

Example of a Well-Designed Course in: GENDER, WOMEN'S AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

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Name of Your Institution: Appalachian State University

1. Specific Context

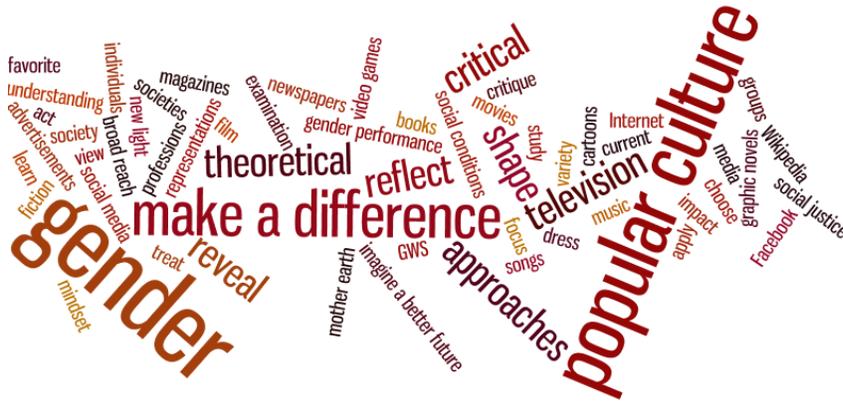
- **The subject matter:** Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies
- **The title of the course:** Gender, Media and Popular Culture
- **Typical class size:** 25
- **Level of the course:** 3000 level class, an elective for the major and minor
- **Mode of delivery:**
 - face-to-face, with some flipped components and an active classroom
- **Type of institution:**
 - University

2. General Description of the Course

Catalog Description: GWS 3350. Gender, Media and Popular Culture (3). On Demand. This course uses a variety of critical and theoretical approaches in its examination of how popular culture representations of gender reveal and reflect current social conditions and shape society. Areas of study may include, but are not limited to, television, film, music, advertisements, magazines, fiction, cartoons, graphic novels, video games, newspapers, the Internet, and social media.

3. BIG PURPOSE of the Course

Interested in how the broad reach of Facebook, Wikipedia, and your favorite books, songs, movies and television shows reveal, reflect and shape societies view of gender? You'll look at popular culture in a whole new light as we learn about and apply critical and theoretical approaches. We'll also move beyond critique and understanding to a social justice mindset. Gender performance can impact the way we act and dress, the professions we choose, and even how we treat "mother earth." Popular culture grounded in social learning theory has been shown to change attitudes and lead to lifestyle changes, so we'll imagine a better future and focus on ways groups and individuals, including you, have and can make a difference.



4. Important SITUATIONAL FACTORS/Special Pedagogical Challenge

Situational & Pedagogical Challenges	Solutions for the Challenges
students have wildly diverse backgrounds, interests, and feelings about GWS	use this diversity to our advantage in active class discussions, clicker questions and more. I'll solicit information about their past experiences in class as well as online. Assignments will not assume prior coursework, but they are still interesting and challenging to those that have it.
instances of triggering can happen when somebody is exposed to media	discuss and give prior warning of content, as per http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/guide-to-triggering/
the theoretical nature of feminist theories may be challenging	use active engagement techniques, like asking students what the authors meant regarding certain theories, along with concrete examples that illustrate, compare and contrast the concepts during class, in sharing reflection responses and in project 1. To help students make connections to critical and theoretical approaches, I am working on a Moodle glossary/Wiki of a variety of approaches and institutional structures, with influential people. This list is meant to highlight some of the diverse approaches rather than be all inclusive, and students will be able to add to each entry and add their own entries.
students will be required to read, watch, understand, critique, write, discuss and create in this class. Students will likely have difficulty with one or more of these methods	point students to university resources like the writing center, as needed. Standards based grading will allow students (and myself) to identify strengths and weaknesses early in the class, and focus on their problem areas once they have met other goals.

