

Dr. Keir Keightley
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Fridays: 10:30-1:30, FNB-3210
Office Hours: Fri. 1:45-2:15
Email: kkeightl@uwo.ca

Email policy: Email is only for simple, “yes or no” questions. If you have a more complicated question, please speak to me in person during office hours.

Make-up Exam policy: Documentation must be submitted to FIMS; please note that "I booked a non-refundable plane ticket" is never an acceptable excuse for missing an exam (such as the exam on Feb. 15th, the Friday before Reading Week starts).

Electronic Device policy: All devices (e.g., laptops, iPads, cellphones, digital recorders, etc.) are **prohibited**.

Overview

An unprecedented culture of celebrity arose in the twentieth century, and it shows no signs of dissipating. Fame and notoriety seem ever more important in the realms of entertainment and everyday life, and yet we often lack the critical tools needed to understand the full significance of stars and stardom. Why do we celebrate stars? What can the analysis of celebrities tell us about ideas of self and individual identity in the new millennium? The growth of celebrity culture was driven by the expansion of mass media and consumer culture in the 20th century; the course will thus investigate those institutional and industrial processes which have been crucial in establishing stars who appear to articulate our most intimate thoughts and desires. In particular, the course will focus on the emergence and development of the Hollywood star system and on the role of celebrity within popular music cultures. The course will introduce a range of critical and theoretical approaches within celebrity studies and will present case studies of selected stars. There are complex issues underlying our apparent fascination with fame, and the study of celebrity as a cultural phenomenon can reveal a great deal about both society and self.

Course Objectives

- 1) To survey key historical developments and cultural texts (e.g., particular stars, writings and films) relating to the culture of celebrity in the twentieth century.
- 2) To understand the industrial and institutional processes that create, maintain and disseminate stars and celebrities.
- 3) To familiarize students with some of the critical literature on celebrity and develop tools for investigating the social and cultural significance of stars and stardom.
- 4) To develop critical and analytical abilities and improve research, writing and argumentation skills.

Texts

We will read **at least** three articles/chapters a week. This means the reading load in this course is heavy. A very big part of this course involves setting aside time every single week to do the readings in advance of the lectures. If you don't do the readings, then: a) you'll look silly in front of everybody when I ask you about them during class discussions and you draw a blank, b) you'll fail the exams, and c) your written assignments will suffer, because I expect students to integrate the most relevant ideas from the readings into their papers—and you can only figure out which ones are the **most** relevant ideas if you are aware of **all** of them. This means that **if taking reading seriously isn't really for you, then neither is this class.**

Course readings may be in one of four places: on the web, in the textbook, on OWL (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>), or as an electronic resource via UWO Libraries. (FYI: some things you can't get full access to on the web are fully available via the Proxy function on the UWO Libraries website).

Joshua Gamson's Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) is the required textbook. It is available in the bookstore and many used copies are about. Apart from Gamson's book, the majority of readings are on OWL, but there are also some required readings from the Web. I encourage you to purchase the textbook immediately and make sure you can access OWL.

Further reading and research: You can use scholar.google.com to start looking for materials. There is also an on-line bibliography of critical writings on celebrity, assembled by students. It may be of some use, but it is incomplete and out of date, so don't rely solely on this:

<http://blake.intrasun.tcnj.edu/celebrityculture/Celebrity%20Bibliography.htm>

Evaluation

1) Proposal for research paper: 10% of final grade due at start of class Fri. March 8th

The proposal involves identifying and outlining a subject for the research paper, conducting initial research, and beginning to think about your argument. The proposal will include a brief description of the proposed topic, an outline of a preliminary perspective, analysis or argument, a bibliography clearly demonstrating preliminary research, and a discussion of the research and work that remains to be done. It is in your interest to visit my office to talk to me about your ideas for your paper well in advance of the proposal due date (extra office hours will be announced in February) 500 words plus bibliography.

