

Spring 2020
SOC 407 TOPICS IN POPULAR CULTURE:
GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN FILM
Dr. Maura Kelly

Course description

This one credit course focuses on depictions of gender and sexuality in film from a sociological perspective. We will seek to understand portrayals that reproduce oppressive ideologies and assess possibilities for portrayals that resist systems of oppression. This course will investigate depictions of gender, sexuality, and other identities in film, utilizing sociological theories and methods to better understand popular culture.

Course materials

For this course, you will be required to watch three films. You can find the films on Amazon, Netflix, Hulu, iTunes, Google Play, Redbox or access them another way. Note: you can find all the options for watching films (and how much they cost) [HERE](#) *If you have any challenges accessing or affording the films, please let me know ASAP and I will set up free remote viewing options for all three films via Zoom (this will require access to the internet).* All other course materials will be provided via links in the syllabus and D2L.

Course requirements

- Part 1 Quiz, due Friday May 15 via D2L (20 points)
- Part 2 Application of key concepts assignment, due Friday May 15 via D2L (20 points)
- Part 3 Arguments and evidence assignment, due Friday May 15 via D2L (20 points)
- Part 4 Final paper proposal, due Friday May 15 via D2L (5 points)
- Part 4 Final paper, due Friday June 12 via D2L (35 points)

Guidelines for Part 1: Intro to Gender and Sexuality in Film

1. Watch all the videos for part 1 of the course:
 - Watch: Kelly, Maura. 2020. “Introduction to Gender and Sexuality in Film” [LINK](#)
 - Watch: Smith, Stacy. 2016 “The Data Behind Hollywood's Sexism” *TED Talk* [LINK](#)
 - Watch: WHYY. 2020. “History of LGBTQ+ Representation in Film” (Note: weak on the BTQ+ content) [LINK](#)
 - Watch: Whitney E., Oliver. 2017. “An Unfortunate History of Cis Actors in Trans Roles” [LINK](#)
2. Review the lecture slides (available as PDF on D2L) and read the sources listed in the references if you need clarification on any of the concepts. Note that the quiz will only cover material presented in the videos listed above.

3. Take the quiz. You will have 30 minutes to complete the 20 question multiple choice quiz (one attempt). This quiz is open-notes. You will have enough time to look up or double check SOME of the answers, but not enough time to look up EVERY answer.

Quiz is due Friday May 15 (end of day) via D2L.

Guidelines for Part 2: Application of key concepts

1. Watch one of the two films below. Take notes on examples of key concepts (see list below)
 - *Think like a Man* (2012) When a group of friends find out their women have been using Steve Harvey's book, *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, to manipulate them in relationships, they respond by using this knowledge to gain the upper hand. Romantic comedy, PG-13, [rent from Amazon](#) or find elsewhere.
 - *Tangerine* (2015) After hearing that her pimp boyfriend cheated on her while she was in jail, a transgender sex worker and her best friend set out to find him and teach him and his new lover a lesson on Christmas Eve. This film is notable for filming on iPhones and casting transgender actors in lead roles. Comedy/Holiday, R, [free on Hulu](#), [rent from Amazon](#), or find elsewhere. ***This film is very R rated (for all the reasons, except there's only mild violence). This film would be best for students who have some background knowledge in transgender studies and/or sex work.***

Note: you can find all the options for watching films (and how much they cost) [HERE](#)

Remember that these are *comedies*. Sometimes the intended meaning is the opposite of what characters are saying or doing (this is a form of irony). For example, we might see a display of hegemonic masculinity where the audience is invited to laugh *at* this display for being outdated or offensive.

2. Choose six concepts from the list below to apply to the film

- Gender, gender identity
- Masculinity
- Femininity
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Cisgender
- Recognition
- Misrecognition, misgender
- Sexuality, sexual identity, sexual relationships
- Intersectionality
- Bechdel Test
- Shulka Test
- Objectification
- Male gaze
- Normative beauty ideals
- Trope
- Stereotype
- Countertype
- Postfeminism, postfeminist
- Performativity, performative
- Heteronormativity
- Homonormativity
- Cisnormativity
- Textual multiplicities

3. Complete the assignment

For each of the six concepts: 1) Define the concept (use a quote or paraphrase in your own words; cite appropriately); and 2) Apply the concept to the film, including at least one specific example from the film (e.g. dialog, non-verbal communication, imagery, plot point). Also, include a references section for all the sources you cited

Note: This is not intended to be a cohesive essay. Write one short paragraph (2-3 sentences) for each of the key concepts.

Example

Heteronormativity is defined as... We see heteronormativity in the film when... One specific example of this is when the main character says...

Assignment should be 400-600 words total. Due Friday May 15 (end of day) via D2L.

