

Women and Gender
Studies Institute
University of Toronto

Course Instructor:
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(she/her)

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Course Time:
Mondays 11-1pm
Location:
OFFICE HOURS:
MN4235
Mondays 1-2pm
And by appointment

QUICK LINKS

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Politicizing Culture: Pop Feminism and Representation

WGS470 / Fall 2024 / MN3160

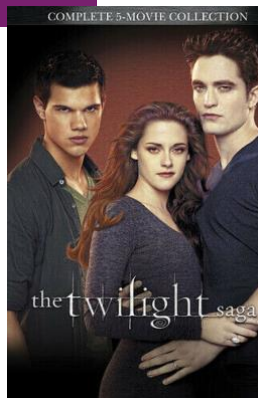
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the intricate relationships among feminism, culture, power and representation. Major themes include: the construction of gendered, sexualized, and racialized subjectivities; ideologies and the media; bio-and communication technologies; neoliberalism and neocolonialism; and counter interpretations, reclamations, and remixes of hegemonic cultural forms.

LEARNING GOALS

- Critically analyze claims about the relationship between culture and politics from feminist, queer, anti-racist, and intersectional perspectives
- Contextualize contemporary debates about the politics of culture within longer historical developments
- Work with key cultural studies concepts that allow you to understand and talk about how stories, histories, and political movements inform each other
- Critically assess and reflect upon a variety of feminist aesthetics through creative and analytical writing

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Land Acknowledgement

I (we) wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

- Revised by the Elders Circle (Council of Aboriginal Initiatives)

"It's one thing to say, "Hey, we're on the territory of the Mississaugas or the Anishinaabek and the Haudenosaunee." It's another thing to say, "We're on the territory of the Anishinaabek and the Haudenosaunee and here's what that compels me to do." – Hayden King

Many of us work, live, and grew up on this land as uninvited settlers. Many of us go through school and university not knowing much about the histories and present realities of indigenous peoples. As such, in including this land acknowledgement, I am further compelled to include indigenous perspectives and decolonial frameworks in this course which finds many of its *academic roots* in a white-colonial academia. I am further compelled to learn more about the history of this land, and work towards becoming a better ally.

Further resources to check out (that have helped me in thinking through this land acknowledgement) check out Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgement

(<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/i-regret-it-hayden-king-on-writing-ryerson-university-s-territorial-acknowledgement-1.4973371>), "For Settlers who say that they support

Decolonization ... But wish it weren't so hard" by Sheri M McConnell (https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/webinars/For_settlers_-_McConnell_-_March_2018.pdf), and the Indigenous U of T website

(which includes many resources on learning indigenous histories as well)

(<https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>)

As well as my own thoughts on Land Acknowledgements: <https://blog.apaonline.org/2022/08/18/land-acknowledgements-and-trans-philosophy-what-are-we-compelled-to-do/>



Androgyny by Norval Morrisseau 2017

Course Policies

Course Instructor: Sam Dolores Sanchinel (she/her)

Email: sam.sanchinel@mail.utoronto.ca

Sam Office Hours: Mondays 1-2pm, MN4235

Lecture (in-person): Mondays 11-1pm, MN3160

Class accountability

What I sincerely hope for us in this course is for it to become a place where we feel comfortable, and confident in sharing our thoughts.

As in any classroom, I expect participation in class to be done with mutual respect, curiosity, and generosity. Please do not hesitate in contacting me if you're finding it difficult to navigate or participate in our online community.

The topics we will be covering often are explicit, sensitive, upsetting, or polarizing. In order to allow everyone to actively engage with and think through this course we must support an inclusive learning environment. It is important that students respect and appreciate others' opinions, views, and experiences.

Critical engagement and discussion are encouraged but disrespectful and hateful remarks will not be tolerated. If any student has concerns about material or behavior in class, they are encouraged to speak with me. If you ever feel uncomfortable about a topic or a selected reading, contact me and we can figure it out.

If this happens in class, please feel empowered to bring it up and we can confront the situation. Of course, you might not feel comfortable with this, so you can email me privately, or you are welcome to take a break from lecture as well. I'll try my best to be attune to the class environment.

This is going to be a process, but through it all if we share our thoughts and participate with generosity, we will all have a wonderful time, and gain some valuable insights not only from this course, but from each other.

