

COMMUNICATION - QUEER STUDIES - WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES 229: MEDIATING GENDER AND SEXUALITY



In this class we will examine and evaluate the cultural construction and representation of gender and sexuality in contemporary American mass media, and trace their development throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. We will focus on a variety of mass-produced commercial media texts, surveying film, television, magazines, advertising, and popular music.

Although gender and sexuality are the primary constructions examined in this course, we will also pay close attention to other aspects of identity, such as race and class, and their intersections with sex and gender. We will investigate representational issues in relation to their political repercussions, and draw from a broad range of academic literature, including feminist television criticism, film theory, cultural studies, communication theory, and popular music criticism.

Contact Information

Instructor:	Bill Kirkpatrick
Office:	327 Higley, (740) 587-8512
Email:	kirkpatrickb@denison.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00; Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30; or by appointment
Virtual Office Hours:	From time to time, I will be available through video chat on Notebow!

Learning Goals

By the end of this class, you should:

- have a solid understanding of a range of influential theoretical approaches to the role of gender and sexuality in the media and vice-versa.
- be able to think critically about gender and sexuality in terms of media texts, their social contexts, media industries, and audiences.
- have improved your ability to read, comprehend, and apply challenging theoretical texts.
- be able to research, analyze, and evaluate with sophistication an issue relevant to the themes and concerns discussed in class.

Content Advisory

This course will include readings, discussions, and screenings about topics that some students may find disturbing or uncomfortable, including a wide range of sexual attitudes and practices. Issues of gender discrimination and sexual violence are also going to come up. It is my goal as the instructor to facilitate frank and open conversation, as well as the questioning of received ideas, while remaining respectful of the difficulty that many persons may experience in engaging such topics. While attendance is not required—thereby allowing students to skip days on which particular content is certain to be discussed—the nature of open dialog means that the direction of our discussions and the topics that come up on any given day will not always be predictable. I will do my best to facilitate a learning environment in which boundaries and personal investments (positive or negative) in various issues will be honored; if I could be doing a better job at this, please let me know (anonymously if you prefer).

Required Materials

Although there are no books to buy, you should budget approximately \$50-\$100 for viewing expenses (Netflix, etc.) and printing costs.

Assignments

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late assignments will be penalized ½-grade per day (e.g. B+ to B).

Fishbowl	15%	Blog post	15%
Journals	15%	Class Engagement	10%
Midterm Exam (due 10/26)	20%	Community Engagement	05%
Podcast	20%		

Policies and Expectations

Attendance: Attendance is highly encouraged and will greatly enhance your own and others' class experience. However, there are no penalties for non-attendance; if you must be absent, you may employ other strategies to demonstrate class engagement (see below).

Lateness: Please be in your seat and ready to begin class at the scheduled start time. I am much stricter about lateness than absenteeism and would rather you not come at all than interrupt your classmates by showing up late.

Engagement: The main responsibilities of creating a productive and enjoyable class rest with you, and that is why class contribution is part of your final course grade (10%). Your active engagement affects not only what you get out of the course but also what your classmates get out of the course. Merely attending class

and taking notes is not enough for your success in this class. You can also demonstrate class engagement in ways other than speaking in class (e.g. sending me your thoughts via email; coming to office hours to talk about ideas, not just exam prep; forwarding or posting to Notebowl relevant links and items of interest).

Preparation: Always bring the day's readings to class with you. The syllabus will always state clearly what you should read prior to each class, which assignments you should hand in, and what else you must do or bring for a given day. Late assignments will be penalized by a half-grade for each 24 hours of lateness (e.g. from B+ to B). If you know that you will have difficulty completing an assignment on time, let me know before the deadline and I will try to work with you if possible.

Grades: All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. The calculation of your grade will be based on a 1,000-point scale, and the weight of each assignment is listed above. If you are concerned about your grade, come talk to me as early as possible.

Electronics: You may not use computers, iPads, phones, or similar devices in class without express prior permission. Your cell phone must be turned off and put away during class. If you absolutely need to have your phone on during class for some reason, talk to me at the beginning of the semester or the particular class session and we'll work something out.

