



# Western Arts&Humanities

## Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies 2161A – Women and Popular Culture Fall 2025

*Western University is located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples, all of whom have longstanding relationships with the land and region and continue to be vital contributors of society.*

### 1. Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer

### 2. Course Overview and Important Dates

Mode	Day(s) of Week	Time per Week	Frequency
Virtual asynchronous	N/A	2-3 Hours	Weekly

Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Section 4

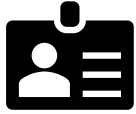



All course material will be posted to OWL. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently as different features within OWL are especially reliant on the right browser being as up to date as possible. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study Day	Exam Period
September 4	November 3 – 9	December 9	Dec 10	Dec 11 – 22

### 3. Contact Information



Course Instructor	Contact Information
<b>Dr. Nichole Edwards</b> (she/her) 	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:nedwar7@uwo.ca">nedwar7@uwo.ca</a>  <b>Zoom Office Hours:</b> Wednesdays, 11am – 1pm. Sign up on OWL And the Zoom link will be sent to you the morning of the office hours

Teaching Assistants	Contact Information	Virtual Office Hours

You will be assigned a TA in the next two weeks, and they will reach out to let you know their office hours and contact info!

### 4. Course Description and Design

How is gender represented in popular culture? What messages do we receive about women from Reality TV? Disney films? Tampon commercials? Moreover, how do cultural understandings of what it means to be feminine become entangled in the way women are represented within popular culture, and what kind of impact might these messages have on us, as consumers?

This course explores several the themes listed above and moreover, how they relate to ideas, representations, and experiences of women in popular culture. Taught through an intersectional lens, this course focuses on elements of class, race, and sexuality *alongside* gender. In doing so, students will be offered a nuanced understanding of the way in which women are represented, and valued, within popular culture (and the broader social world.) While we explore historical *and* contemporary figures, most of the course will focus on contemporary themes like the representation of transgender folks in the media, the branding of feminism in mainstream media, and the representations of class and femininity that we see in reality TV – to name a few!

This course is also designed so that it becomes clear how various technologies (magazines, the Internet, music videos, literature, reality TV, etc.) can play a direct role in how women are represented in popular culture and how we, as consumers, experience them through these technologies. As a result, this course hopes to gauge your interest when you are consuming pop culture inside as well as outside the classroom, where you perhaps become aware of some of the themes we've discussed when you're Netflixing at home on a Saturday night.

### 5. Learning Outcomes



Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Offer critical reflections of mainstream films and TV shows in a way that speaks to ongoing debates about gender, femininity, masculinity, and sexuality
- Identify how intersections of race, class and sexuality impact the way women are represented in popular culture, and as a result, the broader social world

- Construct an argument around the negative and positive ways women are represented in popular culture, including the development of stereotypes and the ways women can resist them
- Recognize the importance of changing technologies and how this has impacted understandings and representations of women in popular culture throughout history
- Become critical consumers of popular culture!

## 6. Overview of Course Content



Week	Dates	Topic
1	Sept 4 – 7	Syllabus & Course Navigation
2	Sept 8 – 14	Studying Gender and Pop Culture
3	Sept 15 – 21	Feminism and Advertising
4	Sept 22 – 28	Trans Representation Matters
5	Sept 29 – Oct 5	Women in Comedy
6	Oct 6 – 12	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity
7	Oct 14 – 19	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television
8	Oct 20 – 26	Indigenous Women in Canadian Media
9	Oct 27 – Oct 31	Race, Resistance, and Sports Media
10	Nov 3 – 9	<b>Fall Reading Week</b>
11	Nov 10 – 16	Witches, Witchcraft, and Wellness Culture
12	Nov 17 – 23	To All the Teen Flicks I've Loved Before
13	Nov 24 – 30	Periods, Politics, and Pop Culture
14	Dec 1 – 7	Patriarchy and Princesses
15	Dec 8 and 9	Catch up Days!

## 7. Online Participation and Engagement

Although this is a large class, you will be invited to engage with lesson content on OWL. You are not required to do so (as in, there is no graded participation component to this course), but you will be invited to participate and engage in the course material when prompted on OWL.



Consider this to be like in-class discussions, where I might ask for opinions on a certain topic, or feedback on films we watch. Much like an in-person class, not everyone will feel comfortable participating/engaging, and that's fine. I'm hoping you'll blow my expectations out of the water 😊

