

**Women in the Media 2011 MIT 3210G**  
**Mondays 1230-320 pm in SSC 3006**

**Professor:** Dr. Romaine Smith Fullerton

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**Office:** 218 North Campus Building; Phone extension: 86663.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays noon to 1pm or by appointment

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will explore representations of women in the media. The term 'media' is understood and employed in its broadest context and is used to mean any vehicle for communicating ideas, values, ideologies, philosophies, culture, *et cetera*. We will explore film, television, print and broadcast stories, advertisements and Internet sites to analyse how women are and have been depicted by men, women and institutions. It's become cliché to say 'it's much better for women now;' we'll see.

### **Texts and Tools:**

- Photocopy course readings (listed below)—for details about location, please check our site on Web CT.
- A package of standard size cue cards (for giving speeches, etc) available at any business store. Buy one pack and split with your pals. Please do NOT give me things other than standard cue cards; they are hard to store.

### **Course Objectives**

This course will:

- Enable you to develop your close reading and evaluative skills on a variety of media representations of women in contemporary Western society
- Expose you to a wide range of theory and criticism about current images of women in the media
- Encourage you to examine the attitudes and beliefs that inform representations of women today
- Encourage your conversational and general communication skills in all these areas

### **Assignments and Grading**

- Attendance, participation and readings' reflections 15%
- Group Research submission—annotated bibliography and media examples (due in my Tuesday office hour prior to your theme's list in the syllabus). One grade for the group 15%
- your contribution to research submission—outlined in log 5%
- your written analysis of one of the media eg's from the group package 10%
- 10-12 page essay (or project) based on some aspect of SOMEONE ELSE'S research presentation (due 2 weeks after their material has been presented in class) 25%
- Final examination during regular exam period 30%

### **Important Information:**

- Please do not email me questions about course material. If you would like to talk about what we cover in class or in the readings, come and see me during office hours; I cannot respond to detailed questions via email. My typing is not that good and I love to chat— really!

- **Plagiarism:** you must write all your assignments in your own words. Whenever you take an idea, or a passage from another author, you must acknowledge this debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. **Plagiarism includes submitting the same assignment in two separate courses.** Plagiarism is a major academic offence that is taken seriously. Claims of ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse. You are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. 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 The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

- If you are seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, assignments or

participatory components worth 10% or more of your final grade for the course, you must apply to the Academic Counseling Office of your home faculty and provide documentation in the form of a Student Medical Certificate. Your counselor will contact me with details about your accommodation.

- FIMS undergraduate programs have implemented a policy requiring that the average final grades in most courses fall within prescribed ranges. This was done to curb grade inflation. The grading policy is intended to ensure that our undergraduate programs do not acquire a reputation among graduate programs, professional schools, or prospective employers for routinely awarding high grades.
- Electronic devices are not permitted in class at all; they can be disruptive to me and other students. This is a discussion-based class, so with that in mind, **you may not use a laptop, a cell phone, or any other electronic communications device in this classroom** unless you have made arrangements through the office for students with disabilities. If I see you using your phone, etc. while class is underway, this will be reflected in your participation and attendance mark. In return for your consideration in this regard, I will post the Powerpoint slides (or class notes if I've not done slides) on our class website on Web CT so you can always access this material AFTER class has occurred.
- While every attempt will be made to follow the topics and readings as outlined below, it is possible that changes to the readings or the weekly themes may be emended or adjusted. Please note that any such changes will be noted on our Web CT and made clear to you in class. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are up to date with any and all changes made to our schedule.

### **About the Assignments—**

**Attendance and Participation:** I expect that you will make every effort to attend class, keep up with your readings and contribute to the discussions. **I may call on any of you specifically for comments on the day's readings, so be sure to read them before class.** Please note that merely showing up will not necessarily even garner you a passing grade for attendance/participation. You must contribute in a thoughtful, constructive and respectful manner. While this should go without saying, I don't think it's polite to talk to others when someone is speaking to the whole class. If this involves you in any regular sort of occurrence, your participation and attendance grade will reflect this. If you feel uncomfortable speaking up in class, please come see me and we will discuss what kinds of accommodation can be made. If I see you texting in class—even once—your attendance and participation will also suffer.

