

Media Representations of Women 2013 MIT 3210F
Wednesdays 930am-1220 pm in UCC 53

Professor: Dr. Romaine Smith Fullerton

Email: rfullert@uwo.ca (Best way to reach me. Phone is 'hit and miss' unless you call during office hours).

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 20%
- your contribution to research submission—outlined in log 15%
- your written analysis of one of the media eg's from the group package 20%
- 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) 30%
- OPTIONAL Final examination during regular exam period—if you choose this option, your term mark will be worth 70% of your grade and your final exam would be worth 30%. You must let me know, in writing or via email, what option you're choosing on the last day of class for the term (Wednesday, December 4, 2013).

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!
- 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 OWL 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 amended or adjusted. Please note that any such changes will be noted on our OWL 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.

Required information from FIMS Dean's Office:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following

Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf .

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

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>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Academic Accommodation**Medical Accommodation**

For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see:
www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): studentservices.uwo.ca under the Medical Documentation heading

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request. *Bereavement*

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation.

Students seeking additional bereavement leave for religious or other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo> Further specific information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Other support services on campus:

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

Indigenous Services: indigenous.uwo.ca/

International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS recently changed its class average policies, which specify the range between which the average marks for courses at particular levels (1000, 2000, 3000) must fall. Previously, these policies applied to all courses. Now they apply only to required MIT courses.

The MIT program now has the following class average policy:

- All 1000-level MIT required courses (i.e., 1200, 1500, 1700) will have a class average of between 67 and 72%.
- All 2000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) will have a class average of between 70 and 75%.
- All 3000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 3000, 3100) will have a class average of between 72 and 77%.
- 4000-level MIT courses and courses with fewer than 20 enrolled students will be exempt from this grading policy.
- Elective courses have no class average requirement.

FIMS remains committed to rigorous academic standards, and to grading practices that give high marks only for high quality work. To this end, FIMS undergraduate instructors mark according to the Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range, using the full range of marks available. Please consult these Guidelines to see the standards work is expected to meet. http://www.fims.uwo.ca/acad_programs/undergrad/mit_mpi/courses/grading/averages.htm

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well,

competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

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 9 am on Wednesdays. 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 Owl 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 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 you hand in your presentation.

Part 2, your journal or log will assist me in assigning the individual component of this package and is worth 15% 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 20% 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. There can be no greater spread though than 10 marks. 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 20% 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 Wednesday presentation date. If you miss this deadline, your package is deducted 3% per day. **The entire research submission (parts 1-4) is worth 55% (20% group grade and 35% 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, so your paper is due in class Week 6. 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. 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 30% of your final grade.**

Final exam:

You will know your final grade for this course on or before the last day of class. You can then decide if you want the option to try to raise your grade by writing the final exam. If you choose to do this, you'll need to know that the 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. If you choose this option, your course work will be reweighted to be out of 70% and the final exam to be 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. 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 for your research packages/groups:

- * The ‘new’ royalty: romancing vampires and werewolves...
- * “When She was Bad”: media representations of the female criminal
- * When she was in the wrong place at the wrong time...women as victims: slasher/horror films, news representations, fashion shoots, advertisements
- * Where is the ‘love’? From romance to porn and some thoughts in between...
- * Women are ‘all talk’...Advice, talk shows, and the like: Dear Abby, Dr. Laura, Oprah, Ellen DeGeneres and others...
- * in praise of older women—contemporary and historical representations of women over 50
- * BFF’s (Best Friends Forever): representations of girls/women and their girlfriends (and friends who are guys)
- * *Mothers (One) and other family relations: 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)
- * *Mothers (Two) and other family relations: can’t live without ‘em...* continue into the present
- * *Gender and orientation: LGBT representations in pop culture and mainstream news*
- *Women of colour
- *women in sports
- *women’s fashion -- clothing and ‘costuming’
- *women in and creators of and players of video games
- *stuff/toys for little girls
- *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