

WS 3331: Gender and Popular Culture
Spring 2023 online

Dr. Lee Ann Westman

Cell phone 915-342-0684

Email: LEWESTMAN@utep.edu

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 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.

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

Course Requirements:

Exams, quizzes, discussion postings, presentations, and papers must be submitted by the specified time. **Late postings, papers, quizzes, group presentations, and exams will not be accepted.**

One (1) midterm exam worth 100 points

One (1) final exam worth 100 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 (11) worth 110 points total.

Final group presentation worth 100 points. Create a presentation about ANY example of mass media that challenges the gender, race, sexual identity, and/or class norms we've studied this semester. Presentation should consist of 5 slides only: Introduction, 1-2 examples, explanation of how example challenges norms, and conclusion.

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. If your group members do not post, or post less often, this will not affect your grade. You are welcome to discuss asynchronously, which means at your convenience and not necessarily when your other group members are posting.

In order to receive full credit for your weekly discussion, your group should submit ONE (1) Discussion Summary on the discussion board for that week by 11:30 p.m. Note that the discussion board closes at 11:30 p.m. so be sure to post it before the discussion closes. Your group should create a rotation so that a different group member posts the summary each week.

Group Selection: You must join a group during week 1 of the course. **Your group is for BOTH your weekly discussion and for your group presentation at the end of the semester.** If you fail to participate in your group, I will remove you from the group and put you in a group with other students who are not participating.

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

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

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

- 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
- 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
- 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 **Students who submit any plagiarized material will receive a zero for the assignment, and risk referral to dean of students office.**

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.

Diversity and Inclusion: Women's and Gender Studies supports an inclusive learning environment in which diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our program must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability are contrary to the mission of our program. All our faculty and staff are responsible for promoting inclusive spaces for all, including students with children and breastfeeding mothers. While a Women's and Gender Studies student, you will be given an equitable opportunity to contribute and succeed. The diversity of lived experiences and knowledge that you bring to our courses are considered a resource, strength, and benefit. Thank you for the diversity you bring to our program!

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official UTEP records, please let me know.
- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

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: January 16

Unit 1

Review the power point “Introduction to Popular Culture”

Sign up for a group under “Course Groups”

Participate in Week 1 discussion with your group

Syllabus Quiz due by Saturday at 11:30 p.m.

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

Week 2: January 23

Unit 1 continued

Read: Sut Jhally, “Image Based Culture”

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

Assignment 1 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 2 discussion with your group

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

Week 3: January 30

Unit 1 continued

Advertising and Gender

Read: Jean Kilbourne, “The More You Subtract, The More You Add”

Watch *Still Killing Us Softly 4*

Quiz 2 due by 11:30 on Wednesday

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

Participate in Week 3 discussion with your group

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

Week 4: February 6

Unit 1 continued

Advertising and Gender

Read: Jackson Katz, “Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity”

Watch *Tough Guise 2*

Quiz 3 due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Assignment 3 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 4 discussion with your group

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

Week 5: February 13

Unit 1 continued

Advertising and Race

Read Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes"

Watch *Ethnic Notions*

Quiz 4 due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Assignment 4 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 5 discussion with your group

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

Week 6: February 20

Unit 2

Children's Toys

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

Quiz 5 on Rogers and Goldman due on Wednesday at 11:30 p.m.

Assignment 5 due by Saturday at 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 6 discussion with your group

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

Week 7: February 27

Unit 2 continued

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"

Quiz 6 on Artz due by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Assignment 6 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 7 discussion with your group

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

Week 8: March 6

Unit 2 continued

Introduction to Prime-Time TV

Read Butsch "Ralph, Fred, Archie, and Homer: Why Television keeps re-creating the white male working class buffoon"

Watch *Class Dismissed*

Quiz 7 on Butsch article due by 11:30 on Wednesday

Assignment 7 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 8 discussion with your group
Group discussion report due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Week 9: March 13

Spring Break

Week 10: March 20

Midterm Exam due on Saturday, March 25 at 11:30 p.m.

No Group Discussion

Week 11: March 27

Unit 3

Men and Women in Sports

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

Watch *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics, and American Sport*

Participate in week 11 discussion with your group

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

Week 12: April 3

Unit 3 continued

Music Videos

Introduction to MTV

watch *Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

<https://www.njvid.net/show.php?pid=njcore:17531>

Quiz 8 on Rose article due by 11:30 on Wednesday

Due: Assignment 8 by Saturday at 11:30 p.m.

Participate in Week 12 discussion with your group

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

Week 13: April 10

Unit 3 continued

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 by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Due: Assignment 9 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 13 discussion with your group

No Group discussion report due this week (but be sure to participate in discussion!)

Week 14: April 17

Pornography

Introduction to Pornography

Read Caputi, "Everyday Pornography"

Watch *The Pornography of Everyday Life*

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C3190431

Quiz 10 on “The Pornography of Everyday Life” by 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday

Assignment 10 due by 11:30 p.m. on Saturday

Participate in Week 14 discussion with your group

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

Week 15: April 24

Sites of Resistance

Sites of Hegemonic Resistance: What does it look like?

No Group Discussion – work on group presentation

Week 16: May 1

Due: Group Presentations by 11:30 p.m. on Monday, May 1

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

Week 17: May 8

Final Exam due by Monday, May 8 at 11:30 p.m.