(Adapted from Prof. T, and Prof. Alexopoulos course Syllabi)

Accessibility

We all learn in different ways and in different styles. My goal for this term is for everyone to be able to succeed and flourish in this course. Though given all our different abilities, I'm committed to accommodating anyone who needs to, in order to make sure we can all participate in this course to our best abilities.

If you require further accommodations due to a disability or other health concerns, please contact me or Accessibility services. Accessibility services is confidential and helps many students in the university achieve their goals. And if you don't have a documented disability, there are still many resources (including myself!) that are here to support you in this course and your university journey. For a list of resources available to you check out the quercus page.

Your success in this course is my number one goal. I genuinely care about each of you, and I'm more than happy to chat with you about the course requirements and how to best reach those goals according to your needs.

(Inspired by Prof. T)



Email and Consultation Policy

Please include the course code [WGS470] in the subject line of any emails!

In general, I'll try my best to answer any emails within 48 hours (not including weekends) and will likely not answer any assignment-based questions less than 24 hours from the due date.

There are a few reasons for this. For myself, and all you too, consider that burnout is real. With managing our respective screen time, setting up some time away is important.

My office hours start the first week. Otherwise you can email me to set up an appointment. I'm more than happy to chat whenever 😊



Grading Policies

Evaluations + assignments*

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Pop Culture Journey Map	20%	September 23
Reflection	20%	October 21
Final Project Outline	15%	November 15
Final Project	25%	End of Term
PARTICIPATION	20%	Ongoing

For each assignment a larger description will be provided, along with a detailed rubric outlining grade levels.

There is no final exam in this course. The final project is currently due at the end of term.

Pop Culture Journey Map (Collaboratively Option – Co-Journey)

Due: September 23

Weight: 20%

In this assignment I'm asking you to consider your pop culture journey via a journey map! In short, this journey map should show your history and relationship with pop culture through various stages of your life (or whatever other method you want to organize it!). Ask yourself, what pop culture things (movies, shows, music, toys) impacted you the most through your life? And why?

Make a map highlighting at least 5 different things and write a short paragraph for each explaining why it was impactful for you (each paragraph should be around 150-200 words). Examples (and time to start drafting) will be given in class.

Minimum 5 things, 750 words, 1 journey map.

NOTE: You can take a more creative approach as well. If you want to make a video it should be 10 minutes and make sure to submit a transcript. You can make an infographic, a playlist, whatever. The options are endless! We can chat further about other creative options in completing this assignment.

Reflection

Due: October 21

Weight: 20%

In 5 pages (1500-1700 words) critically engage in-depth with an author(s), idea, concept, or theme from a chosen week in the first half of class. These reflections are an opportunity to thoughtfully work through difficult knowledge with focused analysis and interrogation.

This is not a summarization assignment. Rather, you'll be evaluated on your ability to critically engage with the material, make connections between the course, and express your own ideas and reactions. These reflections are a way for you to puzzle through anything you might find challenging and delve into the material in more varied ways than may be possible in class.

NOTE: This can be completed collaboratively in 7 pages. In this case I ask that you present a quick summary, then:

1. Discuss your engagement with the text,
2. Your partner discusses their engagement,
3. Reflect with each other. Do you both agree with each other? Disagree? Further thoughts?

NOTE 2: The information you write in these assignments can be part of the basis of the final paper (Though not copy and pasting! The information can still be useful!)

Final Project Outline (With Collaborative Option)

Due: November 15

Weight: 15%

This assignment will help you work through your ideas for the final research paper. The first part I'm asking you for is to write out a clear thesis that states what your paper will be about. This should be one to two short sentences.

The second part to this is for you to also write about what your inspiration is for the thesis (which leads into thinking about your paper). This section should be around a half a page (150 words). Try to delve into your motivations for writing the paper. If it's interesting to you, why? Is it something that's important? Is it personal? I'm interested in reading your thoughts, and I find that having an internal motivation really helps in the writing process.

In the third part of this assignment I'm asking you to provide a roadmap for your paper. Include your thesis again, major arguments (no need to go into detail, just state them in a sentence), main points in your arguments, and prospective sources for each section.