students may not take popular culture seriously, or may not enjoy analyzing popular culture. For instance, it can be quite disappointing to realize that your favorite song, movie, etc, contains misogynistic undertones.	discuss and engage in these issues on day one of the class so students know what they are getting into. Allow flexibility within reflections and projects so that students can choose what they are interested in exploring and are hence engaged.
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5. 3-COLUMN TABLE

Learning Goals:

Assessment Activities:

Learning Activities:

(See Descriptions later in this document)

<p>1. Foundational Knowledge</p> <p>1) I can summarize media and popular culture representations of gender</p> <p>2) I can understand and explain critical and theoretical approaches used in studies of gender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflections and project 1 • reflections and exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework questions on readings and videos • clicker activities in class • discussions in class • worksheets in class • reflections • exam • project 1
<p>2. Application</p> <p>3) I can apply critical and theoretical approaches to analyze and critique gender representations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflections and project 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group work in class • discussions in class • reflections • project 1
<p>3. Integration</p> <p>4) I can give examples of the ways gender is socially constructed in the media and popular culture, and reveals, reflects or shapes society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflections and exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework questions on readings and videos • discussions in class • reflections • exam
<p>4. Human Dimension</p> <p>5) I can reflect on the arguments of others and connect them to me.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflections and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework questions on readings and videos • clicker activities in class • discussions in class • reflections • projects

<p>5. Caring</p> <p>6) I can identify a problem related to gender and popular culture and form a creative action plan that could (at least theoretically) make a difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflections and final project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussions in class • incubation sessions in class • reflections • final project
<p>6. Learning How to Learn</p> <p>7) I can engage in standards based learning to identify and separate out any problem areas. Once I have met a learning goal, I can focus my energy elsewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards based grading rubric for the course which includes multiple chances to meet each learning goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students list any learning goals they want assessed • revisions • applications to lifelong learning and upcoming popular culture

Homework Question Assignments

Students respond to targeted homework questions based on articles, videos and/or research that relates to learning goals 1–6. These are low stakes assignments designed for engagement. I will mark whether they attempted the questions, and a good faith effort is all I ask for at this point. These may be informally hand written or spoken expositions.

Class Participation

Participation includes attendance, which is required, and active learning via clickers and engaging in small group discussions, larger group discussions, and the forums.

- **Clicker questions** are a combination of knowledge questions and opinion-based questions. As research indicates, the act of clicking itself does not result in learning, instead it is the small group and larger class discussions that occur afterwards that are essential. I will often ask students to talk to a neighbor they haven't already talked to about the issue before coming back together as a class. The anonymity of clickers allows us to gauge class attitudes about controversial issues and check in to see whether the class understood the material.
- **Small groups** also engage material by completing worksheets during class, such as those analyzing and critiquing content using feminist approaches, and working on creative solutions to real-life problems.
- We'll engage in diverse engagement techniques during class. One example is **incubation sessions**. Each incubation session is broken up into four timed components: a statement of a problem and a proposed plan of action from a presenter, clarifying questions from the remainder of the group, an incubation period for group members to discuss the issues while the presenter silently but actively listens, and a rejoin period during which the presenter responds, asks questions, and/or summarizes.

Reflections

These typed or spoken expositions are typically the equivalent of 1 page long, single-spaced text. They are due after readings, class discussions and activities on the topic. Aside from the title of each of the six reflections (example: gender and professions in popular culture), the focus is flexible so that students can follow up on and make connections to their own interests. For each reflection, they will list any learning goals they want me to assess (learning goal 7). Each individual reflection may address any or all of the other learning goals 1–6.

Test

The test will focus on learning goals 2 and 4 as students articulate quality written responses to targeted questions about course material in a timed environment. A study guide and a sample question for each goal will help students prepare for these short answer questions.

Projects

Students will apply what we have learned in two projects, which they will present to the class. In Project 1, they will choose a representation of gender in the media or popular culture, summarize gender aspects of the representation, and then name and use at least two different critical or theoretical approaches to analyze and critique the gender representations. Project 1 relates to learning goals 1, 3, 5 and 7, and students will have a chance to revise this project. The final project for this course invites students to design a creative intervention—artistic, activist, policy, educational, media, popular culture, business, or other—to transform any aspect of current practices, discourses, or institutions surrounding gender and the media and/or gender and popular culture. The final project connects to learning goals 5 and 6.