Email Policy: I will regularly use email to send out announcements, changes in the syllabus, reminders about tests or due dates, etc. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly to keep up-to-date with these announcements. Except in rare cases of personal or family emergency, I promise to answer all email from students within 24 hours (36 hours on weekends) and will hold you responsible for any announcements made via email within 24 hours of the announced change (36 hours on weekends). Please keep in mind that more involved questions should be asked in office hours, not over email.

Accessibility and Special Accommodations: In keeping with the nature of the course and my own ethical commitments, I am striving to make the class and my teaching materials as accessible as possible. Access needs will be addressed preemptively through the following strategies:

- Captions for in-class videos, and transcripts of audio material, will be provided whenever possible
- The midterm is a take-home, open-book exam with at least a one-week completion window
- Flexible deadlines are possible with advance notice
- Participation will be evaluated through a variety of modalities: in-class discussion, contributing to Notebowl, coming to office hours, etc.

It is important that the course be accessible to all students. If you need any alternative accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to be able to participate fully in the course, or if there are any external issues that may affect your work in this course, please contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs.

Academic Honesty: You may not turn in substantially similar work to two classes without the express consent of both instructors. All sources in your written work must be properly cited; if you have any doubts about correct citation, contact the Writing Center or any of the many paper and online guides to academic citation. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated, and students found to have committed plagiarism, regardless of whether or not the plagiarism was committed intentionally and knowingly, will face grade penalties and will also be reported to the university to face further academic discipline. You are encouraged to use the resources available in the library system and the Writing Center to guide your research. In addition, I call your attention to Denison's statement on academic integrity:

"Proposed and developed by Denison students, passed unanimously by DCGA and Denison's faculty, the Code of Academic Integrity requires that instructors notify the Associate Provost of cases of academic dishonesty, and it requires that cases be heard by the Academic Integrity Board. Further, the code makes students responsible for promoting a culture of integrity on campus and acting in instances in which integrity is violated.

"Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted—not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. Students should ask their instructors for assistance in determining what sorts of materials and assistance are appropriate for assignments and for guidance in citing such materials clearly.

"For further information about the Code of Academic Integrity see <http://www.denison.edu/about/integrity.html>."

Evaluations: At the end of the semester, you will be asked to evaluate this course and the instructor. These evaluations are an important tool for helping Denison faculty achieve and maintain excellence in the classroom; it will also help you reflect on your learning, participation, and effort in the course. A key purpose of course evaluations, then, is to constantly improve the level of teaching and learning at Denison by instructors and students. Your ratings and comments will also be included as one element of the instructor's overall teaching portfolio. Together with peer observations and other means of assessing teaching effectiveness, this portfolio will be considered by the instructor's colleagues and college administrators in making recommendations for contract renewal, tenure, promotion, and salary decisions.

Gateway Criteria for Written Work

The following criteria are the bare minimum requirements for all written work you turn in, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the assignment prompt. If any of these criteria are not met, I will stop reading and give you a zero on the assignment. Depending on the assignment, you *might* be able to revise your work to meet the gateway criteria and hand it back in, at which point a grade penalty will be assessed; if that option is available to you, it will be spelled out in the assignment prompt.

1. The work must be typed in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and double-spaced.
2. Your name and the date of completion must be given at the top unless otherwise specified.
3. If the work is printed out and more than one page, it must be stapled.
4. All citations must be in Chicago full-footnote/bibliography style unless otherwise specified or you make other arrangements with me.
5. The version that you turn in must have been properly spell-checked.
6. If an electronic file, the file name and type must conform to the guidelines for the assignment.
7. The work must adhere to any word counts or page counts given in the prompt unless otherwise authorized.
8. All titles of media works must be formatted correctly according to the following guidelines: italicize titles of books, plays, films, albums, magazines, journals, newspapers, and TV programs; use quotation marks around titles of individual articles, songs, poems, chapter titles, short stories, and TV series episodes.

Journals

The course material is not just intellectually challenging; it should also be personally challenging. After all, as you read through the material, your own identity, norms, and sources of social power should be called into question: this class is about *you* too. To help you reflect on how course material intersects with your personal experiences, relationships, and beliefs, I'm asking you to write three "journals" this semester (due dates on the syllabus).

