

**The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

**MIT 3210G—Media Representations of Women
Course Outline – Winter 2019**

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Tuesday 3:30 – 6:30pm, FNB 1200

Prerequisites or Antirequisites

Restricted to Years 3 & 4 FIMS modules. Not only to MIT minor module. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course considers how media – including film and tv, mainstream news, music, social media, pop culture, and societal trends – represent the experiences of both real *and* fictional women. By investigating these representations through an intersectional lens, students will explore how gender is often experienced alongside elements of race, sexuality, and class. For instance, how are women of colour represented in film and TV? Why are we in the midst of a transgender movement that is not necessarily including representations of transmen? How can we critically engage with the ever-popular genre of teenage witches that continue to grace our screens? And, what does the world look like one year after the #MeToo movement became a global conversation?

These are just some of the intriguing questions at the heart of this course. By investigating these kinds of themes, students will not only come to an understanding of the many ways in which women are (and are not!) represented in media, but how these representations can often have real-life implications and knock-on effects – in other words,

how representations can impact how women are valued, perceived, and treated within the broader social world. Through this approach, students will have a more nuanced understanding surrounding the varied representations of women in media.

By the end of this course students will:

- Identify how intersections of race, class and sexuality impact the way women are represented in various forms of media, and as a result, the broader social world
- Offer critical reflections of various films and TV shows in such a way that speaks to many current and ongoing debates within mainstream, political, and feminist discourses
- Understand the significance and many implications surrounding the idea that representation matters (“you can’t be what you can’t see”) as it has real-life impacts on women, and minority populations
- Understand the importance of changing technologies and how this has impacted understandings and representations of women in media
- Develop a coherent sense of how to respectfully and intelligently engage in discussions/debates with peers

Course Materials: A required course package can be purchased from the UWO bookstore.

Detailed Weekly Schedule

DATE	TOPIC
Jan 8	Why Representation Matters
Jan 15	“She’s Too...”: Representations of the ‘Unruly’ Woman
Jan 22	How the Media (Mis)Represents Feminism
Jan 29	Transgender Identities: From Politics to Pop Culture
Feb 5	Women of Colour and the Media
Feb 12	Midterm
Feb 18-22	Reading Week
Feb 26	Queer Hollywood and Straight Audiences
Mar 5	Witches are Having A(nother) Moment
Mar 12	Youth Sexuality, Social Media, and the Digital Age
Mar 19	The #MeToo Movement: One Year On
Mar 26	Group Presentations
Apr 2	Group Presentations
Apr 9	Group Presentations

Detailed Weekly Schedule and Reading List

Jan 8 – Why Representation Matters

- No Reading for this week

Jan 15 – “She’s Too...”: Representations of the ‘Unruly’ Woman

- Bore, Inger-Lise Kalviknes. 2010. (Un)funny women: TV comedy audiences and the gendering of humour. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13(2), pp. 139-154.

Jan 22 – How the Media Mis(Represents) Feminism

- Zeisler, A. 2016. Do These Underpants Make Me Look Feminist? *We Were Feminists Once: From RIOT GRRRL to COVERGIRL, the Buying and Selling of a Political Movement*. New York: PublicAffairs, pp. 59-80.

Jan 29 – Transgender Identities: From Politics to Pop Culture

- Lovelock, M. 2017. Call me Caitlyn: making and making over the ‘authentic’ transgender body in Anglo-American popular culture. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 26(6), pp. 675-687.

Feb 5 – Women of Colour and the Media

- Warner, K. 2015. ABC’s *Scandal* and Black Women’s Fandom. In Levine, E. (ed.) *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 32-50.

February 12 – MIDTERM (2 HOURS)

February 18-22 – READING WEEK

Feb 26 – Queer Hollywood and Straight Audiences

- Corey, S. 2017. All Bi Myself: Analyzing Television’s Presentation of Female Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality* 17(2), pp. 190-205.

Mar 6 – Witches are Having (A)nother Moment

- Reading TBA – link will be posted on OWL

Mar 12 – Youth Sexuality in the Digital Age

- Ringrose, J. and Harvey, L. 2015. Boobs, back-off, six packs and bits: Mediated body parts, gendered reward, and sexual shame in teens’ sexting images. *Continuum*, 29(2), pp. 205-217.

Mar 19 – The #MeToo Movement: One Year On

- Mendes, K. et al. 2018. “#MeToo and the Promise and Pitfalls of Challenging Rape Culture Through Digital Feminist Activism.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 25(2), pp. 236-246.

Mar 26, Apr 2, Apr 9 -

Group Presentations

Methods of Evaluation

Participation – 10%

- By this time in your undergraduate degree, you know that being actively present can significantly increase your grade, and that you cannot participate unless you attend class. Learning is not a spectator sport and this course has been designed so that there is ample opportunity for discussion in both small and larger groups.

Midterm – 25%

- On **February 12th**, you will be given two hours to write the midterm. The midterm will be short answer and essay-based. More details to come closer to the date.

Essay – 25%

- You are responsible for writing a **2,500 word essay** (*not* including the bibliography) on a topic of your choosing. The topic you choose must simply fall under the umbrella of one of the themes we’ve explored in this course, but other than that, it is up to you. Topics must be approved by me by the end of February. The essay will be **due in class on Wednesday March 13th**. You will also need to submit an electronic copy via OWL so that your essay can run through Turnitin *and* you must submit a hard copy in class.

Group Presentation - 20%

- At the start of the semester, I will randomly assign you into groups of 4. Each group will be assigned a general theme for their presentation (for instance, “Celebrity Feminism”) and it will be up to your group to determine how you will approach this general theme. Each presentation should be 30 minutes in length. These presentations will occur in the final three weeks of the semester. More details will be announced in class.

Exam – 20%

- On the last day of class, you will receive potential essay questions, two of which will appear on the actual exam. The exam will be written during the formal exam period. The exam is not cumulative, and only covers topics from the midterm onwards.

Important Policies

Return of Graded Work: Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. This year, the date by which students are to have received at least 15% of their grade is March 4, 2019. You can find details about this academic policy here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf.

Scholastic Offences: 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/scholoff.pdf> Simply put: **do not cheat**. It is unfair to other students who work hard to do assignments on their own.

Seeking Extensions: Students seeking academic accommodation 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. **Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor.** Requests for accommodation must be made within 28 calendar days of the missed assignment.

Appeals: Discussions about graded assignments **may not take place within 24 hours after the grade is posted** or the assignment returned. Questions about grades will be entertained for the following three weeks. This policy is **strictly** enforced.

Late Penalties: A deduction of 5% per day on late assignments that have not received accommodation.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2019

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

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/pdf/academic_policies/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 Turnitin 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.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Medical Consideration

Students seeking academic consideration 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 in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth **less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration 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 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 consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on consideration for medical illness, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

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 crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request. 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 should contact their Academic Counsellors with 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. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

FIMS Undergraduate Grading Policy

The MIT, MPI and MTP programs now have the following class average policy:

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

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

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

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:

<http://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

International and Exchange Student

Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western:

www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

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.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.