Course Description and Course Goals
This course explores representations of women in the US and in a global context. It will provide students with the necessary skills to critically think about representations of women in multiple texts and contexts. Texts analyzed include: religious texts, news media, legal documents, advertisements, music, film, television, graphic novels and cartoons. We will explore the real effects representations of women have on job discrimination against women, female body image, and women’s personal beliefs and social practices. We will also explore positive representations of women, as well as culture as a site of resistance to negative or stereotypical representations of women.

Course Materials
Available in the bookstore:

Additional readings may be accessed accordingly:
- Book chapters and journal articles are available on Blackboard.
- News, media, blogs, etc. can be accessed via the links on the schedule of assignments.

All films and documentaries are available either online, on/through Netflix, and/or on reserve in the JC media library.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to complete all of the assigned readings before class and to be prepared to discuss them. Because discussion will be based on the readings it is necessary that students bring the day’s reading materials with them to class. Additionally, each student must come to each class prepared with a thought-provoking discussion question, based on one or more of that day’s readings, that will be submitted to me at the end of each class. On occasion, short reading responses (no more than a few paragraphs) will be assigned to ensure that students are engaging with the readings. There are 6 more formal assignments for this class: first, each student will participate in a group presentation in which they will discuss the readings assigned for a specific day; secondly, over the course of the semester, each student will submit 4 analytical papers; and lastly there will be a final exam on the final day of class. The final exam will be in essay format and may include information from the readings, lectures, screenings, and class discussions.

Grade Policy
Grades will be based on students’ ability to engage with representations of women using the ideas learned in class readings, lectures, and discussions. The attached instructions for the analytical papers must be followed and all papers must be submitted in hardcopy (no email submissions will be accepted) on the appointed day. If papers are handed in late 5 points will be deducted everyday until the assignment is handed in. Exams and quizzes must be taken on the assigned day. The only exceptions made will be if
you have a doctor’s note or have previously informed me about a religious observation. Group presentations should follow the attached guidelines and each student will be evaluated for his/her individual role in the presentation.

Grade Breakdown:
- 4 Analytical Papers= 50% (12.5% each)
- Final Exam= 15%
- Presentation= 15%
- Participation (including discussion questions, reading responses, and quizzes)= 20%

Attendance Policy
Regular class attendance is crucial to the participation portion of your grade. Please let me know in advance if you are going to be absent from class as a result of illness, religious observation, or a personal emergency. You will be responsible for submitting any assignments due on the day of your absence by the assignment due date. You will also be responsible for getting the lecture notes and watching any documentaries screened in class. Please note that I will not be providing students with lecture notes if they are absent.

Phones/text messaging and Internet surfing/chatting
The use of phones and text messaging is not permitted during class. The visibility of a phone during class time will result a 5% deduction from your final grade. While laptops are allowed in class for taking notes and referencing class readings, surfing the Internet, checking Facebook, and chatting online is not acceptable and will also result in a 5% deduction from your final grade. In other words, if I see your phone out during class or if I see you looking at anything on your laptop that is not class related, you will lose 5% off of your final grade.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information, which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers’ own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)
For further information on plagiarism see: http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm

GMU Writing Center
The University Writing Center provides free tutorial sessions for all students needing help with any writing project. It is best to make an appointment; walk-ins are accepted if there are openings at that time. Assistance is also offered online. The GMU Writing Center has several locations on campus. For more information see: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

Disability Resources
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
Women and Gender Studies at George Mason
The Women and Gender Studies program offers an interdisciplinary minor to undergraduate students. This is a 21-credit minor that works well with most majors and can be structured to fit your interests. “Representations of Women” provides a good overview of the topics studied. Feminist scholarship has influenced many disciplines and the minor provides students with the tools necessary to engage with issues of gender, race, sexuality and class in various texts and contexts.

The Women and Gender Studies Center is located in the Johnson Center, Room 240K. The Women and Gender Studies Center organizes a variety of lectures, workshops, and other activities relevant to campus life throughout the academic year. They also have a collection of over 1000 books relevant to Gender Studies, which students may check out with their George Mason ID card. You can learn more about the Women and Gender Studies Minor and the Women’s Center at:
http://www.gmu.edu/acadexcel/findex.html

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Course Schedule

Tuesday, Aug 30- Introduction and syllabus

Defining Women
Thursday, Sept 1: Conceptualizing Woman
1. Simone de Beauvoir, Excerpt from the Introduction to The Second Sex

Tuesday, Sept 6: Women in Religion
1. “Genesis 1-3,” The Bible
   http://www.bibleontheweb.com/Bible.asp
2. Stuart Z. Charmé, “Children's Gendered Responses to the Story of Adam and Eve”

Thursday, Sept 8: Women in Religion (cont.)
   http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,185647,00.html
3. David M. Rosen and Victoria P. Rosen, “New Myths and Meanings in Jewish New Moon Rituals”
   IN CLASS: Presentation Group #1

Tuesday, Sept 13: Women at the Intersection of Religion and the State
1. Suad Joseph, “Gender and Citizenship in Middle Eastern States”

Thursday, Sept 15: Women at the Intersection of Religion and the State (cont.)
1. Faisal al Yafai, “What western feminists should do about the veil”
2. Satrapi, 72-153.