These are 600-800 words each of personal reflection on the operation of gender, sexuality, and media in your life. There is no set format or style for these. One possibility is to find a "hook"—a media text you have come across, an incident you experienced or witnessed, a phenomenon or pattern you've noticed, or a conflict that you have with friends, partners, parents, or yourself--and use that to generate your exploration. Your journal should, however, connect to the ideas we are discussing in class. The word count is just a rough guideline to give you a sense of scope: poetry, images, songs/spoken word performances, dialogs, etc. are also welcome.

I want these journals to be safe for you to express your thoughts and ideas, so they will not be "graded" per se--although I do reserve the right to ask you to redo them if you do not appear to have taken the assignment seriously, if the writing is particularly sloppy, or if there is little or no connection to class content. If you do all three of them, they are about the right scope, you seem to have taken them seriously, and I can see how you're working with ideas from class, you'll get 50 points (out of 1000) for each. These assignments are exempt from the gateway criteria; however, all multipage documents must be stapled.

Community Engagement

Over the course of the semester, I will alert you to speakers and events that are relevant to the class. You may also suggest opportunities as you learn of them. You must attend two such events; for each, please summarize the event and connect it to class theory and concepts (maximum 250 words). Gateway criteria apply. Your summary is due on NoteBowl at the latest one week after the event. Each summary is worth 2% of your grade (20 points out of 1000). In addition, you are required to provide two substantive (minimum 50 word) comments on your classmates' event summaries (also on NoteBowl), each worth 0.5% of your grade (5 points out of 1000).

Fishbowl Assignment

Three times over the course of the semester, you will be picked at random to enter the "fishbowl," wherein you and two-three of your classmates will have a guided conversation for 15-20 minutes about the reading/screening for that day before the rest of the class joins in. Here are the rules:

1. Fishbowl days will be marked by an asterisk next to the date in the syllabus.
2. On that day, three-four students will be selected to have an initial conversation about the material for the day while the rest of the class listens, takes notes, and gathers their own thoughts.
3. Students cannot be selected more than twice until everyone has gone twice.
4. Students get one "bye": if you are selected but are not ready or willing to participate on that day, or if you are absent on the day you are selected, then you can opt out one time. At that moment, another student may opt in.
5. After your one "bye," any absence or decision to opt out will result in a zero, or a 1/3 reduction in your grade for the fishbowl assignment.
6. Each fishbowl will be worth 5% of your final grade and evaluated on your preparedness, ability to respond to the guiding questions with direct references to the readings/screenings, ability to connect ideas across class periods, overall quality of participation, and willingness to do your part to maintain respectful and productive discussion.
7. After everyone has gone twice, we will reevaluate the exercise for its effectiveness and adjust as necessary.

Daily Schedule

Readings/screenings should be completed by that day's class,
and you should come prepared to discuss them. All readings will be linked on NoteBowl (NB).

UNIT 1: THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Aug. 30 Media, Gender, Sexuality

Sep. 4 Introduction to Media Studies Read: Becker, "Ideology"
Beltrán, "Representation" (97-103)
Smith, "Role Models and Stereotypes" (103-109)

Sep. 6* Ideology, Gender, and Sex Watch: *The Purity Myth* (LIB)

Sep. 11* Psychoanalytic Approaches Read: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Sep. 13* Mass-Media Approaches Read: Tuchmann, "The Symbolic Annihilation of
Women by the Mass Media"

Sep. 18 Sexuality and Normalization I Read: Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 3-49
("We 'Other Victorians,'" "The Repressive
Hypothesis," "The Perverse Implantation")

Sep. 20* Consolidation: From Mulvey
to Foucault Read: Sturken & Cartwright, "Spectatorship, Power,
and Knowledge"

Sep. 25 Gender and pornography Read: Stanic, "The Space Between"
Watch: Trailer for *Mr. Angel* (link on NB)
Watch: OPTIONAL — *The Crash Pad* (link on NB)

Sep. 27* Sexuality and Normalization II Read: Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination"
Watch: Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette* (Netflix)
Turn In: Journal #1

Oct. 2* Intersectionality Read: Crenshaw, "Beyond Racism and Misogyny"

