WGS 291
Media Representations of Women, Men, and Sexuality
MWF 10:10-11:00
LA 138

Instructor Information:
Professor Elizabeth Hubble
Office: LA 138A
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Required Texts:
1. Feminism and Pop Culture by Andi Zeisler (Seal Press, 2008)
3. Additional readings available on Moodle

Course Description:
This course is intended to be a survey introduction to a variety of issues related to gender and sexuality in the mass media. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with the breadth of these issues while at the same time providing tools to critically analyze and engage modern media. The course will focus largely on mass mediated forms such as television, film, music, sports, news, advertising and new media. An underlying understanding within the course is a recognition of the inextricable interconnections between gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and so forth. Therefore, the course is invested in exploring the ways in which differences in identity produce different mediated representations and experiences of media.

The course will be comprised largely of class discussions based on readings, class presentations, and viewing and interpreting various mediated texts and documentaries. The course readings are both practical and theoretical, and while many of them focus on specific case studies, they are intended to provoke thoughtfulness in each student such that it can be applied to a variety of media.

This course may be used as part of the Minor in Women’s and Gender Studies (20 credits), which may be combined with any major. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, please contact me or drop by the Women’s Studies Office, LA 138A-B, or visit the Women’s and Gender Studies website. http://www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog/.

Learning Objectives
1. Learn to critically examine media representations and their role in shaping, reinforcing, or challenging our concepts of sexuality and gender.
2. Acquire skills to analyze sexuality and gender issues in media organizations and understand diverse audiences’ responses to media representations.
3. Learn about different theories and approaches to doing research on sexuality, gender, and the mass media.
4. Develop the ability to speak and write honestly, sensitively, and critically about sexuality and gender.
5. Understand that media content is produced within particular social, political, and cultural contexts.
**Methods:**
This class is not a lecture course. It is a reading and discussion course. I will present certain background information to provide you with a context for your readings, discussions, and writings. I will propose my own interpretations of the texts we read and the topics we discuss, but you are not expected to accept these interpretations blindly. Each reader brings his or her own experiences to a literary text. If you disagree with my reading of a text, you should feel free to say so. Your active participation is essential and counts as part of your grade.

You will hear many different opinions and ideas during this course, some of which you may disagree with. I expect each student to respect the opinions and beliefs of his or her classmates and for the level of discourse in class to remain civil and academic. A failure to respect your classmates and/or the professor will have an adverse impact on your grade.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Students should arrive on time and not leave until class is over. All cell phones must be turned off. Students may use laptop computers to take notes. Students should not text while in class, and internet use is limited to topics related to discussion topics.

**Classroom Agreement:** On the first day of class, students will propose and vote on repercussions for violating classroom etiquette.

**Attendance:** This is a discussion course and attendance is required. After 2 unexcused absences, your participation grade will be lowered one notch for each subsequent absence (A to A-). An excess of 6 absences may result in an F in the course. A failure to prepare and participate may also be grounds for being counted absent. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Two tardies will equal one absence. There will be NO make-up assignments or late submission of homework for unexcused absences. If you are sick or have some other emergency, please contact me. Failure to attend the first two classes will result in the student being dropped.

**Trigger Warning:** This course will touch on some difficult topics, including gender-based violence and sexual assault. You should feel free to talk to me about any issues you have with the topics we are discussing and ask for excused absences.

**Assessment:**
- Preparation and Participation: 10%
- Moodle Discussions: 20%
- Class Presentation: 5%
- Major Project: 40% (20% for each component)
- Journals: 25%

**Grading Scale:**
- A 93% -100%
- A- 90%-92%
- B+ 87%-89%
- B 83%-86%
- B- 80%-82%
- C+ 77%-79%
- C 73%-76%
- C- 70%-72%
- D+ 67%-69%
- D 63%-66%
- D- 60%-62%
- F 59% and below

**Preparation and Participation:** This is not a lecture course. It is a course that requires your active participation. Coming to class prepared (i.e. having read all material, written your reading journal, and prepared to participate in discussions) is essential and counts for a large percentage of your final grade. Participation does not merely mean responding when called upon but showing a willingness to raise your
hand and enter discussions. Classroom work will include both general discussions and small group discussions. Quizzes on the readings and discussions may be given at the beginning of class as necessary. Attendance is required. You will be allowed two unexcused absences. Your final grade will be dropped one notch for each subsequent absence.

**Moodle Discussions:** You will alternate weeks posting a piece of media related to that week's readings to the designated Moodle Discussion Forum by **Wednesday at midnight.** By **Friday 10am,** all students must reply to two of your classmates' media postings with a brief reaction/analysis of the posted media. Replies should be at least 5 sentences in length and must provide analysis, not just a reaction to the posted media. A reading about Educationally Valuable Postings will be provided.

**Class Presentation:** Related to the Moodle Discussions, you will choose one week to present your media posting to the class on Friday with a brief analysis and explanation of how it relates to the readings. A sign-up sheet will be distributed the first week of class.

**Major Project:**
- **Research Component:** Deconstructing Media Messages. You will choose five pieces of media to deconstruct using advanced deconstruction questions. A handout will be provided. You will submit a 5-7 page, double-spaced paper deconstructing your media.
- **Creative Component:** Creating Counter Ads. As a follow-up to the research component of this project, you will create a series of five counter examples for your chosen media.

**Journals:** This course will raise many questions in your minds. It may challenge your personal opinions, and at times it may outrage you. Your reading journal is a place to share the questions, thoughts, and reactions you have to the readings, discussions, and media viewings. It will give you an outlet to express your opinions, always maintaining an academic voice (i.e. no text speak or overly informal writing). You should write one page per week about topics related to the readings, discussions, or media viewings. Entries must be typed and double-spaced. Entries may be submitted in class or uploaded to Moodle by class time every Friday, unless otherwise indicated. Uploaded files must be in one of the following formats: .rtf, .doc, .docx, .pdf.

**Disability Accommodations:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.