Women's Work
Tuesday, Sept 20: Discrimination of Women in the Workplace
   http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2005/01/19/harvard_womens_group_rips_summers/
   IN CLASS: Screening of the film The Associate (1996)

Thursday, Sept 22: Discrimination of Women in the Workplace (cont.)
1. “Women’s Employment: Global Trends and ILO Responses”
2. Susan M. Heathfield, “Women and Work: Then, Now, and Predicting the Future for Women in the Workplace” (read all 4 pages)
   http://humanresources.about.com/od/worklifebalance/a/business_women.htm
   DUE: Analytical Paper #1

Tuesday, Sept 27: Women in Politics/Woman as Political Icon
1. Seager, 82-83 and 96-99.
2. Camille Paglia, “Kind of a Bitch: Why I Like Hillary Clinton”
3. Ann C. McGinley, “Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and Michelle Obama: Performing Gender, Race, and Class on the Campaign Trail”
   IN CLASS: Presentation Group #2

Thursday, Sept 29: The Domestic Sphere as Woman’s “Place”
2. Theresa Preston-Werner, “In the Kitchen: Negotiating Changing Family Roles in Costa Rica”

Tuesday, Oct 4: Reproductive Control or Control of Women?
1. Caitlin Guse, “‘Take Your Rosaries Out of Our Ovaries:’ Women's Rights in Argentina and Bolivia”
3. Amartya Sen, “Missing women—revisited: Reduction in female mortality has been counterbalanced by sex selective abortions”
   http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC286281/
   http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/dahl20110517
   IN CLASS: Presentation Group #3

Women's Sexuality
Thursday, Oct 6: Defining Female Sexuality in a “Man’s World”
1. Sigmund Freud, “Female Sexuality” (1931)
2. Germaine Greer, Excerpt from The Female Eunuch
   IN CLASS: Begin screening of the film Fire (1997)

Tuesday, Oct 11- NO CLASS (Monday classes meet this day)

Thursday, Oct 13: Female Companionship and Lesbianism
1. Adrienne Rich “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”
   IN CLASS: Finish screening of Fire

Tuesday, Oct 18: Female Companionship and Lesbianism (cont.)

*DUE: Analytical Paper #2*

**Thursday, Oct 20: (Re)Defining Female Sexuality: Racial Difference**
1. Patricia Hill Collins, “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images”

**Tuesday, Oct 25: (Re)Defining Female Sexuality: Image and Sexual Ideology**
2. Ian Capulet, “With Reps Like These: Bisexuality and Celebrity Status”
3. Triveni Gandhi, “Bollywood Is India's Sexual Battleground”
   [http://www.alternet.org/sex/80624/bollywood_is_india%27s_sexual_battleground/](http://www.alternet.org/sex/80624/bollywood_is_india%27s_sexual_battleground/)

*IN CLASS: Presentation Group #4*

**Women and Beauty Ideals**

**Thursday, Oct 27: American Representations of Ideal Bodies**
1. Susan Bordo, “Never Just Pictures”

*IN CLASS: Screening of the documentary Killing Us Softly 4*

**Tuesday, Nov 1: The Globalization of Western Body Ideals**
1. Seager, 52-55.
2. Lelwica, Hoglund and McNallie, “Spreading the Religion of Thinness from California to Calcutta”
3. Corydon Ireland, “Fijian girls succumb to Western dysmorphia”
4. Larry Rohter, “In the Land of Bold Beauty, a Trusted Mirror Cracks”

*IN CLASS: Presentation Group #5*

**Thursday, Nov 3: Countering Body Ideals**
1. “I’m Happy to Be Fat” from MTV’s True Life (21 Jan 2008)
2. Nomy Lamm, “It's A Big Fat Revolution”
   [http://www.tehomet.net/nomy.html](http://www.tehomet.net/nomy.html)

*DUE: Analytical Paper #3*

**Tuesday, Nov 8: Cosmetic Procedures: Bringing Sexy (Back)**
2. Fabienne Darling-Wolf, “Mixed Message: How the Media Went Wrong on the Breast Implant Story”
4. “This is What Getting Your Vagina Vajazzled Looks Like”

**Thursday, Nov 10: Cosmetic Procedures: Achieving the Western Ideal**
2. Alex Perry, “Letter From Bombay: Could You Please Make Me a Shade Lighter?”
   http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1134744,00.html
3. Malangu Ntambwe, “Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Who is the FAIREST of Them All?”
4. Zenobia Chan, “Prettier When Pink”
   http://www.saidit.org/archives/jul01/article1.html