## 8. Required Readings



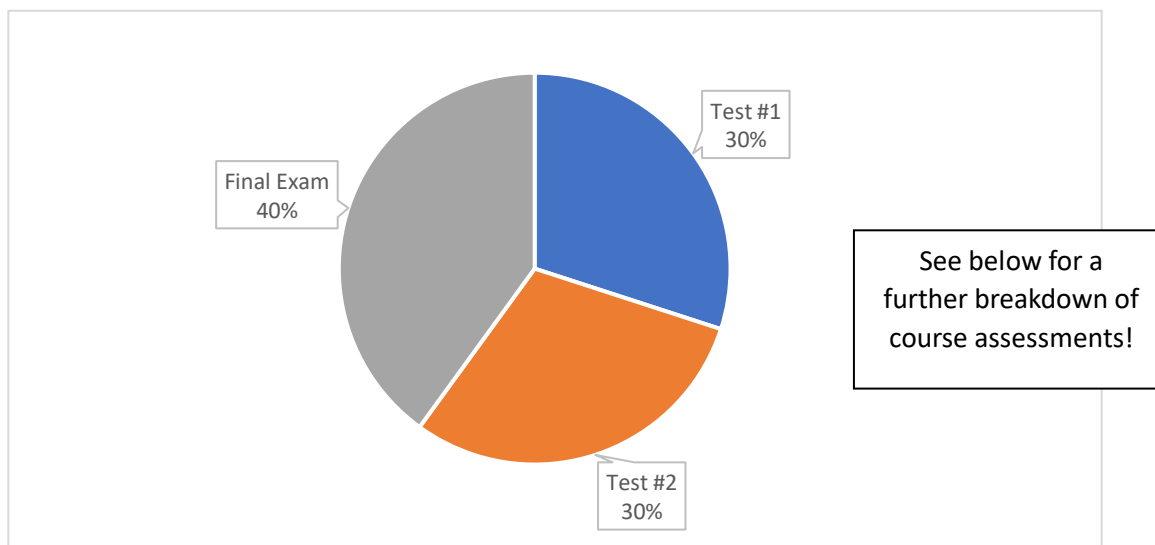
All readings are available in OWL on each week's overview page. **All you have to do is click the reading link provided on each week's overview page, and you will be redirected to a downloadable copy via the Western libraries database.** Remember to login using your UWO ID to access the full library database off-campus. Please note that if you click the reading link and it does not automatically open the reading in a new window, **you may have to update your browser.**

Below is a more detailed table outlining the required readings for each week, as well as the assessment due dates. Details about each assessment can be found below this table.

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMET
Sept 4 – 7		Make sure that you have gone through the syllabus, watched the welcome video, and are comfortable navigating the course site	
Sept 8 – 14	Studying Gender and Pop Culture	Caroll, G. 2023. "Why more of us should study pop culture". <i>Medium</i> . <a href="#">Available online here.</a>  Libes, L. 2024. "Schools make a big mistake swapping out Shakespeare and Dickens for Kendrick Lamar and Taylor Swift." <i>Minn Post</i> . <a href="#">Available online here.</a>	
Sept 15 – 21	Feminism and Advertising	Martin, C. 2016. "A Nuance and Fearless Feminism: In Conversation with Andi Zeisler." <i>On Being</i> . <a href="#">Available online here.</a>  2015. " <i>Bitch</i> magazine's Andi Zeisler calls out feel-good feminism." <i>Q, CBC Podcast</i> . <a href="#">Available online here.</a>	
Sept 22 – 28	Trans Representation Matters	Lovelock, Michael. 2017. "I Am...": Caitlyn Jenner, Jazz Jennings, and the cultural politics of transgender celebrity." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 17(5), pp. 737-754.	
Sept 29 – Oct 5	Women in Comedy	Swink, R. 2017. "Lemony Liz and likeable Leslie: audience understandings of feminism, comedy, and gender in women-led television series." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 17(1), pp. 14-28.	Test #1 must be completed on OWL by SUNDAY OCT 5 <sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm.
Oct 6 – 12	Reality TV, Class, and Femininity	Pickering, Jo. 2014. "Class looks and classificatory gazes: The fashioning of class on reality TV." <i>Film, Fashion, &amp; Consumption</i> , 3(3), pp. 195-209.	
Oct 14 – 19	Dad is Rad? Fatherhood and Television	Walker, T. 2019. "Dadvertising: The Rise of Involved Fatherhood in Contemporary American Advertising." <i>Advertising &amp; Society Quarterly</i> , 20(4).	
Oct 20 – 26	Indigenous Women in Canadian Media	Moeke-Pickering, T. et al. 2018. "Understanding the ways missing and murdered Indigenous women are framed	

		and handled by social media users.” <i>Media International Australia</i> , 169(1), p.54-64.	
Oct 27 – Oct 31	Race, Resistance, and Sports Media	Razack, S. and Joseph, J. 2021. “Misogynoir in women’s sports media: race, nation, and diaspora in the representation of Naomi Osaka.” <i>Media, Culture &amp; Society</i> , 43(2), p.291-308.	Test #2 must be completed on OWL by FRIDAY OCT 31 <sup>st</sup> at 5:59PM.
Nov 3 – 9		Fall Reading Week!	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; transform: rotate(-5deg); display: inline-block;"> UWO legislation states that Reading Week begins at 6pm on Friday, so all assessments must be completed before </div>
Nov 10 – 16	Witches, Witchcraft, and Wellness Culture	Waldron, D. 2005. “Witchcraft for sale! Commodity vs. Community in the Neopagan Movement”, 9(1), pp. 32-48.	
Nov 17 – 23	To All The Teen Flicks I’ve Loved Before	Jenkins, T. 2005. “‘Potential Lesbians at 2 O’Clock:’ The Heterosexualization of Lesbianism in the Recent Teen Film.” <i>Journal of Popular Culture</i> , 38(3), pp. 491-504.	
Nov 24 – 30	Periods, Politics, and Pop Culture	Merskin, D. 1999. “Adolescence, Advertising and the Ideology of Menstruation.” <i>Sex Roles</i> . 40(11/12), pp. 941-957.	
Dec 1 – 7	Patriarchy and Princesses	Watch one animated Disney movie that features a princess – your choice!	
Dec 8 and 9		Catch up Days!	

