



Western Arts & Humanities

Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies 2161A – Women and Popular Culture Fall 2024

Western University is located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples, all of whom have longstanding relationships with the land and region and continue to be vital contributors of society.

1. Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer

2. Course Overview and Important Dates

Mode	Day(s) of Week	Time per Week	Frequency
Virtual asynchronous	N/A	3 Hours	Weekly

Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Section 4



All course material will be posted to OWL. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently as different features within OWL are especially reliant on the right browser being as up to date as possible. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study Days	Exam Period
September 5	Oct 12 – 20	December 6	Dec 7 – 8	Dec 9 – 22

3. Contact Information



Course Instructor	Contact Information
Dr. Nichole Edwards (she/her) 	Email: nedwar7@uwo.ca Zoom Office Hours: Thurs 12:30-2:30pm (sign up on OWL)

Teaching Assistants	Contact Information	Virtual Office Hours

You will be assigned a TA in the next two weeks, and they will reach out to let you know their office hours and contact info!

4. Course Description and Design

How is gender represented in popular culture? What messages do we receive about women from Reality TV? Disney films? Tampon commercials? Moreover, how do cultural understandings of what it means to be feminine become entangled in the way women are represented within popular culture, and what kind of impact might these messages have on us, as consumers?

This course explores several the themes listed above and moreover, how they relate to ideas, representations, and experiences of women in popular culture. Taught through an intersectional lens, this course focuses on elements of class, race, and sexuality *alongside* gender. In doing so, students will be offered a nuanced understanding of the way in which women are represented, and valued, within popular culture (and the broader social world.) While we explore historical *and* contemporary figures, most of the course will focus on contemporary themes like the representation of transgender folks in the media, the branding of feminism in mainstream media, and the representations of class and femininity that we see in reality TV – to name a few!

This course is also designed so that it becomes clear how various technologies (magazines, the Internet, music videos, literature, reality TV, etc.) can play a direct role in how women are represented in popular culture and how we, as consumers, experience them through these technologies. As a result, this course hopes to gauge your interest when you are consuming pop culture inside as well as outside the classroom, where you perhaps become aware of some of the themes we've discussed when you're Netflixing at home on a Saturday night.

5. Learning Outcomes



Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Offer critical reflections of mainstream films and TV shows in a way that speaks to ongoing debates about gender, femininity, masculinity, and sexuality
- Identify how intersections of race, class and sexuality impact the way women are represented in popular culture, and as a result, the broader social world

- Construct an argument around the negative and positive ways women are represented in popular culture, including the development of stereotypes and the ways women can resist them
- Recognize the importance of changing technologies and how this has impacted understandings and representations of women in popular culture throughout history
- Become critical consumers of popular culture!

6. Overview of Course Content



Week	Dates	Topic
1	Sept 5 – 8	Studying Gender and Pop Culture
2	Sept 9 – 15	Feminism and Advertising
3	Sept 16 – 22	Trans Representation Matters
4	Sept 23 – 29	Women in Comedy
5	Sept 30 – Oct 6	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity
6	Oct 7 – 11	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television
7	Oct 12 – 20	READING WEEK
8	Oct 21 – 27	Indigenous Women in Canadian Media
9	Oct 28 – Nov 3	Race, Resistance, and Sports Media
10	Nov 4 – 10	Witches, Witchcraft, and Wellness Culture
11	Nov 11 – 17	To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before
12	Nov 18 – 24	Periods, Politics, and Pop Culture
13	Nov 25 – Dec 1	Patriarchy and Princesses
14	Dec 2 - 6	Catch up Week

7. Online Participation and Engagement

Although this is a large class, you will be invited to engage with lesson content on OWL. You are not required to do so (as in, there is no graded participation component to this course), but you will be invited to participate and engage in the course material when prompted on OWL.



Consider this to be like in-class discussions, where I might ask for opinions on a certain topic, feedback on films we watch, or a 'just for fun' multiple choice question to see what you know about a topic before diving into a section of the lesson content.