Guidelines for Part 3: Arguments and evidence

1. Watch: Burke, Mary and Maura Kelly. 2017. "The Visibility and Invisibility of Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality in *The Hunger Games*" [LINK](#)
2. Watch *The Hunger Games* (2012), [rent from Amazon](#) or find elsewhere. Take notes on the argument and evidence provided.
3. Complete the assignment
 - What is the main argument of Maura's research on *The Hunger Games*? Use a quote or paraphrase in your own words and cite appropriate.
 - Give two examples of evidence (e.g. dialog, non-verbal communication, a visual image, action of a scene) used in the lecture to support the main argument
 - Give four *additional* examples of evidence (not included in the lecture) from *The Hunger Games* that either support or challenge the main argument presented. Make sure to explain how it supports (or challenges) the main argument.
 - Include a references section only if you cited sources other than the lecture and the film

Note: This is not intended to be a cohesive essay. Write one short paragraph (2-3 sentences) for each of the examples.

Assignment should be 400-600 words total. Due Friday May 15 (end of day) via D2L.

Guidelines for Part 4: Final paper

PAPER PROPOSAL

1. To get started, watch Maura's video on how to write the final paper [LINK](#)
2. Choose a film that meets all the following criteria:
 - Released 2018 or later
 - At least 80 minutes long (no short films or television episodes)
 - Fictional (not a documentary or a scripted film based on a true story)
 - Primarily for adult audiences
 - Takes place in the recent past (1980s or later), the present, or the future (not a period piece, time travel is okay)
 - In English or another language you are fluent in
 - Not a sequel or part of a series (same universe is okay, ask me about specific superhero films)

Choose a film from the list of suggestions (see final paper video lecture) or search [IMDB](#) or [Netflix](#)

3. Watch the film (if you haven't seen it before)
4. Write the proposal

Components of the paper proposal

- Film title and year
- Topic of the film analysis and/or main argument

Example

- *Hangover 3* (2013)
- This paper will examine queer possibilities of the bromance in *Hangover 3*

Note: if you want to change your film or topic/argument between submitting the proposal and writing the paper, that will probably be fine, but check with me first.

No minimum or maximum word count. Due Friday May 15 (end of day) via D2L.

FINAL PAPER

1. Watch the film at least one more time, taking notes (draw on the big questions for the course, elements of film analysis, and the key concepts for the course)
2. Write the paper

Components of the final paper

- The paper should start with an introduction that describes the main argument of the paper and a brief description of the focal film and key characters.
- The bulk of the paper should be your original analysis of the film.
 - Draw on lots of quotes and examples from the film to support your points. Note any counter-examples that show variation from the overall trend.
 - Make sure to compare and contrast throughout the paper. Going one-by-one through characters or scenes will not be a successful strategy for this paper!
 - Draw on key concepts from the course
 - Keep the focus of the paper on the content of the film. You do not have the data to make arguments about how this may effect audiences. Your personal opinions are also not relevant here.
- Write a concluding paragraph briefly restating the main argument of the paper. Then reflect on what you have observed and written means for gender and sexuality in pop culture and in society. Here you can feel free to go beyond the data.
- Include a references section in which you include the citations for the course readings cited and any additional readings cited (not recommended)

3. Review what you have written against the final paper rubric (out of 35 points)

	A	B	C	D
Main argument	There is an interesting argument that is clearly stated and supported by examples and quotes	An interesting argument is present, but is underdeveloped, or not completely supported	Argument is present, but is not interesting or not successfully developed or supported	There is no argument
Examples and quotes	Examples and quotes are incorporated throughout the essay	Examples and quotes are occasionally incorporated into the essay	At least one example or quote is included	Examples and quotes are absent or inappropriately used
Comparisons	Compares and contrasts throughout the essay	Occasionally compares and contrasts	At least one example of comparing or contrasting	Does not compare and contrast
Key terms	Introduces and define key terms where appropriate	Occasionally misses opportunity to introduce and define key terms	At least one introduction and definition of a key term	Does not introduce and define any key terms
Writing style	Writing is clear, grammatically correct, and organized	Writing is reasonably clear and has an overall structure	Style or organization sometimes inhibits understanding of the essay	Style or organization inhibits a basic understanding of the essay

Letter to points: A=32-35, B=28-31, C=25-27, D=21-24 F=23 or lower

- Subtract 1 point for every 200 words under 1200 or over 1400 words (e.g. 1000-1199 words = minus 1 point)
- Subtract 1 point if any citations of readings or episodes discussed in the text are missing from the references section (or if references section is missing).

Assignment should be 1200-1400 words total. Due Friday June 12 (end of day) via D2L. No late assignments accepted!