Aim to have at least 3 sections with 1-3 subpoints in each (classic essay model).

Writing in bullet points is fine (if not encouraged!)

There should be at least 3 sources from class and 2 sources from outside of class. The outside sources don't *need* to be academic but be critical in your usage.

The total length of this assignment should be 3-5 pages. An example will be given in class along with a rubric.

NOTE: This assignment could be done collaboratively. You all have the option of teaming up with one other person for the final paper. More on this in class! *This is still needed if you do another type of creative final project.

Final Project (Individual 9-10 Pages, Collaborative 11-12 Pages)

Due: End of Term

Weight: 25%

In this assignment you'll build on the previous assignments (reflections, proposal with thesis) to write a 9 page research essay.

You can write on any topic as long as it's related to a topic from the course! Make sure to include at least 3 sources from the class and at least 2 sources outside of course content. For this paper, what I'm really looking for is reading your perspective. So, what is your viewpoint? How do you use the research to craft an argument?

NOTE: You're welcome to work collaboratively in this assignment as well (as a continuation from the proposal). If you choose this collaborative option, the word limit increases a bit.

I will provide a longer description in a separate document! Also, different creative options possible!

Participation

The participation grade is 20% of your total grade. The grading for the participation has a few parts to it.

Asynchronous discussion posts. (15%)

This is further broken-down into two categories

1. Pre-Class Readings Questions and Thoughts: Before class starts (for 4 classes) (7.5%)

This includes at least 2 questions you've had about any of that week's readings, as well as at least 1 paragraph 75-150 words on your thoughts.

Please **do NOT** spend the entire post summarizing. You can quote the text (include author and page number), but make sure to use it as a jumping off point. I'm more interested in reading your thoughts on it!

NOTE: This can also be completed as a creative assignment if you like. Create a video, a tik tok video, a meme, and explain it in relation to the week's reading in a few sentences. Please still include 2 questions if you choose this option.

ii. Responses to Peers (for 4 classes) (7.5%)

This consists of a 100-word response to one of your peers which engages with their post. Try to expand further than solely saying you agree. Rather, consider why you agree? Maybe you disagree? What does the post make you think of?

NOTE: These are based on COMPLETION and CONTENT. As such, I won't be "formally" assigning a grade to them (A, B, C ...). BUT! I will be reading each post carefully. Further, the questions will help me frame the week's classes, and I might reference discussion posts in class! Also, feel free to do more than the required discussion posts. These are meant to help you work through the texts and interact with your peers.

2. Self-Reflection (5%): End of year self-reflection on participation. Assign yourself a grade from 1-5% based on how much you feel you engaged with the class (discussion posts, emails, office hours, class participation, etc).

Late policy

There are **no deductions** for handing in assignments late. This is something I'm taking from a previous prof who I really appreciated.

The due dates are designed to be ethical. If you submit late then: the I may not be able to leave ample feedback. There is no need for doctors' notes or any other reasons. Just email me and tell me when you'll be submitting the assignment.

There is a three-day grace period for submitting assignments. This will be in place for all the assignments. If for any extenuating reasons more time is needed, email the instructor. No assignments will be accepted once another assignment is due.

Discussion posts need to be completed *before* the respective class.

If you're finding difficulty staying on track, we can chat and figure something out. I'm here to help you learn and get past obstacles.

Academic Integrity (& Generative AI)

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and in ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As

a result, UofT treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. (UTM Syllabus Statement - <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/facultystaff/syllabus-statement>)

For more resources on what constitutes academic integrity misconduct check out:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity/academic-misconduct>

If you're concerned or have any questions about academic integrity for an assignment, don't hesitate to contact me. Sometimes citations are finicky, and you might not be sure about something. Email me! I'm here to help.

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course or in an assignment outline. This includes: ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing and coding assistants. Use of generative AI in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is an academic offense. If you're super struggling with everything and feel deadlines and the world ending, PLEASE reach out to the instructor (me: Sam!) I am here to support you! If you're suspected of using generative AI you'll have to meet with your course instructor to discuss your assignment.

Academic Supports:

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is located in Room 3251 on the third floor of the Maanjiwe nendamowinan Building. The RGASC offers individual consultations, workshops (many CCR-accredited), and a wide range of programs to help students identify and develop the academic skills they need for success in their studies. Their programming will include both in-person and online options. Visit the RGASC website to explore their online resources, book an in-person or online appointment.