UNIT 3: HISTORIES

Oct. 4* True Femininity, True Masculinity Read: A-L: Kimmel, "Baseball and the Reconstitution
of American Masculinity, 1880-1920"
M-Z: Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood"

Oct. 9* Gender and Race in History Read: A-L: Hutchison, "Reexamining Jack Johnson"
M-Z: Wanzo, "Beyond A 'Just' Syntax"

Oct. 11* Postwar Myths Read: Coontz, "'Leave It to Beaver' and 'Ozzie and
Harriet': American Families in the 1950s"
Watch: *Pleasantville* (lib., Amazon Prime)

Oct. 16 Podcasting Workshop (325 Higley) Listen: *Out on the Wire*, Ep. 1, "Eureka" (link on NB)
NOTE: Take-home midterm handed out 10/16,
due 10/26

Oct. 18 **No Class: Fall Break**

UNIT 4: GENDER/SEXUALITY AND THE STATE

Oct. 23*	The Straight State	<u>Read:</u>	Canaday, <i>The Straight State</i> , "Introduction"
Oct. 25	The Security State Guest: Dr. Shoshana Magnet	<u>Read:</u>	Davis, "Sexual Coercion, Prisons, and Feminist Responses"
		<u>Read:</u>	Magnet & Rodgers, "Stripping for the State"
		<u>Turn In:</u>	Take-home midterm by 5:00 p.m. on 10/26

UNIT 5: BODIES AND BEAUTY

Oct. 30*	Gender, Beauty, and the Media I	<u>Read:</u>	Choose EITHER: Bordo, <i>Unbearable Weight</i> , "Introduction" OR Bordo, <i>The Male Body</i> , "Beauty (Re)Discovers the Male Body"
Nov. 1*	Beauty in a Global Context	<u>Read:</u>	Parameswaran, "Global Queens"
		<u>Watch:</u>	<i>The Illusionists</i> (Kanopy)
Nov. 6*	Women's Bodies as Sites of Crisis	<u>Read:</u>	Everyone: Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate" A-L: Levine, "Having a Female Body" M-Z: Linton, "The Menstrual Masquerade"
		<u>Turn In:</u>	Journal #2
Nov. 8	No Class: (Bill out of town)		
Nov. 13	Podcast critiques	<u>Listen:</u>	<i>Out on the Wire</i> , Ep. 8, "Your Baby's Ugly" (link on NB)
		<u>Email:</u>	Three minutes of your podcast by 8:00 p.m. on 11/12 to assignments@billkirkpatrick.net

UNIT 6: OTHER STUDENT-SUGGESTED TOPICS

Nov. 15*	Drag	<u>Watch:</u>	<i>RuPaul's Drag Race</i> : S2E1 "Gone With the Window," and S2E2, "Starrbootylicious"
		<u>Read:</u>	Yudelman, "The RuPaulitics of Subjectification"

THANKSGIVING BREAK, NOV. 17 - NOV. 25

Nov. 27*	Fetishes/Objects	<u>Listen:</u>	<i>Love & Radio</i> , "A Girl of Ivory" (Link on NB)
		<u>Read:</u>	Terry, "Loving Objects"
		<u>Turn In:</u>	Podcast to Notebowl by 5:00 p.m. on 11/28
Nov. 29	No Class: Research Help		
Dec. 4*	The Media and Gay Rights in 20th-Century America	<u>Watch:</u>	<i>Seinfeld</i> , "The Outing" (S4E17)
		<u>Read:</u>	Becker, "Gay-Themed Television"
		NOTE:	Fishbowl only if needed
Dec. 6	The Media and Gay Rights in 21st-Century America	<u>Watch:</u>	<i>The New Normal</i> , "Pardon Me" (S1E9); <i>Modern Family</i> , "Not in My House" (S1E12)
		<u>Read:</u>	Cavalcante, "Anxious Displacements"
Dec. 11	The Television Industry, the Social Context, and Postfeminism	<u>Watch:</u>	<i>Full House</i> , "Honey, I Broke the House" (S3E20); <i>Fuller House</i> , "Mad Max" (S1E5)
		<u>Read:</u>	Loock, "Whatever Happened to Predictability?"
Dec. 13	Wrap up	<u>Turn In:</u>	Journal #3

BLOG POST DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, AT 11:00 A.M.