Much like an in-person class, not everyone will feel comfortable participating/engaging, and that's fine. I'm hoping you'll blow my expectations out of the water 😊

8. Required Readings

All readings are available in OWL on each week's overview page. **All you have to do is click the reading link provided on each week's overview page, and you will be redirected to a downloadable copy via the Western libraries database.** Remember to login using your UWO ID to access the full library database off-campus. Please note that if you click the reading link and it does not automatically open the reading in a new window, **you may have to update your browser.**

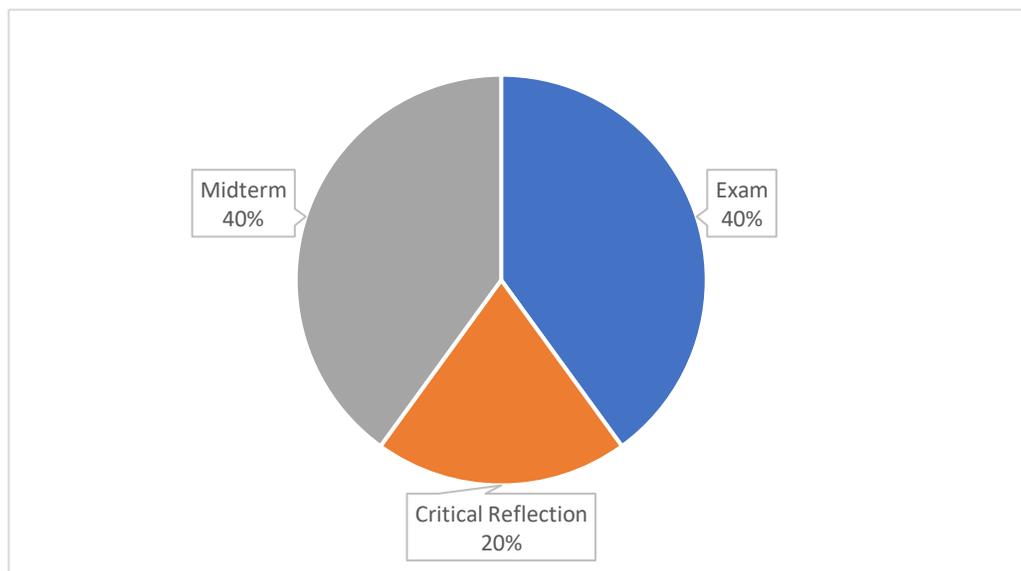


Below is a more detailed table outlining the required readings for each week, as well as the assessment due dates. Details about each assessment can be found below this table.

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMET
Sept 5 – 8	Studying Gender and Pop Culture	No reading! Just make sure that you complete the lesson content and are comfortable navigating our OWL site	
Sept 9 – 15	Feminism and Advertising	Martin, C. 2016. "A Nuance and Fearless Feminism: In Conversation with Andi Zeisler." <i>On Being</i> . Available online here. 2015. "Bitch magazine's Andi Zeisler calls out feel-good feminism." Q, <i>CBC Podcast</i> . Available online here.	
Sept 16 – 22	Trans Representation Matters	Lovelock, Michael. 2017. "I Am...": Caitlyn Jenner, Jazz Jennings, and the cultural politics of transgender celebrity." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 17(5), pp. 737-754.	
Sept 23 – 29	Women in Comedy	Swink, R. 2017. "Lemony Liz and likeable Leslie: audience understandings of feminism, comedy, and gender in women-led television series." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 17(1), pp. 14-28.	
Sept 30 – Oct 6	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity	Pickering, Jo. 2014. "Class looks and classifactory gazes: The fashioning of class on reality TV." <i>Film, Fashion, & Consumption</i> , 3(3), pp. 195-209.	
Oct 7 – 11	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television	Walker, T. 2019. "Dadvertising: The Rise of Involved Fatherhood in Contemporary American Advertising." <i>Advertising & Society Quarterly</i> , 20(4).	Midterm must be completed on OWL by FRIDAY Oct 11 at 5:59 pm. <i>*UWO states that all tests must be done by 6pm on the Friday prior to the start of Reading Week.</i>