IN CLASS: Presentation Group #6

Young Women in Popular Culture
Tuesday, Nov 15: Creating Little Women: Representations Aimed at Girls
1. Celeste Lacroix, “Images of Animated Others: The Orientalization of Disney’s Cartoon Heroines From The Little Mermaid to The Hunchback of Notre Dame”
   http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/articles/gender_portrayal/break_mold.cfm
3. “Media and Girls”
   http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/women_and_girls/women_girls.cfm

Thursday, Nov 17: Developing Sexual Identity
1. Sharon Jayson, “Media cited for showing girls as sex objects”
2. Murali Balaji, “Why Do Good Girls Have to Be Bad? The Cultural Industry’s Production of the Other and the Complexities of Agency”

IN CLASS: Presentation Group #7

The Future for Women
Thursday, Nov 22: Postfeminism: A Step Forward or a Step Back?
1. Sarah Gamble, “Postfeminism”

Thursday, Nov 24- NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Tuesday, Nov 29: Postfeminism: A Step Forward or a Step Back? (cont.)
1. Watch Juno (2007) available through Netflix and in the JC Library
   (If you have already seen Juno or if you just prefer you may choose to watch Knocked Up (2007) or Waitress (2007) instead. Both are available through Netflix)

DUE: Analytical Paper #4

Thursday, Dec 1: Subcultures and Subversion
1. Theresa Winge, “Undressing and Dressing Loli: A Search for the Identity of the Japanese Lolita”
2. Sam Huber, “Queercore and the punk politics of feminism”
   http://kasamaproject.org/2010/04/14/tank-girl-anarcha-feminist-punk-from-nepal/
4. “Janaza: A Female Blasphemous Black Metal Solo Project From Iraq”
   http://www.metalinjection.net/in-the-news/janaza-redefines-blasphemous-black-metal
Tuesday, Dec 6: Feminism and Activism

   http://noreaster.neanarchist.net/issue8/article7.html

Thursday, Dec 8

IN CLASS: Final Exam

Assignments

Participation, Daily Discussion Questions, and Reading Responses (20% of final grade)

All three elements factor equally into your overall participation grade.

Class participation is foundational to a discussion-based class. Through class discussions you will have the opportunity to discover new perspectives and challenged perceived notions. During these discussions, diverging opinions and experiences may arise; please respect your peers. Differences can lead to productive discussions, but we need to be considerate. In order to encourage participation from all students, I ask that we keep the classroom a safe place where a variety of ideas can be expressed and reflected upon. Trust amongst peers is essential to a successful discussion-based class.

In order to ensure that you are engaging with the materials prior to entering the classroom, you will be asked to come into each class session with a discussion question based on one or more of that day’s readings. Discussion questions should be thought provoking; for example, you may address a concern raised by the reading or ask your peers to puzzle through a difficult passage. A discussion question is not a question with a “yes” or “no” answer or a simple content question. You should come to class with your discussion question in hardcopy, as I will be collecting them at the end of each class. While they will not be evaluated with a grade, your preparation for class via discussion questions will be factored into your participation grade.

On occasion, I will assign reading response papers. These will be assigned to ensure that you are working though the main points of the class readings. I will announce at least one class in advance if a reading response will be due for an upcoming class. For reading response papers I ask that you give the name of the author, title of the work, the author’s thesis statement (can be quote directly from the text with page number or summarized in one to two sentences in your own words) and a brief summary of the author’s argument (how he or she defends/proves the thesis statement). These reading responses should be about one paragraph per reading. These short exercises will help you prepare not only for the day’s discussion, but will assist you in thinking through the scholarly arguments made about female representation, giving you a context for the analytical papers that you will be writing over the course of the semester. Reading responses will be graded +/-√/0 and will be factored into your participation grade.

If it becomes difficult to determine that the course readings are being completed in a timely and thoughtful manner, I will assign reading responses on a regular basis and give reading quizzes to ensure that students are engaging with the materials.
**Group Presentation (15% of final grade)**

A sign up sheet will be passed around during our second class meeting listing the date and the topic of the readings to be presented. You will sign up in groups of 5 or 6 participants.

Groups will present the articles assigned for the day of the presentation and engage the class by connecting the readings to visual representations of women. Group presentations should be between 25 and 30 minutes in length—each presenter should speak for approximately 5 minutes. Each group will prepare a PowerPoint presentation that must include 3 or more representations of women related to the articles, and at least 3 discussion questions for class (note: on the day of your group presentation you do not have to submit a daily discussion question). Should you choose to show any video or audio clips, the total length of the clip(s) should not exceed 5 minutes.

