

WS 3331: Gender and Popular Culture
Fall 2019 online

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to teach students how to think critically about popular culture and to achieve a certain level of cultural literacy by examining both critical essays and primary texts of popular or mass culture productions, such as advertising, television, music videos, popular music, and film.

Course Outcomes: Students who are successful in WS 3331 should be able to interpret mass cultural works as a part of a culture, be able to justify those interpretations with an understanding of the interpretive process, and have increased knowledge of strategies used to interpret popular culture, as well as be able to gain increased self understanding through the study of mass culture. Students will study all of the examples of mass cultural works in the course through the lenses of gender as well as race and class, and will have a deeper understanding of how mass culture serves to reflect and reinforce race, class, and gender norms in American culture. Students will study examples of pop culture phenomena that challenge those norms as well.

Class Philosophy: This course provides the student who takes it with a degree of flexibility that is unavailable in the traditional classroom setting. You choose when you read and answer discussion questions as long as your work is completed by the due date. In a very real sense, your learning is self-directed and self-motivated. What you take away from the course will in large measure be determined by how much time and effort you put into it.

Discussion postings and papers must be submitted by the specified time. **Late postings and papers will not be accepted.**

Discussions will be conducted online with the students in your group. Questions will be provided to you that will guide your reading, focus your attention on the important elements of each work, and aid you in assessing these texts. The instructor will participate with replies to some, but not all, of your postings.

TEXT: *All course readings are online and loaded into Blackboard site. There is no text to purchase for this course.*

Course Requirements:

One (1) midterm exam worth 100 points

One (1) final exam worth 50 points

Ten (10) weekly assignments worth 100 points total. The purpose of your weekly assignment is to build your own database of mass media images (ads, TV shows, children's toys, Disney movies, music videos, etc) that illustrate, or contradict, the ideas found in the articles you're reading.

Reading quizzes (10) worth 100 points total.

Group Presentations worth 100 points. Groups of students will design a presentation that corresponds with one of the topics we are covering this semester. Your group will receive an "A" if the following items are achieved:

1. There is evidence in your presentation that all members of the group participated in the project. This will be judged two ways – each member of the group must label their contribution to the presentation, and any member of the group should be prepared to answer questions from the professor or from the students in the class.
2. Your presentation offers original material and insights. If your group simply reviews what we have already

covered in class, you will receive a "C."

3. Your presentations should follow this format:
 1. Introduce your topic.
 2. Make an argument about the topic.
 3. Use examples to support your argument.
 4. Draw a conclusion.

Group Discussions worth 100 points. You must start the discussion early in the week by posting an individual thread to the group question. Your post should be at least 100 words, and you should post at least three times each week in order to receive full credit. You are welcome to discuss asynchronously, which means at your convenience.

In order to receive full credit for your weekly discussion, your group should submit TWO (2) group reports by 11PM Saturday night. There are two group reports: 1) attendance report and 2) discussion summary.

Attendance Report: Each week, a member of your group will post a report listing the names of group members who participated in group discussion and how often each group member posted.

Discussion Summary: Each week, a member of your group will post a summary of your discussion.

Group Selection: Early in the semester groups of 4-5 students each will be determined by the professor's random selection. Group duties will be rotated each week; group members will determine the rotation. There are 3 positions: a group leader, a group recorder, and a group messenger. If there is a fourth or fifth member to any group, those members get the week off.

Duties of Group Members: Group leaders shall act as group organizers, directing group activities, keeping the group on task, and checking that all group work is properly recorded and reported and returned. Group recorder takes notes for the group and submits the Discussion Summary on the group discussion board. The group messenger takes "virtual" attendance each week and posts that information on the group discussion board as well.

Rubric: Discussion Postings

FULL CREDIT

- Responds fully to question
- Gives a realistic response
- Expresses ideas clearly and persuasively
- Exercises good judgment in selection of relevant ideas
- Presents ideas clearly, logically, coherently,
- Expresses facts correctly
- ideas are well organized and in own wording
- Responses are at least 100 words or more
- Responses to others are thoughtful and supported with research and practical application
- Uses and cites course text/module to support response

PARTIAL CREDIT

- Responds adequately to question asked
- Selects ideas which are supportive
- Presents ideas clearly
- Expresses facts correctly
- Ideas are organized and in own wording
- contains noticeable errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling
- Expresses ideas with some confusion
- Expresses ideas clearly and persuasively
- 50-75 words
- Uses course text/module to support response minimally

LITTLE TO NO CREDIT

- Partially responds to what the question asks
- Responds to question with some errors
- Ideas are lacking in support and unclear.
- Facts are inaccurate
- Copies, wording from sources
- Contains substantial errors in grammar punctuation, word choice or spelling throughout
- Presents ideas unclearly with little organization
- <50 words
- Responses reflect general ideas without supporting references to readings and supporting research.
- Responses to others are minimal or none. (i.e., "I

agree!" or "I like the ideas!")

