
Fall 2014

W/F 11am-12:20pm

ED 254

Instructor: Dr. Natalie S. Loveless

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Office hours: FAB 3-85 12:30-2:00pm,
Wednesdays (bring all other questions to office hours)

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ARTH 226

Gender, Sexuality, and Visual Culture



Overview

As a discipline focused on the circulation of gendered images, feminist visual culture aims to evaluate the changing relationship between the gendered individual and society, while also attending to other key axes of difference. We will look at the circulation of gendered and sexualized images through the media, popular culture, and contemporary art from an intersectional perspective. Together we will: distinguish between gender, sex, and sexuality in the context of the essentialism debates of the 1970s and the theories of performativity that emerged from them; look to the fields of queer theory, fat studies, disability studies, and critical race studies as potent locations to practice the tools of feminist visual culture; consider the Gaze as a critical construct of feminist visual culture historically and today. By the end of the semester you will have been introduced to different theoretical approaches and how and why “theory” in feminist visual culture is produced and circulated – in other words, how “theories” can help change “practices.”

Goals

Learning outcomes include the following:

- Become familiar with key ideas in contemporary feminist visual culture
- Develop skills in close critical reading of texts and images
- Develop facility with discursive/theoretical vocabularies that are utilized in debates within the field, and demonstrate knowledge of the field through the deployment of the vocabulary in orally and in writing

Be Prepared to:

Take risks in your thinking.

Participate in discussions.

Work hard.

Confront some artwork that makes you uncomfortable.

Some of the work that will be performed, read, or viewed may be opposed to your expectations, to your tastes, and/or to societal norms. They may be considered disturbing, irreverent, disgusting, graphic, shocking, etc. Continued enrollment in this class constitutes the agreement to view such materials. You are always permitted to leave the classroom space if you find yourself too uncomfortable to stay.

Reflections and Responses

Online discussions will take place in groups (membership in groups will be determined randomly by Moodle after add-drop to assure an even number of members in each group). Ten times throughout the semester, you will post a short critical reading reflection (max. 300 words) by midnight on Sunday. You are responsible for reading each reflection posted by members of your group, and, in turn, posting an engaged response to your group by midnight on Tuesday. This format is intended to enrich your perspectives on the readings, and help you improve writing and critical analysis skills.

Note

Your contributions to weekly discussions, both in class and online, are key to moving our learning forward collectively.

Proper academic writing practices are expected. You are responsible for knowing how to navigate Moodle, knowing which group you are in, and for posting each week to the right discussion group. Please talk to your TA if you are confused. Late postings will not be counted.

Your initial post should pull out one central idea or concept from the reading. Choose an idea or concept that particularly interests you and commit to it: you only have 300 words to demonstrate a sound engagement with and analysis of that week's reading material. Do not waste words. Your response may also ask a question, but only if that question is well thought out and supported; it must show the depth of your analysis.

Your response to the other posts in your group should demonstrate your commitment to group scholarship and analysis. Take your colleagues' postings seriously and use them to further your own analysis and contribute to theirs. You will be assessed on the acuity of your responses to your group-mates.

In-Class Exam

There will be one in-class slide ID and analysis exam. The exam will consist of image analysis and key term definition.

Final Research Paper

Each student will choose one work of art relevant to the course and research it fully. Research papers (6 pages long –not including bibliography and images, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12pt font) should (1) include a formal analysis of the piece; (2) situate the work historically + conceptually; (3) relevant biographical information; (4) situate the work in relation to the material of the course; (5) discuss relevant essays and reviews of the work in question. You are responsible for providing a polished and well researched short-essay with high quality images that evidence 20 hours of research labour.

CSL Option (Community Service Learning)

In lieu of the final research paper, students have the option of doing a report that emerges from 20 hours of volunteer work at a community organization identified by Community Service Learning. Your volunteer hours will be coordinated by staff at the host organization:

- Men Edmonton (Engaging Young Men on Healthy Masculinity Through Social Media)
- Hollaback Alberta (Gender Based Violence Video Project)
- YWCA Edmonton (In-school Girls' Program Facilitator)
- Alberta Public Interest Research Group (The Art of Protest workshop series research assistants/workshop facilitators)
- Canadian Red Cross (Creative Approaches to Addressing Bullying and Harassment)
- ConsentEd (Take Back the Night dance party and website help)
- Pride Centre (Art and Identity night/Weekly Education Program)

More information on each of the above is available at <http://www.csl.ualberta.ca/> [click link for students, enter your CCID and password, and select course to see options]; your CSL contact is [Erin Kelly \(erin.kelly@ualberta.ca\)](mailto:Erin.Kelly@ualberta.ca).

CSL procedure:

- Look each option up online
- Choose top three community partner projects
- Submit list to TA with a short justification for each choice (Sept 10)
- Assignments made by Sept 17.
- Fill out *top part* of “Student Agreement Form” available on CSL website.
- Contact assigned community organizer to set up an initial meeting.
- Bring “Student Agreement Form” to initial meeting and fill the bottom part out *in conversation with your community organizer* (do not fill this out ahead of time). *Once you have filled out the form together and both signed it, hand it in to your TA. Deadline is Sept 24. Late forms will not be accepted.*
- *For those in need of police check, go to the CSL office Sept 15-19 with 2 pieces of ID (check the website to confirm eligible types of ID). They will process the paperwork for you.*

Please note: the 20 hours of volunteer work is not above and beyond the course work. The 20 hours that CSL (Community Service Learning) students spend with their community organizers is equivalent to the 20 hours of research towards the final paper expected for each CRL (Conventional Research Learning) student. Instead of a final research paper, CSL students will be expected to write a final report (6 pages long –not including bibliography and images, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12pt font) and submit it on the last day of class. In this report: discuss your experience of the placement and relate this experience to the materials of the course, showing how materials that you read helped inform experiences in the placement, and vice-versa.