Every group member is expected to present and actively engage with other group members during the presentation. The format for the presentation is open, and can be a traditional presentation with group members describing the articles or you can format the presentation so that you are addressing questions to the class. While your group must include at least 3 discussion questions, those may be presented at the end of the presentation to segue into the class discussion or interspersed throughout the presentation engaging the class early on, for instance you may choose to turn your questions into a game. Also, though you are specifically presenting on the week’s readings, feel free to make connections or references to earlier readings as applicable.

Presentations will be evaluated according to preparation, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, creativity and relevance to the topic and readings for that class. You are responsible for getting in touch with group members and for planning your presentation, so be sure to get emails and phone numbers of other group members prior to your presentation. In order for your group presentation to work as a whole instead of disjointed parts, you will need to work together and it will be apparent if you do.

On the day of your presentation, you must bring in a jump drive with your PowerPoint presentation and email the presentation to yourself; do not bring your laptop to class with the presentation on it because it will present an issue with the classroom technology. You are also required to submit a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to me that includes the names of each presenter either via email or disk (note: this is the only time I will accept any work for this class via email). Each speaker is also required to turn in his/her notes or talking points for the presentation—these may be typed or handwritten (as long as they are legible) and must be turned in as a hardcopy.

**Your presentation will be evaluated according to:**
- Your ability to present the readings in an informative manner
- Your connection between the readings and selected representations of women
- The cohesiveness of your segment of the presentation with the overall presentation
- Your notes/talking points (illustrating your preparation for the presentation)

**Analytical Papers (50% of final grade, equally weighed at 12.5% each)**

There are 4 Analytical Papers due over the course of the semester:

- **#1: Women in the Workplace and Discrimination- Analysis of The Associate using readings from 9/20 and 9/22**
- **#2: Female Companionship and Lesbianism- Analysis of Fire using readings from 10/13 and 10/18**
#3: Body Image- Analysis of “I’m Happy to be Fat” and/or Killing Us Softly 4 using readings from 10/27 through 11/3

#4: Postfeminism- Analysis of Juno (or Knocked Up or Waitress) using the readings from 11/22 and 11/29

In each paper you should analyze the film, documentary, or television program in conversation with at least 2 of the readings assigned during the corresponding timeframe. Discuss how women are represented in the film/documentary/program, citing specific examples. Consider: What do women look like? What are they wearing? How are they behaving in relation to men and one another? Using the readings from the course, ask: How do race, class, sexuality, social class, nationality, body size and other categories factor in to the representation of women in your text? Why do you think that women are represented in a particular way? Does this representation reinforce stereotypes, challenge them, or both? Be sure to provide specific examples from both the narrative and the readings to support your points! Finally, your paper should NOT be a summary of either the narrative or the readings: you should use both specific examples and briefly discuss the general trajectory of the film/documentary/program, but devote the paper to analysis of the representation of women in it.

All papers must be 3-5 pages long, 12 pt Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, and submitted in hardcopy and stapled together. You can choose to cite articles and books that are from outside of our course readings (in addition to the minimum of 2 readings from the course) to strengthen your analysis if you feel it will add to weight your analysis/argument. All sources that you use, whether from our course readings or from outside of class must be in an approved citation format (APA, MLA, CMS) and each paper must include a works cited page along with the citations within your paper. If you do not have a current style guide, please see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ for up-to-date citation guidelines. Failure to cite sources properly is plagiarism, so this should not be taken lightly!

Papers should include an introduction in which you state your thesis or major point/argument, and a conclusion in which you wrap up your paper and restate that major point/argument. Please be sure to edit and proofread your papers—numerous errors of grammar and form will have an impact upon your grade. Papers must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. I will take off 5 points for every day that a paper is late. If you know you will be absent the day a paper is due it is your responsibility to get it to me in hardcopy by the beginning of class that day, either in person or by placing it in my mailbox in the Women and Gender Studies Center (2nd floor of the JC).

Papers will be evaluated according to:

- The clarity of your argument- that your paper has a clear thesis statement that relates to the topic of the assignment and that your analysis reflects that thesis.
- Your connections between the narrative and the readings- that you cite specific examples from both and show how you understand the two in relation to each other.
- Your connection between the representation(s) of women within the narrative and larger cultural issues as presented in the readings cited and as discussed in class.
- Clarity of writing, organization, spelling, grammar, and correct citations.
Reference Grid of Assignment Due Dates

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<th>Reference Grid of Assignment Due Dates</th>
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<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>September: Week 2</td>
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<td>September: Week 4</td>
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<td>December: Week 16</td>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>12/8: Final Exam</td>
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Bibliography


Darling-Wolf, Fabienne. “Mixed Message: How the Media Went Wrong on the Breast Implant Story.” *Herizons* 10.3 (Summer


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“Media and Girls,” *Media Awareness Network*.


