

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 479 (L01): Feminist Media Studies

Winter 2020

Monday, January 13 – Wednesday, April 15 (excluding February 17 - 23)

Lecture: Tuesdays (via D2L) and Thursdays (via Zoom) from 11:00AM – 12:15PM

Instructor: Nicolette Little
Office: SS 240
Email: Nicolette.little@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM or by appointment.
All student-instructor meetings will be carried out via Zoom or Skype.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the critical perspectives and practices of feminist studies of media cultures. As an interdisciplinary field, we will employ insights from cultural studies, film and television studies, women's and gender studies, queer studies, disability studies, and critical race studies to interrogate the ways in which gendered, racialized and sexualized subjectivities are produced, circulated and consumed through (primarily) North American media cultures. A range of media texts, including television shows, films, music videos, 'zines, selfies, and celebrities will be used as case studies to explore the relationship between power, media, and our identities. Additionally, the course will teach students to critically assess feminist media studies as a politicized practice, and students will reflect on the politics of doing feminist research in the field of media studies.

Additional Information:

We are fortunate to be able to use the Taylor Institute resources for this course. In following the Taylor Institute's emphasis on inquiry-based and experimental student-centered learning, this class is premised on the active participation of students. As such, regular attendance is expected and is essential for success in this course.

During the course of the semester we will be discussing difficult topics, including sexual violence, racism, and other types of oppression. Please see the professor if you require assistance in dealing with this material.

Objectives of the Course: By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the history of feminist media studies as an evolving scholarly field
- Articulate key theoretical and methodological frameworks for studying media cultures from a feminist perspective

- Analyze the ways in which gendered, racialized and sexualized subjectivities are produced, circulated and consumed through media cultures
- Interrogate the ways in which their own identities shape their engagement with media culture
- Develop both verbal and written analytic skills needed for advanced undergraduate study

Textbooks and Readings: There is no primary textbook for this course. Reading will be posted on D2L and should be read **prior** to the lecture for which they are assigned.

Internet and electronic communication device information: You will need your device for the online delivery of our course, and will need access to Zoom and D2L applications and/or sites.

****No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the permission of the professor****

Email policy: Before emailing me, please check that the answer to your question is not in the course syllabus! I aim to answer all email inquiries as soon as possible, but will not reply to emails in the evening or over the weekend. When sending me an email, please specify what course you are in (COMS 479) and include a clear statement of purpose in the subject line. Always be professional and courteous in your emails to me and your peer mentor.

Respect and Diversity in the Classroom: This course is built around student participation. Lecture periods often contain opportunity for student contributions and I welcome your insightful comments (based on course materials) and questions. During these discussion periods I ask that students be respectful of diverse viewpoints; however, racist, sexist, homophobic, Islamophobic, and other types of discriminatory comments are not permitted in the classroom. Comments of this nature will be dealt with at the professor’s discretion on an individual basis.

On pronouns: I respect all students’ pronouns. Please alert me to your pronoun and I am happy to oblige.

Assignments and Evaluation:

| Weight | Course components | Due |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| 10% | <p>Participation Students are required to participate in class discussions, demonstrating a familiarity with the assigned readings and course concepts. Additionally, students are expected to fully engage in group activities and projects (both in class and outside) in order to be successful in this course.</p> | Weekly in class |
| 15% | <p>Feminist Podcast/Website Group Presentation In groups of five, students will research and review a feminist podcast/website, presenting their findings to the class in a 10-minute presentation. Further information about this assignment will be</p> | As assigned |

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| | distributed in the first week of class. | |
| 30% | Midterm Exam Students will have 75 minutes to complete an in-class exam, which will cover all material up to and including class on February 13. More information about the format of the exam will be provided in class. | February 25 |
| 25% | 'Zine Project Students will contribute to a research-informed 'zine (10-15 pages), on our class Word Press site, which will address course concepts and engage feminist media critique. More information about this assignment will be provided in class. | April 9 |
| 20% | 'Zine Reflection Paper (individually written, 1500 words) Each student will be responsible for an individually written paper that "fleshes out" some of the key themes and issues raised through their contribution to our online class zine. As part of this paper, students will also reflect on their own experience producing the 'zine and engaging in feminist media critique. | April 14 |

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: As a result of COVID-19, assignments will be accepted via Dropbox OR in other online formats, as per your instructor's direction. **Please note that assignments will not be accepted via email unless permission on an individual basis is granted from the professor.**

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments: Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. This includes weekends (e.g. if an assignment is due Thursday and you submit it on Monday you will be penalized four grades).

