

W225: Gender, Sexuality and Popular Culture Summer 2009

Course Information

Title: Gender, Sexuality and Popular Culture, WOST 225

Dates: Summer Session One, May 18-June 26

Meeting Times & Location: Online

Faculty Information

Instructor: Lisa Beringer

Email: Preferred mode of communication via course website on blackboard.

Office Phone: 481.2208 (Ivy Tech Community College)

Communication Practices & Tech Needs

Communication Practices:

- Students are encouraged to email the instructor through the course website. I will check most days Monday through Friday. You can call my office, but I have very limited hours when I am available by phone and am in my office infrequently.
- Course work will be conducted, and the instructor will check email, most days Monday through Friday, between 8pm and 10pm EST.
- Feel free to contact me if you'd like guidance, or have a specific question not meant for class discussion. (Please note, there are various links posted on the home page of the course website under "helpful web resources." These include links to offices of academic support through IPFW should you need further assistance.)
- I will post announcements weekly – and for urgent information – that relates to the class as a whole.
- Students are encouraged to communicate with each other through email.
- The instructor will provide graded feedback within one to two weeks (in most cases) of turning in your assignments. A private online grade book will be kept.

Tech Needs:

- Students should visit www.elearning.ipfw.edu to make sure their computers are up to date for the online course. Tutorials are available for students through this website. It is listed as a "helpful web resource" on the course home page.
- Students will need internet access, PowerPoint, Word and the ability to hear streaming video online.

Course Description & Learning Objectives

This course will examine the impact of popular culture on gender and sexuality – especially as it impacts women within our larger society and relates to issues of race, class and gender. Areas of examination will include:

1. Historical and theoretical examinations of gender and sexuality in popular culture.

2. How images and messages in popular culture influence who we are and inform our ideas and actions.
3. How popular culture socializes, disciplines and entertains with ideas of gender and sexuality.
4. How popular culture creates and recreates cultural norms in our society specific to the roles of men and women.
5. Use of feminist analysis to develop critical thinking about popular culture.
6. How race and class impact the discussion of gender and sexuality in popular culture.
7. Overarching ideas of age, beauty, and physical and mental “selves” as they relate to gender and sexuality.

By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate the following objects in assignments:

1. Use theoretical arguments to explain and analyze various components of popular culture.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical perspectives and ideas of gender and sexuality as it relates to popular culture.
3. Evaluate various stereotypes of gender in popular culture, apply them to the key areas of study.
4. Think critically about the impact of popular culture in forming individual choices, as well as how they shape various venues within the larger media.
5. Analyze in writing and discussions issues of race, class and gender as they relate to popular culture.

The afore mentioned objectives and areas of study will also adhere to the Women’s Studies Program Goals, which are as follows:

- To analyze academic disciplines from a feminist and antiracist perspective.
- To encourage original scholarship and research about women that takes into consideration gender, race, class and sexual orientation.
- To integrate self-exploration with academic skills.
- To provide a non-authoritarian learning environment which values students’ ideas and encourages an open exchange of information and opinion.
- To promote an individual and critical approach to learning.
- To promote knowledge of the diversity of women’s experiences.

Required Reading

The following books are available for purchase from the bookstore and are required for the course:

- Byerly, Carolyn M. and Karen Ross. (2006) *Women & Media*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Fielding, Helen. *Bridget Jones’ Diary*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

The following articles are available online through reserve express at the Helmke Library website and are required for the course. These articles may be accessed through the

course website under “Helmke Library” on the “helpful web resources” link on the course website homepage:

- Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, “Body Projects.” (pp.97-137) New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Crane, Diana. *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing*. “Fashion Images and the Struggle for Women’s Identity.” (pp.202-233) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Kreamer, Anne. *Going Gray*. “Is Going Gray Illegal in Hollywood?” (pp.107-118.) New York: Little Brown & Company, 2007.
- Piess, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar*. “Identity and the Market.” (pp.238-270)

Additional required materials for the course include:

- Lectures posted weekly, as well as streamlined movies, videos, and various web links you will need to read and/or view. All such materials are required – unless otherwise specified – and will be used in course discussions and for exams and writing assignments.

Course Policies & Details

Some Rules

- There may be times when ideas and feelings about certain topics become “heated.” I expected students to be respectful at all times to classmate ideas.
- That being said, all ideas and concepts should be filtered through our various feminist perspectives and theoretical perspectives. This will guarantee that we are using fact and theory – not just opinion – to understand the impact of popular culture on gender and sexuality.
- All sources on writing assignments must be academic in nature. See specific assignments for details.

