

Art/Wmst/Engl/Hist 3710 Section 01 Gender and the Humanities Fall 2009
1:20-2:35 T TH Room 111 Fine Arts Bldg.

Dr. (or Professor) Denney, Professor of Visual Culture and Women's Studies

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PREREQUISITES: Engl 1010 or Wmst 1080 and junior standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The overall theme of this course will be gender and representation, looking specifically at issues of the nude, masculinities, femininities and stereotypes in the disciplines of art history, gender studies, and cultural studies, and issues of biography and autobiography within the disciplines of literary/art historical genres. The course will give you a chance to understand fully how artistic representations have mirrored and helped to define suitable feminine behavior differently from suitable masculine behavior. Such “gender scripts” deserve attention because they not only reinforce but also create a sense of identity. Thus over time, our sense of who we are—and what we can become—is influenced by society’s ideas about gender and sexuality.

“Gender and the Humanities” aims to broaden your understanding of how ideas about gender change over time (or don’t). This course will examine how gender roles and sexual identity are constructed (that is, fabricated) on film, in nude imagery, in other artworks/other media about the human body, and in biography and autobiography. Our time period will be the 19th century through the present in Europe and America. **Please note** that this material may often make you uncomfortable, angry, confused and/or upset. This material IS challenging and it will often test your basic assumptions about how you operate in the world. Challenge is good; it is our goal to push the envelope and to investigate the difficult questions. It is good practice to ask yourself WHY you are angry, upset, etc.?

CULTURAL CONTEXT/HUMANITIES: This course fulfills the cultural context humanities focus “CH--Cultural Humanities requirement. Towards this end, it examines what it is that makes us human, how we negotiate our cultures and how we celebrate those cultures.

COURSE TEXTS: Available at University Bookstore in paperback

1. John Berger, Ways of Seeing
2. Guerilla Girls, Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers
3. Jill Ker Conway, When Memory Speaks: Exploring the Art of Autobiography
4. Seba Al-Herz, The Others
5. Access syllabus and all assignments on our “consolidated classes” “Gender and the Humanities” file pages on WyoWeb.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Please be aware that this class requires significant student involvement and time outside the classroom. You especially need to be aware of this time commitment if your major or minor lies outside of the humanities. Class time will often be dominated by discussion and group work. However, art history lectures will usually make up a portion and sometimes all of some classes. **Please take careful notes during lectures and discussions, as the exams will be based on issues in lectures/discussions. Everything is fair game for exams—hand-outs, readings, in-class discussion points, images from the image lists, etc.**

You are required to come to class on time, prepared to discuss assigned readings and assigned writing assignments. You are responsible for obtaining all assignments and asking

questions if you need something clarified. You are responsible for learning any unfamiliar vocabulary in the readings.

Images from class lectures/discussion will be available through our online digital system: ArtStor. We will go over how to access these files in class.

*****NOTE: For this class you will need to purchase an “Art History Materials Card” from the Cashier’s Office. The cost should be around \$15.90. Please bring the pink card to me with your name on it within the first two weeks of class. Failure to purchase the card will result in an incomplete in the course. This card helps us support the costs of our new online digital-imaging system.**

Your attendance and participation in class are required. The attendance policy is three unexcused absences, total, except for medical or other emergency, in which case you and I will make arrangements for how you will make up the missed material.

Two tardies equal one absence. Please don’t be late. It’s disruptive to the smooth running of class. If you have to come from across campus, I will save seats at the front for you.

After three absences, your final grade will be reduced by ½ grade for each additional absences. You need to attend class to do well, particularly since we will spend a good deal of time examining images in class.

Important: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the course outline, unless stated otherwise. **Note that I will not accept late papers at all, unless it’s a medical or family emergency which has to be documented. Please work with student services in Knight Hall in these cases. Please plan ahead in terms of computer problems.**

You are responsible for the entire contents of this syllabus. Please read it carefully and come to the second class with any questions or clarifications before you sign off on the last page and turn it in. It is a contract that symbolizes the fact that you have made a commitment to the course and understand and accept your responsibilities in it.

For further faculty/student responsibilities, see the following web site:

http://uwaadmnweb.uwyo.edu/a&s/Administration/Advising%20web/students_teachers_work.htm.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS Your grade in the class will be assessed on the basis of these assignment categories:

1. I’ve assigned readings for each class. They are listed in the course outline following. You should do all assigned readings for each class and be prepared to discuss them in class. Some days I will ask you to do short take-home papers, or short in-class papers based on the readings, or I will give you a particular set of questions in advance to help you work your way through the readings. Some readings are on e-reserve. Access it through the Coe Library main page. I will put all assignments on our WyoWeb file page (Consolidated Courses: Gender and the Humanities). Responses and participation: 20%
2. Short response papers: 2 essays during the semester, based on specific readings and films. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, pages numbered, stapled. **We will use MLA style in this class. Access it on the Coe main web page and follow the links.** You MUST use this style consistently and properly.
(1) 10% **Due: Tues., Sept. 15th Full Monty** (2) 20% **Due: Tues., Nov. 3rd Ker Conway**

3. Midterm in-class exam with slides to interpret/literature to interpret, in essay format 20%
Tues., Oct. 6th
4. One final comprehensive exam during finals week: essay format 15%
Thursday, Dec. 10th 1:15-3:15pm
5. Sharing gender stories group work. One paper (to share with different groups). This is your research component of the course. You will find a relevant representation of gender in the media—masculine, feminine, transsexual, transvestite, gay, bisexual, or lesbian—and discuss it with the class in groups, providing your team with a copy of the paper which will be a normal essay (intro, body, and conclusion) that includes a brief summary of the article in question and a brief response on how it relates to our studies of gender, biography, autobiography and/or the representation of the human body. **4 pages. 15% Due: Tues., Dec. 1st in class.**

COURSE OUTLINE: Note that this schedule is subject to change.

Prelude: Gender Vocabulary and background

Week 1.

Tuesday, Aug. 25th Introduction to the course. What is gender?

Thursday, Aug. 27th Group discussion on sex/gender and sexuality. Grounding in vocabulary of the course. In preparation for group discussion today, read on e-reserve: Diane Richardson, “Conceptualizing Gender,” pp. 3-19 of Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson, eds.

Introducing Gender and Women’s Studies.

Also, read the following text and prepare the questions on page 7, to discuss and hand in (typed, carefully written), from e-reserve: Alison Easton, “Introduction. What is Women’s Studies?” in Tess Coslett, Alison Easton, and Penny Summerfield, eds. *Women, Power and Resistance*, pp. 1-7.

UNIT ONE. WHAT IS GENDER AND HOW DO ARTISTS/FILMMAKERS REPRESENT IT?

Week 2.

Tuesday, Sept. 1st

Viewing of “The Full Monty” Issues of masculinity and gender masquerade. Pull WyoWeb questions.

Thursday, Sept. 3rd

Viewing of “The Full Monty” continued. Read essay on e-reserve: Jill Marshall, “Going for the Full Monty: Comedy, Gender and Power.” Discussion of film and essay.

(Questions from WyoWeb pages; we’ll go over them today)

Begin to review the explanation of the Full Monty paper included on WyoWeb files.

Week 3.

Tuesday, Sept. 8th

Continue with questions/discussion of the Full Monty and masculinities.

“Ways of Seeing” Discussion of imagery in relation to gender. Art history crash course.

Read Berger essays 1, 2 and 3. Pull questions, image list and information sheet from WyoWeb.

Thursday, Sept. 10th “Ways of Seeing” continued, essay 4, 5 and 6. Discussion of imagery in relation to gender. Art history crash course, continued. Read remaining Berger essays. Pull questions and image list from WyoWeb.

LABOR DAY WEEKEND.

Week 4.

Tuesday, Sept. 15th

3-page paper due on “The Full Monty” and the Marshall essay. Do a full review of the film based on Marshall’s assessment, and whether or not you agree with her interpretation. Make sure to review and follow the guidelines of the assignment from WyoWeb.

Tuesday, Sept. 15th we will begin:

UNIT TWO. EXHIBITING GENDER: DOES GENDER MATTER in representation?

Imaging women in art. For the first part of this unit, we will have art history lectures on themes in art in relation to representations of women which will expand on Berger’s work and bring us up to date in terms of discourse on women’s issues in art.

You will have image lists for the first part of this unit. Coordinate those lists with the digital images stored on ArtStor under the following themes.

Tuesday, Sept. 15th

The Divine; the Heroic;

Thursday, Sept. 17th

Asking for it; Casting couch and brothel

Week 5.

Tuesday, Sept. 22nd

I paint, therefore I am; Body as Battleground

Thursday, Sept. 24th

Household Vanities; Exploring Identities

For the next part of this unit, we will be studying Sarah Hyde’s book, Exhibiting Gender. For each day, we will look at the images first. Record, as I show images (for discussion), your gut reaction to each image and your ideas, if any, as to the gender of the artist for each image. In your responses each day, consider **Which is the woman’s work, which is the man’s work for each pair? How did you come to this conclusion? Don’t worry about giving the right answer (that is, if it’s by a man, or a woman, or what gender orientation they are). I am more curious as to how you formulate your responses. What gender assumptions are you making? I will present the interpretations from this text (it is out of print so we only have one copy on reserve for your review AFTER these discussions. Please do not preview before the classes!)**

However, as a prelude, read pp. 9-16 in the text (on e-reserve). Look at questions on p. 12, bottom of first paragraph, to consider for your in-class reaction writing.

Week 6.

Tuesday, Sept. 29th

Discuss the “prelude” information in Hyde, Exhibiting Gender. “Art and the female nude,” slides and discussion.

Thursday, Oct. 1st

Discuss Hyde, Exhibiting Gender, continued. Slides and discussion. Conclusions.

Week 7.

Tuesday, Oct. 6th

In-class midterm exam, based on readings, slides, and class discussions to date. In class essays. I will provide blue books. Bring Berger book to class for exam.

UNIT THREE. AUTOBIOGRAPHY, BIOGRAPHY AND GENDER

For each reading in this unit (from Jill Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks* and essays on e-reserve), consider this question: What are the cultural assumptions and climates that shape each story? How do the conventions of gender (as distinct from biological sex) lay down the rules about how a man or a woman should report his or her life?

Thursday, Oct. 8th

Read Ker Conway's *When Memory Speaks*, chapter one: "Memory's Plots" which provides an overview of the kinds of autobiography she will examine. Read, in conjunction, Paisley Rekdal essay on e-reserve: "Sexy Mild" Does this essay "fit" any of the categories that Ker Conway discusses? How so? **See specific questions to prepare under the WyoWeb file.**

Week 8.

Tuesday, Oct. 13th

"The Secular Hero." Modern Masculinity. Jackson Pollock as case study. Viewing of Pollock film. Read on e-reserve for discussion today: Andrew Perchak "Pollock and Postwar Masculinity." Read for discussion today, Ker Conway, chapter two, "The Secular Hero." **See specific questions to prepare under the WyoWeb file.**

Thursday, Oct. 15th

Continue Pollock and Perchak discussion with Ker Conway. **See specific questions to prepare under WyoWeb file (same as Tuesday; revisit)**

Week 9.

Tuesday, Oct. 20th

Viewing of Jill Ker Conway's own story: "The Road from Coorain." **Take good notes on film for second paper. See questions below and in assignment on WyoWeb file.**

Thursday, Oct. 22nd

Finish watching "The Road from Coorain." Explore idea of mother/daughter texts. Read for discussion Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks*, chapter five, "Feminist Plots."

Second paper topic:

Assignment for paper (on WyoWeb page) discussed.

The most important items to consider are the film itself as feminist autobiography and how it relates **to at least two "feminist plot" stories in Ker Conway's "feminist plot" chapter.**

3 to 3 ½ pages, typed, double-spaced, pages numbered, stapled. **Paper due: Tues., Nov. 3rd**

Please begin making appointments with me to discuss the gender/media research paper. You can drop in during office hours or make an appointment. I prefer not to do this meeting via email if we can avoid it. I have set aside one class session to meet with students who cannot meet at other times. Pull directions from WyoWeb and bring to meeting.

UNIT FOUR. BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, GENDER, AND THE MEDIA.

We will be exploring representations of gender in the media for this unit and subsequent units. All of the remaining units are especially relevant for your research paper. Do you see gender patterns emerging in your reading of media articles? Are you aware of media manipulation in the portrayal of women and men in popular magazines? Can you come up with women and men who have been taken up by the media? How have they been treated?

Week 10.