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: It is expected that you will write all of your own papers and that you will know how to cite sources and quote people appropriately (using MLA style for this course). If you are not familiar with MLA style, the Tutoring and Learning Center located in the UTEP library can help you. Plan ahead for your written assignments. Also, here is a helpful online resource:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

IMPORTANT: Any indication that you are submitting someone else's work, or that you are adopting statements or ideas of another person without appropriate acknowledgment (plagiarism), will have serious repercussions. Any plagiarism, cheating, or collusion to cheat observed in this class will be reported to the Dean of Students who will initiate disciplinary proceedings. Do not risk your good name and your future based on anxiety about grades, peer pressure, lack of time management, or feeling overwhelmed. Instead schedule an appointment with me about any problems or concerns you have about the course, course assignments, course material, etc.

Technical Support Problems

The following sources will assist you with any technical problems that you may experience in this course.

- Call 1-866-321-2988 (toll-free) any time at the 24/7 Helpdesk or at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/technicalinformation/helpdesk.aspx>

Students With Disabilities

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP needs to be contacted. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call 915-747-5148 for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and [The Disabled Student Services Office](#) at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the [Dean of Students Office](#) for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students found to be cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the policy set forth in the UTEP catalog. Refer to: <http://www.utep.edu/dos/>

Course Schedule

Week 1: August 26

Module 1: Introduction to Popular Culture

Read: Sut Jhally, "Image Based Culture"

Due: Assignment 1 AND Quiz 1 due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Sign up for group presentation topics by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Introduce yourself to the class and to your group

Module 2: Advertising

Read: Jean Kilbourne, "The More You Subtract, The More You Add"

Watch *Still Killing Us Softly 4*

Due: Assignment 2 AND Quiz 2 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Group discussion report by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 2: September 2

Module 3: Advertising continued

Read: Jackson Katz, "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity" (PDF in course content)

Watch *Tough Guise 2*

Read Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes"

Due: Assignment 3 and Quizzes 3 and 4 due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Module 4: What's Barbie Got to Do with Anything?

Read: Rogers, "Hetero Barbie" (14) and Karen Goldman "La Princesa Plastica: Hegemonic and Oppositional Representations of Latinidad in Hispanic Barbie"

Due: Assignment 4 AND Quiz 5 on Rogers and Goldman by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Group discussion report due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 3: September 9

Module 5: Children's Programming: Disney Movies and *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*

Introduction to Children's Animation: Disney

Read Lee Artz, "Monarchs, Monsters, and Multiculturalism: Disney's Menu for Global Hierarchy"

Watch *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

Review power point lecture on "Mirage Multiculturalism"

Due: Assignment 5 AND Quiz 6 on Artz by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Module 6: Introduction to Prime-Time TV

Read Butsch "Six Decades of Social Class in American Television Sitcoms"

Watch *Class Dismissed*

Due: Assignment 6 AND Quiz 7 on Butsch article by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Group discussion report by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 4: September 16

Midterm Exam due on Monday at 11:30 p.m.

Module 7: Men and Women in Sports

Review power point lecture on David Whitson, "Sports and Masculinity"

Watch *Wrestling with Manhood* video

Watch *Playing Unfair* video

Due: Assignment 7 by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Module 8: Music Videos

Introduction to MTV

watch *Dream Worlds 3*

Read Tricia Rose, "There are Bitches and Hoes"

Watch *Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

Due: Assignment 8 and Quiz 8 on Rose article by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Group discussion report by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 5: September 23

Module 9: Female-Identified Music Videos

Read Lisa A. Lewis "Female address on music television: Being discovered"

(<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC35folder/GirlsMTV.html>)

Due: Quiz 9 on Lewis article and Assignment 9 due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Module 10: Tying it All Together

Introduction to Pornography

Read Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life"

Watch Gail Dines, *Pornland*

Due: Assignment 10 AND Quiz 10 on "The Pornography of Everyday Life" by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Group discussion report by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 6: September 30

Module 11: Sites of Resistance

Sites of Hegemonic Resistance: What does it look like?

Group discussion report by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Due: Group Presentations by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 7: October 7

Due: Final Exam by 11:30 on Saturday

Due: Group rankings and analysis of group presentations by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday