

FMMC 267: GENDER/SEXUALITY/MEDIA Fall 2010

Course Location/Meeting Time: Tuesday/Thursday 11AM-12.15 (AXN 109);
SCREENING 7.30-10.25 (SDL DNA)

Professor: Louisa Stein [Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 2-3.30 PM Axinn 206]

Overview & Objectives

This course explores the intersecting roles played by gender and sexuality in our media, focusing specifically on film, television, and digital culture. As we unpack media texts from Rudolph Valentino's *Son of the Sheik* to HBO's *True Blood*, we investigate the multiple ways in which popular media texts construct and communicate gender and sexuality. We will analyze how viewers engage with and make sense of representations of gender and sexuality and integrate them into their everyday lives, and we will consider how gender and sexuality inform our experience of online social networking, blogging and journaling, media fandom, and video game culture. For final projects, students can write media analyses, conduct historical or online research, or integrate class ideas into creative works.

By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to

- interrogate the role of gender and sexuality in cultural context
- debate theories of gender and sexuality in film, television, and new media studies
- incorporate theories of gender and sexuality into your own interpretations and analysis of media texts
- sustain critical thought regarding the role of gender and sexuality in media, in written form
- engage with all aspects of the writing process, from prewriting to drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading

Required Books

There are three textbooks for this class.

- Gauntlett, David. *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Kafai, Yasmin B. and Carrie Heeter. *Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008.
- Thornham, Sue. *Feminist Film Theory, A Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

All additional required readings can be found on e-reserve or online, with links included in the syllabus.

Grading Breakdown

- *Attendance and Participation 15%
- Short (6 one-page) Screening Responses with opportunity to rewrite 25%
- Group zine & individual blurb 10%
- Reading Questions 15%
- Midterm DIY textual analysis 10%
- Final Paper and In Class Conference 25%

*Attendance and participation are a crucial part of this course. More than four unexcused absences will result in an F for the course. Participation must include both class discussion and participation in the online class discussions, either on twitter or on the class blog in the forum pages. Tweets must include hashtag #gsm; you can also use other hashtags, such as screening title etc. In order to ensure full credit, please email me with your username so I know who you are and can give you full credit for your twitter activity

Academic Honesty Policy

PLAGIARIZING in any form from any source will not be tolerated, in accordance with the Middlebury College Honor Code (College Handbook, Chapter V).

All papers and projects must include the Honor Code statements along with the student's name (as digital signature) in order to be graded.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course. Further disciplinary action may also be taken. If you have questions regarding what constitutes plagiarizing, or if you are unsure about how to reference material found on the Internet, please speak with me.

You must cite all your sources. Write with your own words. It is clear when a student borrows from another author; don't take this risk. If you have any concern about how to integrate sources appropriately, please email or meet with me.

Reading Questions

By midnight before each class, you will have reading questions due online. You will be writing questions, not answering them. These questions (one for each reading) can explore points you didn't fully understand, can examine associations prompted by the readings, or can point to gaps you feel the readings have left unexplored. They should be

substantive questions, not trivia or yes or no answers. Post your questions in the specified wordpress post. We will explore these questions in class discussion. These questions will be graded 1-10 and at the end of the semester I'll drop the lowest grade.

I Page Screening Response Essays

Every week, I will offer prompts to guide your viewing and our discussion. **Every other week**, you will write a short essay responding to these screening prompts, drawing on at least one appropriate reading to support your analysis. (This amounts to a total of 5 1-page papers over the course of the semester.) Each paper should have a thesis and focus, and a title (as creative as you want!) that reflects this thesis and focus. You do not need to respond to all of the prompts; just the ones that inspire you and seem connected to the ideas you want to explore. These papers must be written in 12 point font, and must fit on one page only. Beyond that, you can play with the margins, font, and structure to squeeze in as much as you want to, depending on the essay. Submit the finished document as attachment via email, in either a Microsoft Word or Pages accessible document. Be sure to review, revise, and proofread these essays before sending them to me. Please use the email header: GSM2010 I PAGE ESSAY

I will return these essays to you, graded and with feedback, using the comment function in Microsoft Word. You will have the opportunity to revise these short essays once (due a week after you've received feedback) based on my comments. I will average together the earlier and later grade to determine your final grade for each essay. However, your rewrite can only increase your grade; I will not reduce your grade beyond the original, so rewriting can only help!

DIY Textual Analysis

Here's your chance to take the theory we've been discussing and apply it to the media text of your choice. You can analyze a film, television series, video game, online interface, or digital text. Apply at least two of the theoretical readings we've read so far to your text of choice, performing a substantive analysis, five pages in length. Be sure to cite your sources (both the theoretical sources and any additional primary or secondary sources you seek out) using MLA formatting. **Due Date: Friday 11/5**

Zine

Together with your group (chosen in class) choose a focus for a zine and a format (digital/e-zine or hard copy paper zine). Your zine should engage with the ideas in class, but can do so in any creative form you see fit, through a combination of aesthetic

choices and creative typography. We will have studied the significance of zines and looked at examples by the time this assignment comes round. In addition to the zine, you will each individually write a blurb exploring what you feel the zine accomplishes and providing details about your contribution to the zine. **Due Date: 11/19**

Final Paper/Project

There are five choices listed below, but if you have another idea for a focus that doesn't quite fit in these categories, feel free to run it by me. **In every case, your final paper/project must draw on a minimum of three of the required readings.** Reference your sources (required and not) with full citation using MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting.