Tuesday, Oct. 27th

Read from e-reserve for discussion today: Margaret Marshment, “The Picture is Political” and Colleen Denney, “Courtied Darlings and Virgin Brides” from *Representing Diana, Princess of Wales*. It is vital to understand these texts in order to prepare for your discussions in your research papers concerning your own choices of articles or books to share. (I am trying to give you a head-start on the media material for your papers. (Role-playing day)

Thursday, Oct. 29th

Individual meeting times to discuss research papers. Use this time if we have not been able to meet at another mutually agreeable time. I will hand out a sign-up sheet ahead of time and then post it outside my door. Others please spend this time on your papers.

Week 11.

Tuesday, Nov. 3rd

Ker Conway paper due to Women’s Studies office by 1:10pm. No office hours today.

Coe library mandatory meeting day for media research papers. Everyone should have met with me by this date so that you have a clear research goal in mind as you go into this session. New e-classroom, main floor, Coe Library, with Jennifer Mayer, Fine Arts/Women’s Studies Librarian.

UNIT FIVE. Girls Behaving Badly!

Thursday, Nov. 5th

Reading and discussion of Seba Al-Herz’s *The Others* to address issues of race, religion and gender as well as issues in the media and “blogs”. Introduction to Islam. Bring two discussion questions to share with the class that address issues of race, ethnicity, religion and gender. Possible guest speaker.

Week 12.

Tuesday, Nov. 10th

The Other, continued. Introduction to blogs. Continue discussion questions.

UNIT SIX: WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF STEREOTYPES IN TERMS OF GENDER AND POWER? Reading of *Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers* by the Guerilla Girlssssss. (hereafter cited as BBB). For each CHAPTER, consider the following questions: Look at the images and jot down your gut reactions (to share for class discussion). **Then** read the essay and answer: What is the main argument or is there one? Is the argument convincing? Why or why not? What do the chapter/images reveal about issues of masculine and feminine? Do the essays manage to convince you that the imaged bodies of modernity you see articulated through the stereotypes actually communicate dominant social relations (that is, male dominant, female subordinate) while managing, sometimes, to expose or erode those dominant social relations (THAT IS, CRITIQUE THE SOCIAL ORDER OR UNDERMINE IT in SOME WAY)? **Jot Down your responses to share in discussion. Important written component: for each chapter that you read, write your own short narrative to share about being subjected to stereotypical thinking. The narrative can be about you or someone you know or, if you are so inclined, you could create a fictional narrative. We will share these narratives in class. You will turn in the narratives to me but keep the other questions for your notes and for the final exam.**

Thursday, Nov. 12th

Read chapters one and two. “What’s in a name?” and “The Top Stereotypes: From Cradle to Grave.” In BBB. Pull questions from WyoWeb for discussion.

Week 13.

Tuesday, Nov. 17th

Read Chapter three: “Sex Objects” in BBB

Thursday, Nov. 19th

Read Chapter four: “Life Lessons: Real and Fictional Women who became stereotypes” in BBB.

Week 14.

Tuesday, Nov. 24th

Read chapter five: “Women’s Work is Never Done.” And chapter six: “Race and Religion.” In BBB.

Thanksgiving Break Thurs. Nov. 26-Sun. Nov.29th.

Week 15.

Tuesday, Dec. 1st

Group work on your media papers. **All papers are due today.** I will put you in groups of about 4 each and I will work with each group. Please bring 4 copies of your paper to share with your group. We will use these copies in at least two separate groups. I will give each of you specific guidelines for discussion on our WyoWeb portal in advance.

Thursday, Dec. 3rd

Group work on articles you have found. Those who have not gotten to share will do so today. Complete group work on articles you have found. What conclusions can we draw?

FINAL exam: Thursday, Dec. 10th 1:15-3:15pm Fine Arts Room 111. I’ll provide blue books. Bring all of your books.

Art/Wmst/Engl/Hist 3710

I have read the syllabus for “Gender and the Humanities.” If I have had questions about the assignments or my responsibilities, I have asked Dr. Denney for clarification before signing this form. I understand my responsibilities in the class. If I want to do well in the course I will need to keep up with assignments and readings, come to class on time, attend regularly, follow directions for papers, and respond to suggestions from my professor for improvements and perhaps different ways of thinking about the material. I will need to turn in my work on time and be a good classroom citizen, listening to others as well as sharing my own points of view in a respectful fashion.

Student name (Print): _____

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

Please sign this sheet and return it to me by the second week of class.

Include any questions that you still have about the course so that I can answer them in class.

Please also include your UW email address, which you will need to use throughout the semester.