## 9. Assessments and Weighting



Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Test #1	30%	Due by Sunday October 5 <sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm
Test #2	30%	Due by Friday October 31 <sup>st</sup> at 5:59pm
Final Exam	40%	TBD, During formal exam period

### **Test #1 – 30% (due on OWL by Sunday October 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm)**

- Test #1 will include T/F, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching grid, and short answer questions
- **It will open on OWL on Monday September 29<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**
- **It includes content from Week 2 up to and including Week 5**, therefore you must complete the Week 5 content before you write the test
- Students can choose to write the test at a time that works best for their schedule that week, but they **must complete it by Sunday October 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm.**
- Once a student opens the test, they will have **90 minutes to complete** all questions
- **If a student is permitted extra time for tests and exams (approved by Accessible Education), there is no need to reach out and let me know** - I receive this info at the start of the semester and I will ensure that those approved for extra time are contacted with instructions before Test #1 opens.
- Students who receive accommodation for a makeup midterm must write before the answers and marks are released to the rest of the class (unless accommodation is extensive in which case alternative arrangements will be made)

### **Test #2 – 30% (due on OWL by Friday October 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:59pm)**

- Test #2 will be the same format of Test #1
- **It will open on OWL on Monday October 27<sup>th</sup> at 9am.**
- It b, therefore you must complete the Week 9 content before you write the test
- Students can choose to write the test at a time that works best for their schedule that week – however, they **must complete it by Friday October 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:59pm)**
- Why Friday and not Sunday like Test #1? Because **UWO legislation states that tests cannot occur during Reading Week and that 6pm on Friday October 31<sup>st</sup> is the start of Reading Week.**

### **Final Exam – 40% (written during the formal exam period, date TBA)**

- Even though this is an online asynchronous course, final exams must still be registered with the Registrar's Office. As such, we will not know when it is until the university releases the exam schedule (*I have zero say in the exam scheduling process and find out when it is at the same time you do*).
- This final exam will include a similar format to the tests, with some additional short answer questions
- More details will be relayed once the Registrar's Office posts the exam schedule.

**IMPORTANT:** Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

**Please note the following very important and non-negotiable points regarding all assessments in this course:**

- ☒ Detailed instructions and videos will be posted for each assessment on OWL. You will find these under the “Assessment Details” tab
- ☒ Use of AI is strictly prohibited for any and all assessments in this course. There are great uses for AI, but using it to write your work for you is not one of them
- ☒ All written components of assessments will be submitted to Turnitin to ensure academic integrity
- ☒ After an assessment is returned, students must wait **at least** 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator
- ☒ Students are **not** permitted to ask the instructor to re-mark assessments after a TA has already done so
- ☒ Putting in time and effort do not equal an “A”
- ☒ Students are permitted to discuss grades up to 2 weeks after a grade has been returned
- ☒ Asking for assessments to be re-evaluated at the end of the semester is strictly prohibited

**Information about late or missed evaluations:**

- ☒ Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 5 % per day. After 10 business days it will be up to my discretion to accept or not
- ☒ Late **assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 48 hours of submission of the illness self-report.** It is the student's responsibility to follow up with their TA if self-reporting
- ☒ Students must seek accommodation from academic advising for anything worth 10% or more of one's overall grade



- ☒ An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; an alternate assessment will be assigned

## 10. Communication

- ☒ Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- ☒ A weekly update will be provided via Announcements to take care of any housekeeping items and to introduce the week's topic
- ☒ Students should receive an email response within 48-72 hours (not including weekends or holidays)
- ☒ Students should use the OWL forum entitled "Café" for general class chat, questions, concerns, and all course-related content etc. If you have a question that you think others might have, feel free to ask it here rather than in a private email

## 11. Resources

- ☒ All resources will be posted in OWL
- ☒ Required readings will be posted in OWL
- ☒ Students are invited to sign up/login to [Kanopy](#) – sign in with your Western ID to access documentaries that will be required to watch in this course

## 12. Professionalism & Privacy

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- ☒ All course materials created by Dr. Edwards are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- ☒ Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- ☒ Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- ☒ Students will be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- ☒ All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

## 13. How to Be Successful in this Class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

Invest in a planner or app to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.

Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.

Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.

Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes (highly recommend this over typing them!) Notes will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.

Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and



peer support.

Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).

Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.