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/rgasc/>

Other important info

Important Dates

Full List: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/dates-deadlines/academic-dates#academic-dates-deadlines-accordion-4>

First day of classes	September 9
Last day to drop courses	November 6
Reading Week	October 28 – November 1
Last Day of Our Class	December 3

UofT gives you free access to a bunch of movies. Check them out here:

Audio Cine: <https://streaming-acf-film-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/audiocine>

Kanopy: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/utoronto>

Criterion on Demand: <https://www-criterionondemand-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/>

And more: <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/streaming-video>

Course Schedule (Readings)*

*All the readings and videos will be posted on our course site on Quercus.

WEEK 1 September 9 – Introduction: Pop Feminism

Watch: *Miss Representation* dir. Jennifer Siebel Newsom (2011)

<https://www.kanopy.com/en/utoronto/video/128008>

Listen: *feminist rage songs*.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6P9PX55dPlHKCvGoMoPIAt?si=3eac2747e7f44931>

Read the syllabus!

WEEK 2 September 16 – Pop Feminism: Importances and Failures

Zeisler, Andi. “Pop and Circumstance: Why Pop Culture Matters” *Feminism and Pop Culture*. (2008) pp. 1 – 21.

Alexandre, Lily. “2010s Pop Feminism: A Painful Look Back” (2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmnsK74khNw>

WEEK 3 September 23 – Hegemonic Feminisms

Arvin, Maile; Tuck, Eve and Morrill, Angie. “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy” *Feminist Formations* 25(1). 2013. Pp. 8 – 29.

hooks, bell. “The Oppositional Gaze.” in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.

WEEK 4 September 30 – Are we Post-Feminist?

Gill, Rosalind. “The Affective, Cultural and Psychic Life of Postfeminism: A Postfeminist Sensibility 10 years on” *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 20(6). 2017. Pp. 607-620.

Dosekun, Simidele. “For Western Girls Only? Post-Feminism as Transnational Culture” *Feminist Media Studies* 15(6). 2015. Pp. 960 – 973.

Listen: Trainer, Meghan. “Woman Up”

feminist anthems. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3YRo9SrwNpRWRlefCwpTWr?si=af8306175fe54e99>

WEEK 5 October 7 – Unhappy Feminists

Ahmed, Sara. “Feminist Killjoys” in *The Promise of Happiness*. 2010. Pp. 50-88.

Lorde, Audre. “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism”

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1981-audre-lorde-uses-anger-women-responding-racism/>

Listen: Bratmobile. “Brat Girl” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esQcnpeN6fk>

Riot Grrrl. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/37i9dQZF1DXadlZCyb9AB3?si=48f7cb120bc24b88>

OCTOBER 14 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 6 OCTOBER 21 – HALLOWEEN EDITION: Monstrous Sluts: Bitches, Witches, and Freaks

Federici, Sylvia. “The Great Witch-Hunt in Europe” *Caliban and the Witch*. 2004. Pp. 163-219.

Creed, Barbara. “Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts” *The Body: A Reader*. [1995] (2005) pp. 109-114.

Clare, Eli. “freaks and queers” *Exile and Pride: disability, queerness, and liberation*

Watch: Your favourite Halloween movie and consider: Would you call it feminist? How is gender represented? Who is the villain? How is the villain, villainous?

Recommendations: *The Craft*, *Gingersnaps*, *the Babadook*, *the Witch*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *the Exorcist*, *Midsommar*, *Pearl*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Get Out*, *the Substance*, *Alien*

In Class Viewing: *Jennifer’s Body* (2009). Dir. Karyn Kusama

OCTOBER 28 – READING WEEK (October 28 – November 1)

WEEK 7 NOVEMBER 4 – “Kamala is BRAT”: the “Popular” of Pop Feminism

Proctor (2022) “The #TradWife Persona and the Rise of Radicalized White Domesticity.” *Persona Studies*. 8(2). Pp. 7-22.

Hobson, Janell. “Celebrity Feminism: More than a Gateway” *Signs*

Grady, Constance. “How Republicans became the party of raunch” *Vox*.