2) Research Paper: 45% of final grade. due Fri. April 5th

The research paper will present a detailed analysis of, and argument about, either a particular celebrity or an issue in the critical study of celebrity, as approved by the instructor at the proposal stage. It will demonstrate a synthesis and application of the material and theories presented in class lectures and readings, as well as additional research into the particular subject of the paper (e.g., secondary sources, gathering of reviews, press clippings, etc.). The quality of the student's writing will affect the final grade for this assignment. 2000 words plus bibliography, plus any images, appendix, etc.

3) Participation: 15% of final grade.

To get the most out of this course, you need to do the assigned readings, attend the lectures and screenings, and be prepared to discuss the issues at hand in class. I will take attendance at the start of each class (procedure is different on exam days; see below), and so I will expect you to be in class on time if you wish to be counted as "present". **If you're not in class, you can't participate.** There will be a number of videos shown and discussed in class that are unavailable elsewhere and will not be re-screened. I expect all students to come to class having read and thought about that week's readings.

4) Mid-Term Examinations: 30% of final grade. Jan. 25th/Feb. 15th/March 15th

We will have three short (approx. 45 mins.) mid-terms, each worth 10%. They will be given at the **start** of class on **Jan. 25th**, **Feb. 15th**, and **March 15th**. Each quiz covers a **different** group of required readings

(including that day's required readings), plus related class lectures and audio-visual materials presented in the class. Attendance on exam days will be taken only after the break, meaning that writing the exam alone does not qualify as having attended that day's lecture. We will go over the answers in class immediately afterwards.

Outline of Lectures and Required Readings

Jan. 11 **A Face in the Crowd** (Elia Kazan, 1957)

Required Reading:

Horkheimer and Adorno (1944). Excerpt from Dialectic of Enlightenment (OWL)

Noam Cohen (2009) "When Stars Twitter, a Ghost May Be Lurking" New York Times March 27 (OWL)

Suggested Reading: Nate Cohn (2016) "Right-Wing Populism Is Prevailing in Left-Wing Strongholds Around the World" New York Times June 27

Web: http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/nate_cohn/index.html

Jan. 18 **Faces and Crowds**

Required Reading:

Donald Horton & Richard Wohl (1956) "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction" Psychiatry 19.3.
Available as a .pdf in OWL or online at:

http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%201/3_01_hortonwohl.htm

Joli Jensen (1992) "Fandom as Pathology" from Lisa Lewis, Ed. The Adoring Audience (OWL)

Jan. 25 **Merit and Manufacture**

Mid-term exam #1: given at start of class,
quiz covers required readings from **11th/18th/25th**.
Attendance will be taken only **after** the break.

Required Reading:

Daniel Boorstin (1961) "From Hero to Celebrity" from The Image (OWL);

Joshua Gamson (1994) "Introduction" **and** Chapter 1, "The Great and the Gifted" Claims to Fame (Berkeley: University of California Press) (Textbook);

Feb. 1 **Production and Consumption**

Required Reading:

Gamson (1994) Chaps. 2 & 3: "The Name and the Product" **and** "Industrial-Strength Celebrity";

David Buxton (1983) "Rock Music, the Star System, and the Rise of Consumerism" from S. Frith & A. Goodwin, Eds. On Record (OWL)

John Street (2004) "Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation" British Journal of Politics and International Relations Vol.6 # 4, Pp. 435-452 (OWL & online via Weldon)

Suggested Reading:

Nick Bilton (2013) "Disruptions: Celebrities' Product Plugs on Social Media Draw Scrutiny" New York Times June 9.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/apr/25/mary-pickford-silent-film-megastar-gladys-smith-actor-producer-mogul>

March 8

Authenticity

Proposals are due at the start of class

Required Reading:

Richard Dyer (1991) "A Star Is Born and the Construction of Authenticity" from Stardom ed. C. Gledhill.

