

SM5326: GENDER IN POPULAR MEDIA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Gender in Popular Media

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5326

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

When we look at visual images, moving or not, caught by cameras of any kind, we do not always wonder whether the eyes behind the camera belong to a man or a woman. When the eyes behind the camera belong to us, we do not always consider

the images we produce would be better appreciated by male or female spectators. The gender consciousness is something all of us should not overlook, as it is especially of significance for those who study and/or create media art/work. This course explores edge-cutting issues relating to camera eye, spectatorship, gender and sexuality. The primary texts of discussion include all forms of popular media--photographs, films, (music) videos, games, ads, TV commercials, magazines and so on. The course introduces theories of gender and spectatorship from psychoanalytic and cultural studies perspectives. Students may choose to complete their final assignments with either a creative project or a critical essay.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Recognize various clichés regarding the representation of gender in popular media		x	x	x
2	Demonstrate creative ways to subvert stereotypical and patriarchal gender representation		x	x	x
3	Locate gender bias or ignorance in critical theories		x	x	x
4	Understand the terminologies of gender theories and in engendered representations		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Reading	Present media text/ productions through lectures and screenings	1	
2	Analysis	Invite students to analyse popular media materials considered “controversial” in matters of gender representation	2	
3	Presentation	Invite students to present various gender bias they discovered through class presentations	3	
4	Review writing	Review the concepts and their application through critical essay writing	4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participating in in-class discussions	1	10	-	Yes
2	Write short reviews for controversial media materials	2	30	-	No
3	Class presentation on a selected topic	3	30	-	Yes
4	Critical Writing Assignment	4	30	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Participation and Performance (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points

- In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret opinions effectively

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing

- Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Fair ability in interpreting opinions

Marginal

- (D) - Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views
- Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
 - Poor ability in interpreting opinions

Failure

- (F) - Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher
- No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
 - Minimal ability in interpreting opinions
-

Assessment Task

Short Review (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
 - Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
 - Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
 - Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition
 - Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
 - Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
 - Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
 - Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Marginal

- (D) - Weak content, limited use of resources
- Poor organization, structure and composition
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
 - Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms

Failure

- (F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
 - Fail to respond to other comments
-

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter

- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D) - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter

- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Assessment Task

Critical Writing (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
- Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand

- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts

- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
- Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

(D) - Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts

- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of materials

- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
- Irrelevant bibliography

Assessment Task

Class Participation and Performance (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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(F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
- Fail to respond to other comments

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

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Marginal

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- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management
-

Assessment Task

Critical Writing (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates

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- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
- Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of materials

- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography
-

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1st: from surface: {Introduction: concepts and definitions--ads for him or for her?}

2nd: to focus: {The beauty myth: how the great "look" is constructed}

{Camera eye and the gaze: the keyhole and pleasure of looking}
 {Flirting with the camera eyes: double persona in music videos}
 3rd: to the shows: {Women in film: good and bad, mother or whore?}
 {Cross-dressing and gender-role shifting}
 4th: from sex: {Pornography and the case of an anti-heroine}
 5th: to psychology: {Gender and space: Private and Public Spheres}
 6th: to the creation: {Boundaries and edges}

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Toril Moi, "From Simone de Beauvoir to Jacques Lacan" in Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory (Table of Contents for The Second Sex)
2	Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth pp1-19
3	Steve Craig, "Men' s Men and Women' s Women: How TV Commercials Portray Gender to Different Audiences"
4	Laura Mulvey' s "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
5	E. Ann Kaplan' s "Is the Gaze Male?" (pp23-35) in Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera
6	Higgins and Silver eds. Rape and Representation. NY: Columbia UP, c1991.
7	Judith Mayne' s "Paradoxes of Spectatorship"
8	Paul MacDonald' s "Star Studies"
9	Diana Russell' s Dangerous Relationships & Senn and Radtke' s A Comparison of Women' s Reaction to Violent Pornography, Non-violent Pornography, and Erotica
10	Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Lingzhen Wang, Chinese Women' s Cinema
2	Louisa Wei, The Legend of Esther Eng: Cross-ocean Filmmaking and Women Pioneers
3	Women Film Pioneer Project, on-line, Columbia University Library