Late work will not be accepted one week past the original deadline without appropriate documentation (i.e. doctor's note). **Late work will not receive written feedback.**

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this

need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, percentage grades will be used for quizzes, tests and assignments.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

| Grade Point Value | Description | Grade | Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents* | Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* * |
|-------------------|--|-------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4.00 | Outstanding performance | A+ | 96 - 100% | 98.0% |
| 4.00 | Excellent performance | A | 90 - 95.99% | 93.0% |
| 3.70 | Approaching excellent performance | A - | 85 - 89.99% | 87.5% |
| 3.30 | Exceeding good performance | B+ | 80 - 84.99% | 82.5% |
| 3.00 | Good performance | B | 75 - 79.99% | 77.5% |
| 2.70 | Approaching good performance | B- | 70 - 74.99% | 72.5% |
| 2.30 | Exceeding satisfactory performance | C+ | 65 - 69.99% | 67.5% |
| 2.00 | Satisfactory performance | C | 60 - 64.99% | 62.5% |
| 1.70 | Approaching satisfactory performance | C- | 55 - 59.99% | 57.5% |
| 1.30 | Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D+ | 53 - 54.99% | 54.0% |
| 1.00 | Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses | D | 50 - 52.99% | 51.5% |

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|-------------|--|----------|------------|----|
| | in the same subject | | | |
| 0.00 | Failure. Did not meet course requirements. | F | 0 - 49.99% | 0% |

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics: Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Readings and Topics

Tuesday, January 14: Introduction to Course

- No readings; Discussion about Feminist Media Studies

Thursday, January 16: Feminisms, Then and Now

LEARNING ACTIVITY: Privileges and Markers Survey

- Jessica Valenti – You’re a Hardcore Feminist, I Swear
- Rachel Fudge – Everything you always wanted to know about feminism but were afraid to ask

PART 1: MEDIA (MIS)REPRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, January 21: Representation and Media

IN-CLASS SCREENING /w CRITICAL DISCUSSION: *Missrepresentation*

Thursday, January 23: The “Symbolic Annihilation” of Women

- Rosalind Gill – Gender and the Media
- Gaye Tuchman – Introduction to *Hearth and Home*

PART 2: MEDIATED MASCULINITY

Tuesday, January 28: Mediated Masculinities and Engaging Men and Boys

GUEST SPEAKER (TBA) – mediated masculinities and engaging men and boys

- Please view “The Mask You Live In” online *in advance* of this class
- Michael Kehler – Myles Garrett, Don Cherry and the changing nature of boys sports clubs

Thursday, January 30: The Male and Other Gazes

- Emma Hope Allwood – Why we still need John Berger’s Ways of Seeing
- Laura Mulvey – Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema
- (RECOMMENDED/NOT REQUIRED: bell hooks, The Oppositional Gaze; John Berger, Ways of Seeing)

GROUP #1 PRESENTATION

PART 3: POSTFEMINIST MEDIA CULTURE

Tuesday, February 4: Postfeminism

- Angela McRobbie – Postfeminism and Popular Culture

PART 4: AUDIENCES & PLEASURE

Thursday, February 6: Audiences and Pleasure

- Rosalind Gill – Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility
- Kristen Warner – ABC’s *Scandal* and Black Women’s Fandom
- RECOMMENDED/NOT REQUIRED: Janice Radway, *Women Read the Romance*