Grading Information

Assignments

Your performance will be measured on the following assignments:

1. 15 Discussion boards (10 points each)150 Points
 2. One 2-page response paper 100 Points
 3. Midterm Essay Exam.100 Points
 4. One 5-7 page research paper 200 Points
 5. Final Essay Exam. 100 Points
- Total: 650 Points

** There will be one extra credit discussion board (optional) worth five points in the last week of class. This will be a “course feedback” discussion board.*

Discussion Boards

- Each unit will have two to three discussion board questions. The week’s unit will be made available every Sunday evening by 10pm EST for the following week. Students must make all responses no later than Saturday of the same week at 10pm EST.

- Failure to post to a discussion will result in zero points being awarded for that specific discussion board. Multiple posts to each discussion are permitted.
- Each discussion is worth 10 points.
- Depending on the week there may be as many as two to three discussion boards. There will be fifteen total for the semester.
- **PLEASE NOTE: Every student is expected to make at least one original post for each discussion board AND to respond to at least two other student's posts.** Student involvement will be graded based upon:
 - Quality of critical analysis of material discussed (i.e. using fact and theory to analyze a topic rather than simply ones personal opinion.)
 - Quality of written statement (proper grammar, spelling and punctuation apply). No “text message” language or abbreviations allowed.

Response Paper

- Students will be asked to write one 2-page response paper analyzing *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Papers are due NO LATER THAN 10pm on the designated due date (SEE SYLLABUS) by assignment tab submission via blackboard.
- A specific question will be posted for student response. The question will be given at the start of the unit and the paper will be due after completion of the class discussion. The question will provide students an opportunity to use critical ideas and analysis to critique the “chick-lit” genre.
- Students will be graded based upon:
 - Quality of critical analysis (i.e. using fact and theory to analyze a topic rather than simply ones personal opinion.)
 - Quality of written statement (proper grammar, spelling and punctuation apply.) No “text message” language or abbreviations allowed.
 - Proper use of citations for all quotes must be used.

Midterm exam

- Students will be required to write a timed midterm essay exam.
- The essay question will be given prior to the exam and students will be allowed to use texts and notes to cite evidence for the paper.
- Students will be able to take the exam at any time on the day of the exam starting at midnight and ending at 11:59pm. Once the exam begins, the student will have one hour and fifteen minutes to complete the essay exam.
- Exams will be graded based upon:
 - Ability to fully answer the question posed by the instructor. Citing specific evidence from text and theory will make for strong written arguments.
 - Quality of critical analysis used to answer the posed question (i.e. using fact and theory to analyze a topic rather than simply ones personal opinion.)
 - Quality of written statement (proper grammar, spelling and punctuation apply.) No “text message” language or abbreviations allowed.
 - Proper use of citations for all quotes must be used.

Research Paper

- Students will be required to research one area of gender IN POPULAR CULTURE that strikes their interest. Possible topics ideas may include:
 - representations of working women in the media;
 - representations of mothers (working inside or outside of the home);
 - representations of women politicians in the media;
 - changing images in sports magazines;
 - presentation of women in comics, graphic novels or anime;
 - analysis of specific ad campaigns aimed at (or using) women; or
 - a specific nuance to one of the major areas we address this semester that offers new information and insight into the area.
 - Please note this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but a jumping off point to help you begin thinking about your research paper.
- Students will be asked to present idea topics for instructor approval. (SEE SYLLABUS DUE DATES FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS.)
- Papers must be 5-7 pages in length and are due NO LATER THAN 10pm on the designated due date (SEE SYLLABUS) by assignment tab submission via blackboard.
- PLEASE NOTE: No less than four scholarly sources must be used in writing this paper. Web sources must be academic in nature and may account for no more than one of your sources. Please note wikipedia will not be an accepted as a source.
- Papers will be graded based upon:
 - Quality and depth of research into topic area, including ability to raise new ideas about the area.
 - Quality of critical analysis used in individual analysis (i.e. using fact and theory to analyze a topic rather than simply ones personal opinion.)
 - Quality of written statement (proper grammar, spelling and punctuation apply.) No “text message” language or abbreviations allowed.
 - Proper use of citations for all quotes must be used.
 - Quality of sources used.