**Readings Reflections:** Over the course of the term, you must give me 10 cue cards—not more than one per class—with your thoughts about one of the readings for that day. Please write these by hand, but make them legible. They can be a question or series of questions; they can detail connections you see between the reading and your life, or 'real' life; they can be a mini-analysis of what the author put forward. Make it your place to be original and thoughtful. **THEY HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED BEFORE OR AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**—or they don't count. No exceptions. If you can't make it to class, but want to submit your card du jour, go ahead. You may submit MORE than 10 cards, but if you submit LESS, your participation, attendance and reflections grade will be marked out of 10 % instead of out of 15%. In general terms, I will amalgamate the grade for the cards, attendance and participation into one grade—and yes, it is somewhat subjective, but I will give you opportunity for input too at the end of term. Ideally, just bring your card to class and hand it to me before we begin. Otherwise, cards are due under my office door (NCB 218) before 11 am on Mondays. Please note that **ONLY** reflections submitted on CUE CARDS—REAL ones—count. I don't accept pieces of paper, napkins, bus tickets, etc. **Readings' reflections, attendance and participation comprise 15% of your final grade.**

### **Group Research Submission Package (Consists of four parts all due at once):**

You and your group will work on an area that correlates with one of the themes/topics outlined below. I want the group of you to function as my 'researchers' for that week.

**Part 1:** generate an annotated but manageable bibliography or reading list (I would say between 5 and 15 sources per group—articles, book chapters, commentaries), and have a look at some of this critical material. In an annotated bibliography, along with the citation is a paragraph describing what the central argument is and whether/not you found it useful and why. If you find an article (or even two articles) that you think are particularly well done and would be helpful to share with your classmates, please let me know and we can arrange to post it or them to our Web CT site. Regardless of this option, I strongly encourage you to meet as a group and discuss what you have found, what your thoughts are about the critics you've read, what you think is covered by these critics and what is left out. Useful discussion and sharing of information are important skills for you to develop not only as you move into your senior year at Western, but also in the immediate future when you (might) hold a job, or better yet, go to graduate school.

*You will turn in ONE GROUP-GENERATED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY as part of your package.*

**Part 2:** Keep a journal or log—your own personal journal—detailing WHEN you met, WITH WHOM, FOR HOW LONG, WHAT WAS DISCUSSED, plus your own thoughts about WHAT WAS DISCUSSED. Please let me know here how your thinking about the topics changed or progressed throughout the process. I also want to know who did what in terms of leadership roles, grunt work, and so on.

*EVERYONE will turn in her or his own ‘log’ of these group activities on the day of your presentation.*

**Part 2, your journal or log will assist me in assigning the individual component of this package and is worth 5% of your final grade.**

**Part 3:** In the third portion of the project (done before, after, or concurrently with the first part) I want you to locate some examples from existing media content (advertisements, web sites, clips from tv shows, clips from movies, t-shirts, whatever) that illustrate the themes or ideas for the week—consider what your favourite (or most hated or most provocative) media examples might be, and collect some clips or samples that I can show in class.

*As a group, please put all your clips, images, etc. into a Powerpoint presentation—just plain background—so that I can incorporate your examples into my lecture for that week. This is part of your GROUP submission, not to be done individually.*

**Parts 1 & 3 together will comprise one ‘pooled’ group mark and is worth 15% of your final grade.** A pooled grade means that everyone in the group does not necessarily receive the same grade. For example, if I believe the package is worth 80% and there are 3 members in the group, the pooled grade will be 240 marks. You may divide those marks up amongst you however you AS A GROUP decide. One person could get 82, one 78 and the third 80. The default is for everyone to receive the same grade; however, if you know that one person took on a leadership role or did a larger amount of the slogging than some of the others, you may wish to reward her or him by giving up a grade or two of your own. I trust that you yourselves best know and understand how the work was accomplished.

**Part 4:** Each of you will choose ONE of your media examples and offer me your OWN close reading/analysis of this media example. You may use some of the theorists’ points you noted from the readings in your bibliography, or some of those offered in the class readings; BUT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO SO. You can rely on your own thoughts and opinions if you choose. Regardless, the argument you put forth in this short analysis must be your own. Please do not paraphrase what critics have written because they ‘say it better.’ Cite people to show up their deficiencies, or to show where they have ‘got it wrong’ or not given quite enough information. In short, write me a thoughtful analysis that is yours and yours alone. Please feel free to use first person, and say, “In my media example X, I see Y, and that makes me think of Z....” In terms of length, between 600 and 1200 words should be adequate, per person, per example.