GROUP #2 PRESENTATION

Tuesday, February 11: Queering Audience Desires / Transgender Labour

- Jessica Johnston – The Reality of ‘Messy Real Life’: Jazz Jennings and the Dramatization of Young Transgender Celebrity on TLC’s *I Am Jazz*

GROUP #3 PRESENTATION

PART 5: MEDIATED “OTHERNESS”

Thursday, February 13: Representing “Otherness”

- Stuart Hall – *The Whites of Their Eyes*

GROUP #4 PRESENTATION

Tuesday and Thursday February 18 and 20: NO CLASS – READING BREAK

- Study for the Midterm (Note: review readings, lecture materials and notes, screenings and guest speakers' notes from the beginning of the course up to and including Feb. 13th's class)

Tuesday, February 25: MIDTERM

- No reading

Thursday, February 27: Representations of Indigeneity and MMIW in Canada

- Miranda Brady & John Kelly – Redfacing, Remediation, and Other Indigenous Art
- Kristen Gilchrist – 'Newsworthy' Victims?

PART 6: PRODUCING RESISTANT MEDIA

Tuesday, March 3: Riot Grrrl and Grrrl Power

IN-CLASS SCREENING - *Don't Need You: Herstory of Riot Grrrl* (2005, Dir. Kerri Koch)

- Discussion & Analysis of film; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9G45K6Fgal>

Thursday, March 5: Zines and Zine Demonstration

- Alison Piepmeier – Making Media, Doing Feminism
- Paula Mejia – Rookie brought the inclusive spirit of zines to the internet era

PART 7: MEDIA INDUSTRIES AND GENDERED LABOUR

Tuesday, March 10: Hope, Affective and Other Media Labour

- No reading

Thursday, March 12: Women and Gaming Cultures

GUEST SPEAKER (TBA) – feminist game studies

- Alison Harvey and Stephanie Fisher – Making a Name in Games: Immaterial Labour, Indie Game Design, and Gendered Social Network Markets

GROUP #5 PRESENTATION

Tuesday, March 17: Class “Check-in” via ZOOM: Our way forward during COVID-19

PART 8: POSTFEMINISM, PART DEUX: SELF-SURVEILLANCE AND EMPOWERMENT CULTURE

Thursday, March 19: Surveilled Bodies (via ZOOM)

- Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Megan Wood – Gender, Race, and Authenticity: Celebrity Women Tweeting for the Gaze
OR
- Sandrina de Finney – Playing Indian and Other Settler Stories: Disrupting Western Narratives of Indigenous Girlhood

Tuesday, March 24: Diversity and Post-Girl Power Femininities

- *Students engage with presentations, shared via email & in 'discussions' forum*

GROUP #7 PRESENTATION
GROUP #6 PRESENTATION

PART 9: NEW MEDIA, MISOGYNY AND THE 'MANOSPHERE'

Thursday, March 26: Mediated Misogyny: MRAs, Incels and the Manosphere (via Zoom)

- Sarah Banet-Weiser – Popular Misogyny: A Zeitgeist
- Wendy Gillis – Shadowy Online Subculture in Spotlight Following Van Attack

PART 10: MEDIATED FEMINISMS

Tuesday, March 31:

- *Students engage with presentations, shared via email & in 'discussions' forum*

GROUP #9 PRESENTATION
GROUP #8 PRESENTATION

Thursday, April 2: Millennial and Digital Feminisms: New Media Callouts of Rape Culture

- Sills et. al – Rape Culture and Social Media: Young critics and a feminist counter-public
OR
- Emma A. Jane – Feminist Digilante Responses to a Slut-Shaming on Facebook

Tuesday, April 7: Mediated Feminism Show-and-Tell

- No reading
- Post an example of mediated feminism to the related discussion board. We will be discussing and analyzing these objects/texts in the discussion board.

- *Also...Students engage with presentations, shared via email & in 'discussions' forum*

GROUP #10 PRESENTATION

Thursday, April 9:

- No reading
- **'Zine Due – Post online to our class WordPress blog**

Tuesday, April 14: LAST CLASS

- No reading
- **Zine Reflection Paper Due (Submit via Dropbox in D2L)**