Evaluation

- Reflections/Responses: 45% (9 responses at 5% per response-pair)
- In-Class Exam 25%
- Final Research Paper/CSL Report: 30%

Plagiarism and Citation

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text 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 offense. The University has an established policy with respect to cheating on assignments and examinations, which the student is required to know. Students are cautioned that in addition to a failure in the course, a student may be suspended or expelled from the University for cheating and the offence may appear on one's transcript, in which event the offence can have serious

consequences for one's business or professional career. For more information refer to the current University Regulations.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and be prepared for and participate in discussions.

Required Texts

All texts are available as pdfs on Moodle. You are responsible for printing out and bringing all readings to class each week. Please take the time to read carefully and look up artists and terms that you don't know.

On Technology in the Classroom

You should not be on the Internet, email, Facebook, or text messaging during class. This is distracting to other students and to the instructor. Handwritten note taking is recommended. If you must take notes on a computer, please sit in the front two rows of the classroom.

Topic 0: Course Mechanics

September 3: Overview of course requirements and assignments (syllabus; groups; TA web tutorial)

September 5: CSL organizers and community partner presentations (information session with CSL partners and testimonial from last year's CSL students.)

- *If you think, after the presentations, that you might be interested in CSL: over the weekend, log on to the portal and decide on your top three choices and submit this to your TA on Sept 10. List your name, your top three choices in order of preference, and briefly justify your choice.*
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Topic 1: Introduction to Feminist Visual Culture

September 10: View *The Codes of Gender* (73 min.)

- **CSL choices due (no late requests accepted)

September 12: Discuss (1) Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (excerpts)

Topic 2: Gender and the Gaze

September 17: Discuss (1) John Berger, “Chapter 3” in *Ways of Seeing* + (2) Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” in *Film: Psychology, Ideology, and Technology*

- Add/drop deadline is Sept 16th.
- Online discussion groups will be assigned September 18 and be visible to you on Moodle.

September 19: Guest lectures (1) alumna Eileen Mericer, *Distinguished Alumni Award Winner* + (2) Sarah Polkinghorne, *Developing Effective Research Skills*

Topic 3: Gender Essentialism

September 24 [first responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Teresa de Lauretis, “Upping the Anti [sic] in Feminist Theory” in *Figures of Resistance: Essays in Feminist Theory* + (2) Ursula K. Le Guin, “Is Gender Necessary: Redux” in *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism*

View: *Love is all you need?* (20 min.)

- **CSL paperwork due to TA (no late paperwork accepted)

September 26: View *Tough Guise* (56 min.) + Continue discussion, image/video analysis and group work

Topic 4: Gender Performativity

October 1 [second responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*

October 3: Sam Pearson, *Working for Change: Sexual Assault Awareness and Education Presentation*

Topic 5: Gender and Race

October 8 [third responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Ian F. Haney Lopez, “The Social Construction of Race” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology, Second Edition* + (2) Rosemarie Buikema, “The Arena of Imaginings: Sarah Bartmann and the Ethics of Representation” in *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture*

October 10: View: *The couple in the cage: a Guatianaui odyssey* (31 min.) + Continue discussion, image/video analysis and group work

Topic 6: Gender, Race, and Sex

October 15 [fourth responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Memory, Sight, Love” in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* + (2) Megan Boler, “The Risks of Empathy:

Interrogating Multiculturalism's Gaze" in *Cultural Studies* 11(2)

October 17: Continue discussion, image/video analysis and group work

Topic 7: Paris is Burning

October 22 [fifth responses due Sun/Tue before class]: View *Paris is Burning* (71 min.)

October 24: Discuss (1) bell hooks, "Is Paris Burning" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* + (2) Judith Butler, "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion" in *Bodies That Matter*

Topic 8: Pornography, Violence, and Representation

October 29 [sixth responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Candice Breitz, "Rethinking Pornography: Imaging Desire" in *Camera Austria* #56 + (2) Olu Oguibe, "Beyond Visual Pleasures" in *Gendered Visions*

October 31: Continue discussion, image/video analysis and group work

Topic 9: Intersex :: Queer :: Trans

November 5 [seventh responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Noah Michelson, "Heather Cassils: Lady Gaga's Prison Yard Girlfriend" in *Out Magazine* + (2) Del LaGrace Volcano, "Hermstory" in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* + (3) Sandy Stone, "A Posttransexual Manifesto" in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*

November 7: View *Orchid: My Intersex Adventure* (60 min.)+ Continue discussion, image/video analysis and group work

Topic 10: Exam Week

November 12: TA-led Study Session (optional)

November 14: In-Class Slide Exam

Topic 11: Lecture Series: Size

November 19 [eighth responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Stefanie Snider, "Fatness and Visual Culture: A Brief Look at Some Contemporary Projects" in *FatStudies* vol 1 + (2) Stefanie Snider, "An Obeast Walk into a Museum: The Politics of Fat Oppression, Performing the Other, and Museum Display in Rachel Herrick's *Museum for Obeast Conserveation Studies*" in *Obeast: A Broader View*

November 21: Guest lecture by Pam Grombacher on fat studies and contemporary art

Topic 12: Lecture Series: Ability

November 26 [ninth responses due Sun/Tue before class]: Discuss (1) Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” in *NWSA Journal* 14(3) + (2) Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence” in *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*

Guest lecture by Danielle Peers on critical disability studies

November 28: Guest lecture by Alexandra Duncan on critical disability arts + in class evaluation of course and CSL

Topic 13: Goodbye

December 3: Final Research Papers and CSL Reports Due in Class