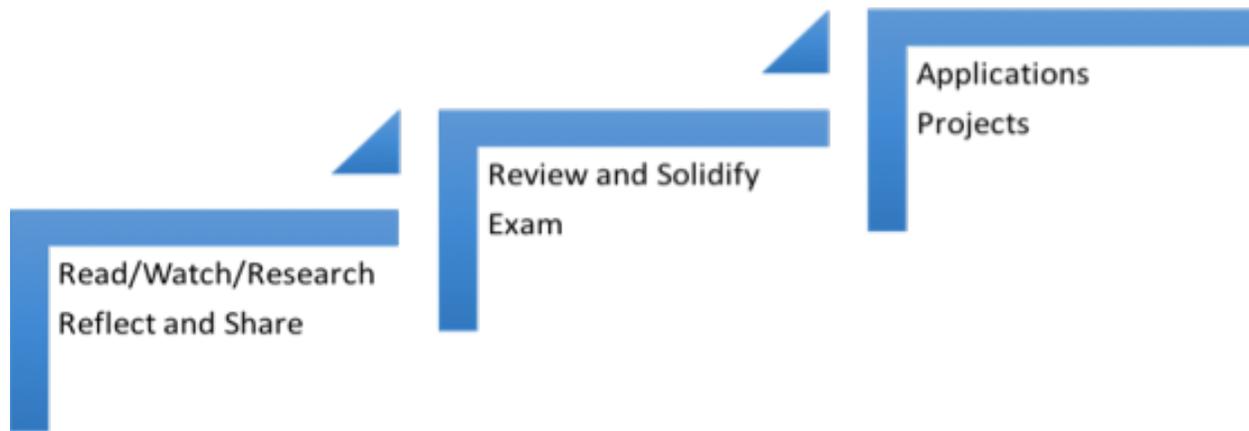
6. Weekly Schedule

Class activities have been designed to build upon one another as we engage with the learning goals. For instance, after introducing a topic in class (such as popular culture and the binary), students read articles, watch videos and/or research a topic. They also respond to targeted homework questions. Then we revisit the topic at a deeper level using clickers and other interactive engagement techniques during class. A culminating reflection assignment on the topic is completed outside of class and then shared in class.

In-class activities	introductory activities		small group and whole class engagement		share from reflection
Out-of-class activities		read/watch/research homework questions		reflection assignment	

The director of GWS asked me to share any **personal connections**. One personal connection is through my grandfather Sidney J. Cohen. He fought against censorship in film during the 1960s as a movie theatre owner, organizer and president of both Allied Theatre Owners and NATO of NY State. I'll mention that very briefly as part of a larger discussion on the Motion Picture Production Code (1930-1968). Appalachian State University's 2016 Common Reading text: *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* has interesting gender elements related to social media in it, so I'll also bring this into the class briefly.

General Sequence: The diagram below shows the general sequence of events. **Engagement** with theoretical and critical approaches and gender constructions in the media and popular culture continues with an **exam** that is designed to encourage students to review and solidify their understanding, and make connections before we apply these approaches.



The remainder of the class is focused on **applications** to areas of study. These include read/watch/research homework questions and reflections as well as two projects.

- I've designed an application segment on gendered professions in popular culture. Students will research a chosen profession to share with the class and I'll also share scholarship related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) issues, including my own work in this area.
- For Project 1, student will choose an application they are interested in, and they will present their research and analysis to the class. Another application is related to whether gendered representations of the earth impact how we treat it. This connects to university emphases on sustainability.
- Next we'll investigate and debate whether video games encourage violent and sexist behavior, and whether media causes individuals to develop negative body images, two questions that are well-represented in the feminist literature as well as the media itself, allowing for multilayered connections.
- We'll conclude the semester by focusing on social justice and activism. In order to help formulate their action plans for the final project, the students will participate in incubation sessions during class. Students will present their finalized pitch during the final exam time.