**Part 4--your individual analysis—comprises 10% of your (individual) final grade.**

THE ENTIRE RESEARCH SUBMISSION (parts 1-4) IS DUE to me in my Tuesday office hour the week before your Monday presentation date. If you miss this deadline, your package is deducted 3% per **The entire research submission (parts 1-4) is worth 30% (15% group grade and 15% individual) of your final grade.**

**What about the essay based on another group’s presentation?**

The paper (or project) is due in class two weeks after the theme’s presentation date (for example, if you were writing about Mickey Mouse, that material was presented in Week 4, October 3, so your paper is due in class Week 6, October 17). Your essay/project should focus on some particular aspect of another group’s presentation material that was meaningful to you. If you choose to write an essay, I would like you to come up with a thesis statement, make an argument with some textual support, and present me with a 10-12 page (2500-3000 word) essay in MLA style. I like papers that are provocative and show original thought. It may—or it may NOT—be a research paper. But if you do incorporate others’ work, do not offer me only a synopsis of their thoughts or writings or a synopsis of the class presentation. Theory or criticism may form a portion of the paper, but that must not be the bulk of your work. Papers must be clearly written without jargon and in proper English. This is a relatively formal submission so please make sure your paper conforms. If you require an extension, please email me and ask in writing, outlining your reason. I will grant permission in the return email, which you can print out and staple to the front of your paper. Otherwise,

the late penalty is 5%/day and weekends count as two days. Please submit papers in hard copy, not via email. If you want to exercise an option to create something other than an essay to fulfill this assignment, please make your pitch to me before you undertake something different. In the past, students have done paintings, made models, created web sites, created political cartoons, written songs, and more. Please remember: it's not easier than writing a paper; it's challenging in a different way...and in most instances, there is still a written component to the project. **This essay/project is worth 25% of your final grade.**

### **Final exam:**

The final exam will be in essay format. I will offer you some choice in which questions to answer. I will expect your responses to be in essay style with specific reference to at least three class readings in each question with no overlap and **YOU MAY NOT DEAL IN DETAIL WITH MATERIAL YOU HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT IN YOUR PRESENTATION OR FORMAL PAPER.** The questions will be broad and I will expect you to focus your answer and draw together the broader themes of the course. **The final exam is worth 30% of your final grade.**

### **SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1:** Introduction to the course, creation of groups for group project and selection of themes; selection of essay topics and assignment of due dates. **IF YOU MISS THIS CLASS,** please come see me **IMMEDIATELY** so you can catch up with the rest of the group.

**Week 2 “Through a glass darkly”:** a consideration of feminist approaches and ‘frames.’ Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, Chapter 1, “News as Frame”; Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. “Introduction: The Variety of Feminist Thinking.” Liesbet van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies*.

**Week 3 Don't bet on that prince:** *women, fairy tales and progress:* The influence of historic fairy tale motifs, images, etc. on contemporary and postmodern representations of women “Don't Bet on the Prince.” Ed. Jack Zipes. London: Gower, 1986. 186-208. Elizabeth Wanning Harries. “Introduction” to *Once Upon a Time: Women and the History of the Fairy Tale*. Princeton, UP: 2005. “Feminist Fairy Tale Scholarship” in *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*, Ed. Donald Haase. Jenny Diski, “Shit and Gold” and “The Old Princess” from *The Vanishing Princess*. Peter & Iona Opie, “Rumplestiltskin” and “The Blue Beard” from *Classic Tales* Angela Carter, “The Bloody Chamber” from *The Bloody Chamber*

**Week 4 Walt Disney: Do or Die?** Henry A. Giroux, “Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?” in *Kinderculture*. Lieberman, Marcia, “‘Some Day My Prince Will Come’: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale.” “Introduction” to *The Emperor's Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney's Magic Kingdom* ed. Brenda Ayres. *In-class viewing of “The Mickey Mouse Monopoly”*