- Write a 10-12 page close analysis of discourses of gender and sexuality in a television program or film of your choice, drawing on the readings and discussions. You can also consider advertising, exhibition, scheduling, and reception.
- Write a 10-12 page close analysis of discourses of gender and sexuality in a specific instance of new media, such as a video game, online interface, or transmedia textual network.
- Write 5 2-page film or television (episode) reviews, in a popular critical voice, interrogating issues of gender and sexuality throughout. These reviews should be informed by the ideas we've encountered in theory readings and discussions, but they can be written in a more informal, popular, or playful tone.
- Write a 10-12 page paper exploring the discourses of gender and sexuality in a specific case of audience textual creativity, such as personal web pages, bulletin board participation, fan fiction/art/vids, etc.
- Create a film, visual essay (vid), webisode, or script that addresses the themes of gender, sexuality, and media raised in class. In addition, write a 5 page paper in which you connect your creative work to the ideas raised in class and in the required readings.

You will have the opportunity to submit an optional rough draft for feedback. Whether you submit a rough draft or not, I encourage you to choose a topic that you feel truly excited about, start working on it early, and give yourself plenty of time to research, draft, rewrite, and proofread.

We will hold a mini conference/screening at the end of the semester where you will have the opportunity to share your projects with each other.

Due Date: Dec 8th

Week by Week Description

WEEK 1 Introduction: Gender as Social Construction

Screening: *30 Rock* (1.1) [PNI992.77 .T55987 v.1 2007D]; *Damages* (1.1/1.2) [PNI992.77 .D36 v. 1 2008D]

September 7

- Intro/overview

September 9

- Gauntlett, David. Parts 1 & 2 (Introduction/Some Background Debates)
- Vesey and K. Lambert, "I Can Have It All": Liz Lemon Negotiates Power, One Sandwich at a Time."
- Nigro, Regina. "Women's Work: 'Damages' and 'The Good Wife' look at female ambition."
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WEEK 2 Gender/Sexuality/Identity

Screening: *It* [PNI997.1752 A1 2003D], *Mad Men* (1.1) [PNI992.77 .M2335 v.1 2008D]

Sept 14th

- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." (Thornham)

Sept 16th

- Sharot, Stephen. "The 'New Woman' Star Personas, and Cross-Class Romance Films in 1920s America. *Journal of Gender Studies* 19.1 (March 2010): 73-86. E-reserve.

WEEK 3 Constructing Gender: Spectatorship and Gaze Theory

Screening: *Rebecca* [MCTR 7822D]

Tuesday September 21st

- Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." (Thornham)

Thursday September 23rd

- Doane, Mary Ann. "*Caught and Rebecca*." (Thornham)
- Modleski, Tania. "Woman and the Labyrinth: *Rebecca*." *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. Routledge: New York and London, 1989. 43-55. E-reserve.

Screening Response 1 due via email on Friday 9/24 [on prompts from week 1 &/or 2]

WEEK 4 The Woman Looks Back

Screening: *Gossip Girl* (1.1/1.7) [PNI992.77 .G6775 v.1 2008D], *Mad Men* (1.6) [PNI992.77 .M2335 v.1 2008D]

September 28th

- Williams, Linda. "When the Woman Looks."

September 30th: No class session—replaced by individual meetings. Readings still due.

- Doane, Mary Ann. "Film and the Masquerade." (Thornham)
- Pressler, Jessica and Rovzar, Chris. "How *Gossip Girl* is changing the way we watch television."
- Havrilesky, Heather. "Loaded."

WEEK 5 Woman Meet Monster

Screening: *Nightmare on Elm Street* [PNI997.N5225 A1 1999 D]; *Buffy* (1.1) [MCTR 6960D]; *Supernatural* (1.1) [PNI992.77 .S847 v.1 2006D]

October 5th

- Clover, Carol. "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film." (Thornham)

October 7th

- Williams, Linda. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." (Thornham)

Thursday, October 7th, at 4:30PM University of Chicago's Samuel Allison Distinguished Service Professor in Physics, Bruce Winstein will speak on "A Cosmologist Reflects on the Work of Michelangelo Antonioni." I encourage you to attend and to write up your thoughts on Antonioni, science, and gender and sexuality in the class forums.

Screening Response 2 due via email on Friday 10/8 [on prompts from weeks 3 &/or 4]

WEEK 6 The Woman Fights Back: Gender, Violence and the Final Girl

Screening: *Buffy* (7.22) [PNI992.77 .B84 v. 7 2006D Pt. 3]; *Heroes* (1.1) [PNI992.77 .H445 v. 1 2007D]; *Dollhouse* (1.6) [PNI992.77 .D6554 v.1 2009D]

October 12th

- Gauntlett, David. Parts 3 & 4. (Representations of Gender in the Past/Representations of Gender Today)
- Cresser, Frances, Lesley Gunn and Helen Balme. "Women's experiences of on-line e-zine publication." *Media, Culture & Society* 2001 23:457.