Week-by-Week Schedule of Activities:

Class Session: Tuesday	Between Classes: Due Thursday	Class Session: Thursday	Between Classes: Due Tuesday
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1	<p>What is pop culture and why study it? Learning goals, course rubrics. Syllabus. Begin theoretical and critical approaches. TED Talk: <i>Confessions of a bad feminist</i>.</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Introduction to <i>Gender & Pop Culture</i>.” • “Introduction to <i>Feminist Theory and Pop Culture</i>” <p>Homework Question Assignment.</p>	<p>Continue theoretical and critical approaches.</p>	<p>Read: syllabus</p> <p>Reflection 1: theoretical and critical approaches for popular culture.</p>
2	<p>Peer review Reflection 1. Syllabus. Exploring the binary gender construction in popular culture. Video: <i>The Codes of Gender; Identity and Performance in Popular Culture</i></p>	<p>Read “Representing Women”</p> <p>Homework Question Assignment.</p>	<p>Examples of outstanding excerpts from Reflection 1, including the learning goals. Femininity in popular culture. Reflect on personal impacts and those on society.</p>	<p>Read “Representing Men”</p> <p>Research men and women in recent popular culture. Choose an item to share.</p> <p>Homework Question Assignment.</p>
3	<p>Masculinity in popular culture. Reflect on personal impacts and those on society. Compare and contrast constructions.</p>	<p>Reflection 2: popular culture and the binary</p> <p>Revision for Reflection 1 is also due.</p>	<p>Genderqueer non-binary constructions. Video: <i>Further Off the Straight & Narrow</i>. Trailer for <i>Do I Sound Gay?</i></p>	<p>Read “Queer Representation in Film and Television.” Read “Beyond the Two-Gender System: Queer Theory”</p> <p>Homework Question Assignment.</p>
4	<p>Genderqueer non-binary representations and queer theory. Tvtropes.org. Reflect on personal impacts and those on society.</p>	<p>Read: “Queerness (Un)Shackled.” Watch <i>Miley Has No Gender?!</i></p> <p>Research genderqueer, non-binary, LGBTQI in recent popular culture. Choose an item to share.</p> <p>Homework Question Assignment.</p>	<p>Motion Picture Production Code. <i>GenderQueer: Voices from Beyond the Sexual Binary</i>. Vito Russo Test and the GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index. <i>The Danish Girl</i>.</p>	<p>Reflection 3: popular culture and the genderqueer non-binary</p>

5	Compare and contrast approaches and theories as we review them. Application to most viewed YouTube video.	Read study guide for test. Read criteria for project 1.	Review activities. Gender in <i>So You've Been Publicly Shamed</i> .	Study for test
6	Test	Begin working on project 1	Begin Applications to Areas of Study. Gendered Professions. Women in mathematics and my scholarship	Read "Between Brains and Breasts—Women Scientists in Fiction Film: On the Marginalization and Sexualization of Scientific Competence" Research a profession of interest and how gender representations of it appear in popular culture
7	What, if any are the impacts of gendered professions?	Reflection 4: gender and professions in popular culture	Share from reflections.	Work on project 1
8	Share project 1 topic. Begin gendered earth in popular culture.	Work on project 1	Project 1 presentations	Begin Project 1 revisions.
9	Finish Project 1 presentations.	Read "Advertising Natures"	Fall Break	
10	Gendered earth in popular culture. <i>Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth</i>	Read "Mother Nature in Popular Culture" and "Ecofeminist Critique" Homework Question Assignment.	Do gendered earth representations impact how we treat the earth?	Reflection 5: gendered earth in popular culture.

