

# Women and Non Binary in Media (Elective)

*"She used to rock with laughter at the lot of you!"*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class explores the intersecting roles played by gender (specifically women and non binary) and sexuality in our media, focusing specifically on film, television, and digital culture. As we unpack media texts from Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* to Fox's *Glee*, we investigate the multiple ways in which popular media texts construct and communicate gender and sexuality. We will analyze how viewers engage with and make sense of representations of gender and sexuality and integrate them into their everyday lives, and we will consider how gender and sexuality inform our experience of online social networking, media fandom, and video game culture.

Readings will include feminist film theory, queer theory, fandom studies, digital media studies, and videogame studies. We will also regularly read related works of online popular criticism.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Interrogate the role of gender and sexuality in cultural context
2. Debate theories of gender and sexuality in film, television, and new media studies
3. Incorporate theories of gender and sexuality into your own interpretations and analysis of media texts
4. Sustain critical thought regarding the role of gender and sexuality in media, in written form

## GRADING

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Reading/Screening Inquiries: 30%
- Final Paper/Project: 50%
- Reading/Screening Inquiries:

These inquiries will consist of questions that you pose of each reading and screening, or that the reading/screening inspires you to ask. Each inquiry should be between 250 and 300 words long (you may go over but do not go below). Your inquiries may explore points you didn't fully understand, examine associations prompted by the readings, or point to gaps you feel the readings have left unexplored. They should be substantive questions,

not trivia or yes or no answers. We will explore the questions you pose in class discussion.

## FINAL PAPER / PROJECT

There are FOUR choices listed below, but if you have another idea for a focus that doesn't quite fit in these categories, feel free to run it by me. In every case, your final paper/project must draw on a minimum of three of the required readings. Reference your sources (required and not) with full citation using MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting.

1. Write a 3-5 page close analysis of discourses of gender and sexuality in a television program or film of your choice, drawing on the readings and discussions. You can also consider advertising.
2. Write a 3-5 page close analysis of discourses of gender and sexuality in a specific instance of new media, such as a video game, online interface, or transmedia textual network.
3. Write TWO 2 page (totaling 4 pages) film or television (episode) reviews, in a popular critical voice, interrogating issues of gender and sexuality throughout. These reviews should be informed by the ideas we've encountered in theory readings and discussions, but they can be written in a more informal, popular, or playful tone. Imagine them to be a series of blog posts on a particular theme.
4. Create a film, visual essay (vid), webisode, or script that addresses the themes of gender, sexuality, and media raised in class. In addition, write a 3-5 page paper in which you connect your creative work to the ideas raised in class and in the required readings.

You will have the opportunity to submit an optional rough draft for feedback. Whether you submit a rough draft or not, I encourage you to choose a topic that you feel truly excited about, start working on it early, and give yourself plenty of time to research, draft, rewrite, and proofread.

## WEEK BY WEEK BREAKDOWN

### **Week 1: GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS**

Screening: Glee Season 1 episode 1 and 18; Girls Season 1 episode 1

*\*Due: First set of Reading/Screening Inquiries*

### **Week 2: GENDER & IDENTIFICATION**

Screening: IT (1927)

*Due: Reading/Screening Inquiries*

### **Week 3: COMPLICATING THE MALE GAZE**

Screening: Gossip Girl Season 1 Episode 1 and Episode 7; Glee Season 2 episode 6

*\*Due: Reading/Screening Inquiries*

### **Week 4: GENDER, KNOWLEDGE, AND POWER**

Screening: Rebecca (1940)

*Due: Reading/Screening Inquiries*

### **Week 5: QUEER MEANINGS AND INTERPRETIVE FLEXIBILITY**

Screening: Glee Season 2 Episode 16 and Season 3 Episodes 2, 5, and 7

*\*Due: Reading/Screening Inquiries*

### **Week 3: FUTURE GENDER, FUTURE PLAY**

Screening: Tomb Raider

*\*Due: Reading/Screening Inquiries and Optional Rough Draft*

### **Week 7: SCREENING REMIXES AND YouTube VIDEOS**

*Due: Final paper and project*