Final Essay Exam

- Students will be required to write a timed final essay exam. The question will be given prior to the exam and students will be allowed to use texts and notes to cite evidence for the paper.
- The student will be able to take the exam at any time on the day of the exam starting at midnight and ending at 11:59pm. Once the exam begins, the student will have one hour and fifteen minutes to complete the essay exam. Exams will be graded based upon:

- Ability to fully answer the question posed by the instructor. Citing specific evidence from text and theory will make for strong written arguments.
- Quality of critical analysis used to answer the posed question (i.e. using fact and theory to analyze a topic rather than simply ones personal opinion.)
- Quality of written statement (proper grammar, spelling and punctuation apply.) No “text message” language or abbreviations allowed.
- Proper use of citations for all quotes must be used.

PLEASE NOTE:

Every assignment and discussion board has a set due date. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. Due dates are listed in this syllabus and noted in each unit. Exams will be timed online.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of total points earned out of 650 points total. All grades will be posted per assignment in an online grade books. The final grading scale will be as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	below 60%

Links & Various Supports

Please refer to the “helpful web resources” link on the blackboard course website for links to various web and IPFW resources that will assist you in this course.

ADA Statement

If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (Walb, room 113, telephone number 481-6658), as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, send the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for SSD at <http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/>

Course Calendar

- **Saturday nights at 10pm EST** – Discussion boards must be posted. Please note the last week of class will have a Friday night posting.
- **Friday, May, 22 10pm EST** - Submission of Research Paper Ideas For Approval (Submit via assignment tab)

Graded assignment due dates

- **Friday, June 5 no later than 11:59pm EST** – Midterm Essay Exam (submit via assessment tab)

- **Friday, June 12 no later than 10pm EST** – *Bridget Jones’ Diary* Response paper due (Submit via assignment tab)
- **Friday, June 19 no later than 10pm EST** - Research Paper due (submit via assignment tab.)
- **Thursday, June 25 no later than 11:59pm EST** – Final Essay Exam (submit via assessment tab.)

Reading & Film Schedule

- Please note: Each unit will have posted lectures, references to web links for exploration, and at least two to three discussion boards. The following readings & films will be needed to understand the week’s lecture and discussion topics.

Week One – Monday, May 18 – Saturday, May 23

Unit One – Welcome and Introduction

- SUBMIT:
 - Research paper ideas by 10pm Friday, May 22.
- READINGS:
 - Byerly, “Introduction,” pp 1-13
 - Byerly, “Women and Production,” pp.75-99
 - Brumberg, “Body Projects,” pp.97-137 (online reserve)

Week Two – Sunday, May 24 – Saturday, May 30

Unit Two – Film and Television

- READINGS:
 - Byerly, “Women in/as Entertainment,” pp.17-36
 - Byerly, “Women as Audience,” pp.56-67
 - Kreamer, “Is Going Gray Illegal in Hollywood?” , pp107-118 (online reserve)
- FILM:
 - *Calendar Girls* (streaming video link)

Week Three – Sunday, May 31 – Saturday, June 6

Unit Three – Sports & Music

- READINGS:
 - No assigned text readings this week. See web links for readings and activities.
- FILM:
 - *Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete* (streaming video link)
- MIDTERM:
 - Midterm question released Monday, June 1
 - Timed online exam by Friday, June 5 no later than 11:59pm.

Week Four – Sunday, June 7 – Saturday, June 13

Unit Four – Literature

- READINGS:
 - Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary* (entire novel)
- RESPONSE PAPER DUE:
 - Submit no later than 10pm EST on Friday June 12.

Week Five – Sunday, June 14 – Saturday, June 20

Unit Five – Advertising and Magazines

- READINGS:
 - Crane, “Fashion and the Struggle for Women’s Identity in Clothing.” Pp.202-233 (online reserve)
 - Byerly, “Women as Audience,” pp.67-68
 - Piess, “Identity and the Market,” pp.238-270 (online reserve)
- FILM:
 - *The Strength to Resist: Media’s Impact on Women & Girls* (streaming video link)
- RESEARCH PAPER DUE:
 - Friday, June 19 no later than 10pm.

Week Six – Sunday, June 21 – Friday, June 26

Unit Six – News & the Internet

- READINGS:
 - Byerly, “Images of women in news and magazines,” pp.37-55
 - Byerly, “Women as Audience,” pp.68-74

Unit Seven – Solutions and New Ideas

- READINGS:
 - Byerly, “Towards a Model Of Women’s Media Action,” pp.99-128
- FINAL EXAM:
 - Final exam question given Monday June 22
 - Timed online exam Thursday, June 25
- FINAL DISCUSSION BOARD:
 - Final Discussion boards need to be posted no later than 10pm EST Friday June 26.