Over as Site of Neo-Liberal Reinvention Toward Bourgeois Femininity" in Feminist Media Studies. 8(3). 2008: 227-246.

Thursday 19 October

- Heyes, Cressida J. "Cosmetic Surgery and the Televisual Makover: A Foucauldian Feminist Reading" in Feminist Media Studies. 7(1). 2007: 17-32.

Week 9: Marriage, Normativity and Neoliberal Life Choices

Tuesday 24 October

- McRobbie, Angela. "Notes on Post-Feminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime" in All About the Girl: Culture, Power and Identity. Ed. Anita Harris. London: Routledge. 2004: 3-14.

Thursday 26 October

- Duggan, Lisa. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism" in Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics. Eds. Russ Castronovo & Dana D. Nelson. Durham & London: Duke University Press. 2002: 175-194.

Week 10: Protest, Movement Building, and Social Change

Tuesday 31 October

- Film Screening: TBA

Thursday 2 November

- Spade, Dean. 2010. It's so Queer to Give Away Money. Tikkun. 25(4): 63-64,74.
- Smith, Andrea. 2010. Dismantling Hierarchy, Queering Society. Tikkun. 25(4): 60-61.
- Alfred, Taiaiake. 2007. Pathways to an Ethic of Struggle. Canadian Dimensions. 41(1), January/February: 35-39.

Week 11: Gender, Colonialism, Indigeneity and Capitalism

Tuesday 7 November

- Bergland, Renee. 2000. The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects. Hanover & London: University Press of New England. (p. 1-22)
- McClintock, Anne. 2001. Double crossings: Madness, sexuality and imperialism. The 2000 Garnett Sedgewick Memorial Lecture. Vancouver: Rosedale Press. (p. 9-30)

Thursday 9 November

- Smith, Andrea. 2006. Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing. Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology. Eds. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. (p. 66-73)

Week 12: Abolition: Responses to Criminalization, Incarceration and Deportation

Tuesday 14 November

- Davis, Angela & Rodriguez, Dylan. 2000. The Challenge of Prison Abolition: A Conversation. Social Justice. 27(3): 212-218.
- Critical Resistant and Incite! 2003. Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex. Social Justice. 30(3): 141-150.
- Lowry, Michelle & Nyers, Peter. 2003. 'No One is Illegal': The Fight for Refugee and Migrant Rights in Canada. Refuge. 21(3): 66-72.

Thursday 16 November

Test #2

Week 13: Sexuality & Terrorism

Tuesday 21 November

- Puar, Jasbir & Rai, Amit. 2002. Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of the Docile Patriot. Social Text 72. 20(3): 117-148.

Thursday 23 November

- Class canceled due to holiday

Week 14: Gross Culture: Queers, Freaks and Fatties

Tuesday 28 November

- Grosz, Elizabeth. "Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit" in Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body. Ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson. New York: New York University Press. 1996: 55-66.
- Lamm, Nomy. "It's a Big Fat Revolution" in Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation. Ed. Barbara Findlen. New York: Seal Press. 1995: 85-94. (distributed in class)

Thursday 30 November

- Clare, Eli. "Freaks and Queers" in Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 1999: 67-101.

Week 15: Art, Aesthetics and Cultural Sites of Resistance

Tuesday 5 December

- Mitchell, Allyson. "The Writing's On The Wall: Feminist and Lesbian Graffiti As Cultural Production" in Turbo Chicks. Eds. Allyson Mitchell et al. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2001: 221-232.

Thursday 7 December

Due: Critical Film Review

- Pelle, Susan. "The 'Grotesque' Pussy: 'Transformational Shame' in Margaret Cho's Stand-up Performances" in Text and Performance Quarterly. 30(1). January 2010: 21-37.