<https://www.vox.com/culture/371632/raunch-republicans-sydney-sweeney-hawk-tuah-girl>

Hancock, Lucy. “The Rise of the Female Troll: Why Brat Summer is Really about Rage” *Elle*. 2024.

<https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/culture/a61912774/brat-summer-troll-culture/>

Romano, Aja. “What we still haven’t learned from Gamergate” *Vox*.

<https://www.vox.com/culture/2020/1/20/20808875/gamergate-lessons-cultural-impact-changes-harassment-laws>

Watch: Episode of *Bewitched* season 1 (1964) <https://www.ctv.ca/shows/bewitched>

Listen to: Charlie XCX. *Brat*. 2024.

Watch: “360” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJW-VvmRKsE>

WEEK 8 NOVEMBER 11 – Aesthetics of Freedom and Femme-inism & Mini-Conference

Carney, Christina; Hernandez, Jillian and Wallace, Anya. “Sexual Knowledge and Practiced Feminisms: On Moral Panic, black girlhoods, and hip hop” [26 pages]

Cheng, Anne. “Ornamentalism: A Feminist Theory for the Yellow Woman”

Naghibi, Nima, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran*, University of Minnesota Press, 2007 (selection)

Misu, Su. *I am fake but my heart is true*. 2016. <https://cargocollective.com/sumisu/i-am-a-fake-but-my-heart-is-true>

Watch/Listen to: “WAP” Cardi B. feat. Megan thee Stallion
“Mamushi” Megan thee Stallion

Watch one episode of the following: *Love Island*, *Too Hot to Handle*, *The Real Housewives of ...*, *Ex on the Beach*, *Are you the one?*

WEEK 9 NOVEMBER 18 – Death and Activism. Guest Lecture: Maya El Helou

Westbrook, Laurel. “Unlivable Lives: The origins and Outcomes of Identity-Based-Anti-Violence Activism” in *Unlivable Lives: Violence and Identity in Transgender Activism*. 2021.

Puar, Jasbir. “Spatial Debilities: Slow Life and Carceral Capitalism in Palestine”
<https://jasbirkpuar.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Spatial-Debilities-.pdf>

In Class Viewing: “Deer Lady” *Reservation Dogs* Season 3 Episode 3. 2023.

Watch: *Paris is Burning* (1990) <https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/10910624?vp=utoronto>

WEEK 10 NOVEMBER 25 – Girl Power! Guest Lecture: Kaylee Hamilton

Akkad, Ruba. “Occupied Joy: The Politics of Skateboarding in Palestine” *American Quarterly*, vol 75, no 3. (2023)

Landis, Winona. “Diasporic (dis)identification: the participatory fandom of *Ms. Marvel*.” *South Asian Popular Culture*

Jackson, Sarah J., Moya Bailey, and Brooke Foucault Welles. 2017. “#GirlsLikeUs: Trans Advocacy and Community Building Online.” *New Media & Society* 20 (5): 1868 – 1888.

Watch:
Ms. Marvel, season 1 episode 1.

Consider reading one of the following:

Ms. Marvel: Beyond the Limit by Samira Ahmed (2022)
<https://readallcomics.com/ms-marvel-beyond-the-limit-1-of-5-2021/> [Links to an external site.](#)

America Chavez: Made in the USA by Kalinda Vasquez (2021)
<https://readallcomics.com/america-chavez-made-in-the-usa-001-2021/>

WEEK 11 DECEMBER 2 – How do we continue living? Pedagogies of Unwellness of the Future

Content warning: readings deal with topics of suicide, gender-based violence, and more.

Khúc, Mimi. *dear elia: Letters from the Asian American Abyss*. 2024. (As much as you can read)

Jordan, June. “Apologies to all the People in Lebanon” <https://allpoetry.com/Apologies-To-All-The-People-In-Lebanon>

Recollet, Karyn. “Glyphing decolonial love through urban flash mobbing and *Walking with our Sisters*” *Curriculum Inquiry*

In class (partial) viewing: *Everything Everywhere all At Once*

OPTIONAL

Park, Lisa. "A Letter to My Sister and a Twenty-Five-Year Anniversary" in *Contemporary Asian America*

WEEK 12 DECEMBER 3 – LAST CLASS –