Simon Frith (1988) "The Real Thing: Bruce Springsteen" in Music For Pleasure

Gamson (1994) Chap. 7 "Can't Beat the Real Thing"

Suggested Reading:

Gamson Chap. 8 "Believing Games";

Merton, Robert K. (1946) "The Social and Cultural Context" from Mass Persuasion

Richard Dyer "Monroe and Sexuality" from Heavenly Bodies (1986) pp. 19-66;

March 15

Pop/Rock Stars, part 1

Mid-term exam #3: exam will be given at start of class. Attendance will be taken only after the break.

Required Reading:

Andrew Goodwin (1992) "Metanarratives of Stardom and Identity" from Dancing in the Distraction Factory

David Shumway (2014) "Rock Stars as Icons" from Sage Handbook of Popular Music Eds. Bennett & Waksman

Suggested Reading:

Toynbee, Jason (2004) "Authorship Meets Downpression: Translating the Wailers into Rock" from This is Pop Edited by Eric Weisbard;

Kembrew McLeod "The Private Ownership of People" in The Celebrity Culture Reader Ed. P. David Marshall (2006)

March 22

Pop/Rock Stars, part 2

Required Reading:

Caroline A. Streeter (2005) "Faking the Funk?" in Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture. Eds. Harry J. Elam, Kennell Jackson, Kennell A. Jackson. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P.

Kobena Mercer (1986) "Monster Metaphors" from Screen [about Michael Jackson and Thriller]

Amanda Palmer (2010) "The lady gaga show. and freedom." Blog entry posted on July 5th; in OWL

Nancy Bauer (2010) "Lady Power." Posted June 20th; in OWL or:
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/lady-power/>

Suggested Reading:

Nancy Bauer "Authority and Arrogance: A Response" Posted June 30th, 2010.

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/30/authority-and-arrogance-a-response/>

Amy Zimmerman (2014) "Lana Del Rey and the Fault in Our 'Feminist' Stars" Daily Beast 11 June:
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/11/lana-del-rey-and-the-fault-in-our-feminist-stars.html>

Ben Sisario (2013) "The Timberlake Brand, Carried Along on a Media Storm" New York Times March 27th. <http://www.nytimes.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/2013/03/28/arts/music/justin-timberlakes-20-20-experience-album.html?ref=music>

Ernest Hardy (2011) "Perspective: Rihanna's videos present challenging issues" Los Angeles Times November 20. in OWL and online: latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-rihanna-20111120,0,6468577.story

March 29 **Post-Stardom?**

Required Reading:

Karen Sternheimer (2011) "Success Just for Being You: Opportunity in the Internet Age" Celebrity Culture and the American Dream

Alice Marwick and danah boyd (2011) "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter" Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies May: 139-158

Willa Paskin (2008) "Who Killed the Movie Star?" Radar July/August.

Suggested Readings:

Peter Robinson (2014) "The Great Pop Power Shift: How online armies replaced fan clubs" The Guardian 25 August: <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/aug/25/great-pop-power-shift-how-online-armies-replaced-fan-clubs>

Brooks Barnes (2014) "Performing Without Net: Stars of YouTube Take to the Stage" New York Times 7 June: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/08/business/media/performing-without-net-stars-of-youtube-take-to-the-stage.html?hp&_r=0

P. David Marshall (2006) "New Media – New Self" in The Celebrity Culture Reader

Lindsey Bever (2013) "Dennis Rodman, Jennifer Lopez and Kanye West: BFFs with dictators" The Guardian September 6th. OWL and: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/06/stars-dance-tyrants-tunes>

Katy Waldman (2013) "Embarrassment of Riches: What happens when the rich and famous rent themselves out to the very, very rich and much less famous." Slate Posted 11 July. OWL and: http://www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2013/07/celebrities_for_hire_jennifer_lopez_christina_aguilera_justin_timberlake.html

Ann Hornaday (2012) "The On-Demand Indie Film Revolution" Washington Post August 17th. <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (OWL and also available online via UWO libraries)

April 5

Conclusions

Final Papers Due

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.