Oct 12 – 20		READING WEEK	
Oct 21 – 27	Race, Resistance, and Sports Media	Razack, S. and Joseph, J. 2021. "Misogynoir in women's sports media: race, nation, and diaspora in the representation of Naomi Osaka." <i>Media, Culture & Society</i> , 43(2), p.291-308.	
Oct 28 – Nov 3	Indigenous Women in Canadian Media	Moeke-Pickering, T. et al. 2018. "Understanding the ways missing and murdered Indigenous women are framed and handled by social media users." <i>Media International Australia</i> , 169(1), p.54-64.	
Nov 4 – 10	Witches, Witchcraft, and Wellness	Waldron, D. 2005. "Witchcraft for sale! Commodity vs. Community in the Neopagan Movement", 9(1), pp. 32-48.	
Nov 11 – 17	To All The Teen Flicks I've Loved Before	Jenkins, T. 2005. "Potential Lesbians at 2 O'Clock:' The Heterosexualization of Lesbianism in the Recent Teen Film. <i>Journal of Popular Culture</i> , 38(3), pp. 491-504.	Reflection due on OWL by SUNDAY Nov 17 at 11:55pm
Nov 18 – 24	Periods, Politics, and Pop Culture	Merskin, D. 1999. "Adolescence, Advertising and the Ideology of Menstruation." <i>Sex Roles</i> . 40(11/12), pp. 941-957.	
Nov 25 – Dec 1	Patriarchy and Princesses	Watch one animated Disney movie that features a princess – From <i>Snow White</i> to <i>Frozen II</i> , your choice!	
Dec 2 – 6	Catch up Week!		

9. Assessments and Weighting



Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Midterm	40%	Friday October 11 by 5:59pm EST
Critical Reflection	20%	Friday November 17 by 11:55pm EST
Exam	40%	TBD, During formal exam period

Please note the following very important and non-negotiable points regarding assessments in this course:

- Detailed instructions and videos will be posted for each assessment on OWL. You will find these under the “Assessment Details” tab

- All assessments are submitted and/or written on OWL

- All written components of assessments will be submitted to Turnitin to ensure academic integrity

- After an assessment is returned, students must wait **at least** 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator

- Students are **not** permitted to ask the instructor to re-mark assessments after a TA has already done so

- Putting in time and effort do not equal an “A”

- Students are permitted to discuss grades up to 3 weeks after a grade has been returned

- Asking for assessments to be re-evaluated at the end of the semester is strictly prohibited

Midterm – 40% (due by Friday October 11 at 5:59pm)

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- The midterm will include T/F, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching grid, and short answer questions
 - **It will open on OWL on Monday October 7 at 9am**
 - **It includes content from Week 1 up to and including Week 6**, therefore you must complete the Week 6 content before you write the midterm
 - Students can choose to write the midterm at a time that works best for their schedule that week, but they **must complete it by Friday October 11 at 5:59pm**
UWO legislation states that tests cannot occur during Reading Week and that 6pm on Friday Oct 11 is the start of Reading Week.
 - Once a student opens the test, they will have **90 minutes to complete** all questions
 - **If a student is permitted extra time for tests and exams (approved by Accessible Education), there is no need to reach out and let me know** - I receive this info at the start of the semester and I will ensure that those approved for extra time are contacted with instructions before the midterm week.
 - Students who receive accommodation for a makeup midterm must write before the answers and marks are released to the rest of the class (unless accommodation is extensive in which case alternative arrangements will be made)

Critical Reflection – 20% (due by Sunday November 17 at 11:55pm EST)