October 14th

- Karas, Irene. "The Third Wave's Final Girl: Buffy the Vampire Slayer."
- Fudge, Rachel. "The Buffy Effect."
- Callot. "The Expired Feminism of Joss Whedon."

WEEK 7

Fall Break-No Screening

October 19th: NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

October 21st

- Gauntlett, David. Part 6 (Michel Foucault, Discourses and Lifestyles)
- Gauntlett, David. Part 8 (Men's Magazines and Modern Male Identities)

Screening Response 3 due via email on Friday 10/22 [on prompts from week 5 &/or 6]

WEEK 8 The Stakes of Masculinity

Screening: *Supernatural* (4.16) [PNI992.77 .S847 v.4 2009D]; *True Blood* (1.1; 1.4) [PNI992.77 .T78 v.2 2010D]

October 25th 6PM Magick Lantern Screening—details to follow. This is a rare opportunity—I encourage you to go and to share your thoughts on the experience in the class forums.

October 26th

- Consalvo, Mia. "The Monsters Next Door." [E-Reserve]

October 28th

- Cohan, Steven. "'Feminizing' the Song-and-Dance Man: Fred Astaire and the Spectacle of Masculinity in the Hollywood Musical." *Hollywood Musicals, The Film Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. 87-101. E-reserve.

Proposal to final paper due on wordpress (at the indicated blog post) by Friday October 29th

WEEK 9 Masculinity as Spectacle

Screening: *Scorpio Rising* [MCTR 761 D c.2], *The Son of the Sheik* [MCTR 5398V]

November 2nd

- Gledhill, Christine. "Pleasurable Negotiations" (Thornham)

November 4th

- Hansen, Miriam. "The Return of Babylon: Rudolph Valentino and Female Spectatorship." *From Babel to Babylon*. E-reserve.
- Optional background reading on Anger and *Scorpio Rising*

DIY Textual analysis due by Friday 11/5 by email attachment, header: GSM DIY

WEEK 10 Queer Media, Text or Subtext?

Screening: *Smallville* (1.1) [PNI992.77 .S62 v.1 2003D], *Sherlock* (1.1) , *Queer as Folk* (excerpt, 1.1) [PNI992.77 .Q8442 v.1 2007D]

November 9th

- Doty, Alexander. *Flaming Classics*. "Introduction." [E-reserve]
- Gauntlett, David. Part 7. (Queer Theory and Fluid Identities)

November 11th

- Kohnen, Melanie. "The Adventures of a Repressed Farmboy and the Billionaire Who Loves Him: Queer Spectatorship in *Smallville* Fandom." *Teen Television: Programming and Fandom*. Ross, Sharon and Louisa Stein, eds. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2008. 207-223. E-Reserve.
- Tuller, David. "Queer as Folk."
- "Showtime seeks broad audience with gay and lesbian programming."
- Additional reading on Sherlock TBA

Screening Response 4 due via email on Friday 11/12 [on prompts from week 8 &/or 9]

WEEK 11 Gender/Identity/Digital Interpretation

Screening: Selected Vids [online link will be available for vid show for reviewing]

November 16th

- Stacey, Jackie. "Feminine Fascinations." (Thornham)
- *Cinema Journal*—excerpts from In Focus section on "Feminism and Fandom" on e-reserve (by Busse, Coppa, Hellekson, and De Kosnik). E-reserve.

November 18th

Over the next two weeks, spend a few hours experimenting with a video game, either one you already have access to, one available at the department, or on various Second Life transmedia extensions (see the links in resources). Draw on your experience in your remaining 1 page paper, and also discuss your experiences in the forums.

- Kafai and Heeter (*Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat*) Preface.
- Kafai and Heeter, Part 1 (Reflections on a Decade of Gender and Gaming) 1-46.

Zine & Blurb due by Friday 11/19 by email (subject: ZINE) or hard copy in my office.

November 23rd/November 25th Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 12 New Media and the Stakes of Play

Screening: *Tomb Raider* [PN1997.2.L1728 A1 2007D] ; Selected machinima

November 30th

- Kafai and Heeter, Part 2 (Gaming Communities, Girls and Women as Player) 47-124.
- Kennedy, Helen. "Laura Croft: Feminist Icon or Cyberbimbo? On the Limits of Textual Analysis." *Game Studies* 2:2 (2002)

December 2nd (Final Session/Party!)

- Kafai and Heeter, Part 4 (Changing Girls, Changing Games) 193-263.
- Gender and Fan Studies Debate Round 2 Parts 1, 2, and comments
- Screening Response 5 due Friday 12/3 via email on prompts from week 10 &/or 11]

December 8th Final Paper/Projects due, by email, to me, header “GSM Final.” Hard copies of projects (video etc.) can be delivered to my office).