11	Begin gender in video games	Read “TinySex and Gender Trouble” Research recent video games and choose an item to share.	Watch: <i>Tough Guise 2: A Taught Behavior</i> with Jackson Katz. Gamergate	Read “Do Video Games Encourage Sexist Behavior?” Homework Question Assignment.
12	Debate: do video games encourage violent and sexist behavior?	Read: “Do Media Cause Individuals to Develop Negative Body Images?”	Debate the readings. Watch: <i>The dangerous ways ads see women</i> with Jean Kilbourne.	Read “Gender and Advertising” Find an ad in a magazine (example: library current periodicals), or a billboard and bring a picture of it to class.
13	Share ads and critique.	Reflection 6: Choose one: video games or media and body images Project 1 revisions are due.	What’s a feminist to do? Watch: <i>Wonder women! the untold story of American superheroines.</i>	Read “Using the Lessons Outside of the Classroom: In Other Words, Now What?” Read “From Street to Tweet: Popular Culture and Feminist Activism”
14	Feminist activism. Have More Feminists Become Involved as Decision Makers in Media?	Read the final project criteria and begin working on it.	Social justice, activism and making a difference.	Work on the final project
15	Incubation session #1 for final project	Work on the final project	Thanksgiving Break	
16	Incubation session #2 for final project	Work on the final project	Reading Day	
Final project pitch day, peer review and self-evaluation				

References for Homework Readings

“Between Brains and Breasts—Women Scientists in Fiction Film: On the Marginalization and Sexualization of Scientific Competence” by Eva Flicker. *Public Understanding of Science*. July 2003, 307–318

Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural by Noël Sturgeon. University of Arizona Press, 2009.

- “Advertising Natures”

Feminist Theory and Pop Culture by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek. Sense Publishers, 2015.

- Introduction” by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek. xiii–xxiii.
- “Queerness (Un)shackled” by Lauren J. DeCarvalho and Nicole B. Cox. 65–76.
- “From Street to Tweet” by Jenn Brandt and Sam Kizer. 115–127.

Gender & Pop Culture: A Text-Reader by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek and Patricia Levy. Sense Publishers, 2014.

- “Introduction to *Gender & Pop Culture*” by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek and Patricia Levy. 1–19.
- “Gender and Advertising” by Patricia Arend. 53–79.
- “Using the Lessons Outside of the Classroom: In Other Words, Now What?” by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek and Patricia Levy. 191–198.

Gender & Popular Culture by Katie Milestone and Anneke Meyer. Wiley, 2011.

- “Representing Women.” 87–112.
- “Representing Men.” 113–145.

Gender in the Media by Niall Richardson and Sadie Wearing. Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

- “Beyond the Two-Gender System: Queer Theory.” 49–57.

Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet by Sherry Turkle. Simon and Schuster, 1995.

- “TinySex and Gender Trouble.” 210–232.

Miley Has No Gender?! mtv braless. May 15, 2015.

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Mother/Nature: Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics by Catherine M. Roach. Indiana University Press, 2003.

- “Mother Nature in Popular Culture”
- “Ecofeminist Critique”

“Queer Representation in Film and Television” by Media Smarts, Canada’s Centre for Digital and Media Literacy. <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/diversity-media/queer-representation/queer-representation-film-television>

Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Media and Society by Alison Alexander and Jarice Hanson, 2014.

- Do Media Cause Individuals to Develop Negative Body Images? 77–88.
Yes: “The Body Shop” by June Deery. *Consuming Reality: The Commercialization of Factual Entertainment*, 2012.
No: “Everyone Knows that Mass Media Are/Are Not [pick one] a Cause of Eating Disorders: A Critical Review of Evidence for a Causal Link Between Media, Negative Body Image, and Disordered Eating in Females” by Michael P. Levine and Sarah K. Murnen. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, January 2009.
- Do Video Games Encourage Sexist Behavior? 93–100.
Yes: “Ms. Male Character—Tropes vs Woman” by Anita Sarkeesian. *Feminist Frequency*, 2013.
No: “Intro to Gender Criticism for Games: From Princess Peach, to Claire Redfield, to Femsheps” by Kaitlin Termlay. *Gamasutra*, 2012.

7. MY CONTACT INFORMATION

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