- One of the learning outcomes of this course is to become a critical consumer of pop culture, and this assignment makes room for you to reflect on one of the two following questions:
- *How does popular culture influence society?*
- *How does society influence popular culture?*
- This is not simply an opinion-based reflection – you will need to construct a line of argument throughout your short paper and use material explored in this course as evidence
- This reflection should be 750 words. 10% above or below this word limit is acceptable – any more or less, and students will be penalized. *(I hope and know that you may have a lot to say in your critical reflection, but there is great merit in being able to edit your own writing, and to articulate yourself in succinct ways, so please stick to the word count).*
- Students may use “I” but must be sure to use evidence that supports the claims being made throughout (eg. citing lesson content, readings, and relevant video material shown in the lessons)
- Because of the short length, please do not include external sources - focus on lessons, readings, and videos to show a level of engagement and understanding of the course/topic/theme you are focusing on
- I will upload a video with more details and instructions a few weeks before the due date
- **Use of AI writing software is strictly prohibited for written assignments in this course**

Exam – 40% (written during the formal exam period, date TBA)

- Even though this is an online asynchronous course, final exams must still be registered with the Registrar’s Office. As such, we will not know when it is until the university releases the exam schedule *(I have zero say in the exam scheduling process and find out when it is at the same time you do).*
- This final exam will include a similar format to the midterm
- More details will be relayed once the Registrar’s Office posts the exam schedule.

IMPORTANT: Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Information about late or missed evaluations:



- Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 5 % per day. After 10 business days it will be up to my discretion to accept or not
- Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 48 hours of submission of the illness self-report. It is the student’s responsibility to follow up with their TA if self-reporting
- Students must seek accommodation from academic advising for anything worth 10% or more of one’s overall grade
- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; an alternate assessment will be assigned

10. Communication



- Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- A weekly update will be provided via Announcements to take care of any housekeeping items and to introduce the week’s topic
- Students should receive an email response within 48-72 hours (not including weekends or holidays)
- Students should use the OWL forum entitled “Café” for general class chat, questions, concerns, and all course-related content etc. If you have a question that you think others might have, feel free to ask it here rather than in a private email

11. Resources



- All resources will be posted in OWL
- Required readings will be posted in OWL
- Students are invited to sign up/login to [Kanopy](#) – sign in with your Western ID to access documentaries that will be required to watch in this course

12. Professionalism & Privacy

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:



- All course materials created by Dr. Edwards are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students will be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

13. How to Be Successful in this Class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

Invest in a planner or app to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.

Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.

Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.



Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes (highly recommend this over typing them!) Notes will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.

Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.

Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).

Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

Mental health resources:

Health & Wellness

University Community Centre

Tel: (519) 661-2111

Email: health@uwo.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

For London-Middlesex: www.cmha.middlesex.ca

I know how easy it is to get stuck in the cycle of “I have so much to do, I don’t have time to _____!”

You, as a human being, are more important than the degree you are working towards at Western.

Taking care of yourself first should always be your priority.

- Dr. Edwards



Good2Talk

Confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario and Nova Scotia

www.good2talk.ca

Tel (Ontario): 1-866-925-5454

Text: GOOD2TALK on 686868

Western Academic Policies and Statements

Absence from Course Commitments

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

In the interest of the health and safety of students and health care providers, you are no longer required to seek a medical note for absences this term. If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness you should use the [Illness Reporting Tool](#). This tool takes the place of the need to submit a medical note and the Self-Reported Absence System formally used by undergraduate students.

You are required to self-report every day that you are ill and unable to complete course commitments. Details about when you should submit missed work, the format of the missed work can be found in the Section 7. Evaluation above. Students should communicate promptly with their instructor and use this tool with integrity.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Academic Offenses

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

Turnitin and other similarity review software

All assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. Students will be able to view their results before the final submission. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as

source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

Arts and Humanities Academic Policies and Statements

Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Rounding of Marks Statement

Final grades on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer, e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g. a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

Support Services

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Academic Counselling \(Science and Basic Medical Sciences\)](#)

[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)