**Week 5 Life in a Fairy Tale: Gender and Class in Wedding Media** (guest lecture: Eric Lohman). Elana Levine, “Fractured Fairy Tales and Fragmented Markets” and Edward Jay Epstein, “Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?” weblink to *Atlantic Monthly*

### **THEMES from which to choose:**

\*) The ‘new’ royalty: romancing vampires and werewolves... Jack Zipes, “A Second Gaze at Little Red Riding Hood's Trials and Tribulations” Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, excerpt. Janice A. Radaway, “*The Act of Reading the Romance: Escape and Instruction.*” *From The Consumer Society Reader. 169-184* Be sure to have a familiarity with *Twilight* (the first two books/movies at least) Angela Carter, “The Company of Wolves” & “The Werewolf” from *The Bloody Chamber*

\*) When She was bad: media representations of the female criminal  
Readings: Romaine Smith Fullerton, “Representing the Reprehensible: Fairy Tales, News Stories, and the Monstrous Karla Homolka.” *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*. Fall 2006.  
Judith Butler, “On Linguistic Vulnerability” from *Excitable Speech* Patricia Pearson, “Maybe you mistook me for an Angel” from *When She Was Bad*

\*) Where is the 'love'? From romance to porn and some thoughts in between... Barbara Creed, "Women and Post porn: Romance to Annie Sprinkle." *Media Matrix: Sexing the New Reality*. B. Creed. Allen & Unwin, 2003. Linda Williams, "Speaking Sex" in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and The Frenzy of the Visible* Check out Candide Royalle's website at [www.royalle.com](http://www.royalle.com) Check out Andrea Dworkin's website at [www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/](http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/) Also, check out "Bed Time Stories, the Fable Issue" online at <http://www.imagozine.com/issue4.htm>

\*) Women are 'all talk'...Advice, talk shows, and the like: Dear Abby, Dr. Laura, Oprah, Ellen DeGeneres and others...

Readings: Corinne Squire, "Empowering Women? The Oprah Winfrey Show," *Feminism & Psychology*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1994), 63-79. Deborah Tannen, "Gossip" from *You Just Don't Understand*

\*) BFF's (Best Friends Forever): girls/women and their girlfriends

Readings: Deborah Tannen, "Different Words, Different Worlds" from *You Just Don't Understand* Carol Gilligan, "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle" and excerpt of "Images of Relationships" from *In a Different Voice*

\*) *Mothers (One): can't live with em, can't live without 'em...* an historical look back at representations of mothers in the media (early magazines, newspapers, radio, television, films and documentaries)

Readings: Shari Thurer, "Introduction" to *The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Re-invents the Good Mother*. Jane Marcellus, "These Working Wives: Representation of the 'Two-Job' Woman Between the World Wars", *American Journalism*, 23 (3), 53-78. Emily Spencer, "Lipstick and High Heels: War and the Feminization of Women in Chatelaine Magazine, 1928-1956. Unpublished dissertation, RMC Kingston.

\*) *Mothers (Two): can't live without 'em...* continue into the present

Readings: Rich, Adrienne. Excerpt from *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. Rubin, Lois. "We Have Deeper Selves to Write From: Motherhood and Writing." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 4 (2) (Fall/Winter 2002): 19-35.

\*) *Gender and orientation: Long Live the Queen: Queering and Drag* If those sexed male dress as women, or those sexed female dress as men, is that empowering? Is it insulting? Are drag queens/kings challenging or reaffirming patriarchy?

Readings: Carol-Anne Tyler, "Boys Will Be Girls" from *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*. Barbara Creed, "Queering the Media: A Gay Gaze" from *Media Matrix Sexing the New Reality*

### **Other ideas from which to choose:**

\*Women of colour –see bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" In *The Consumer Society Reader*. 343-359.

\*sports –see Varda Burstyn, *The rites of men: manhood, politics and the culture of sport*

\*fashion and clothing \*video games \*stuff for little girls \*in praise of older women

\*women as 'victims' (slasher/horror films, mainstream stuff, fashion shoots) \*women's 'work'—in all its implications \*women and classic mythology (gods, goddesses & things pre-fairy tale) \*serious women—in politics and/or business

\* Women and Eating/Food and Sex—see Susan Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology." Carole M. Counihan, "Food, Culture, and Gender." In *The Anthropology of Food and Body*. 6-24.