The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 4406F - 001
Media and Gender
Fall 2022
Wednesdays 9:30-12:30
Room: SSC 5230

In Person

Instructor: Dr Kaitlynn Mendes, Associate Professor
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-2 (virtual or face to face) or by appointment
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5415
Email: Kaitlynn.mendes@uwo.ca

Course Description:
Media and Gender will address key issues and concerns around how women, men, non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals are represented, experience, and engage with various media forms. Drawing insights feminist, queer, post-colonial, and intersectional theories, this course will engage with current topics such as #MeToo and the rising wave of digital feminist activism, pornography, music, the news, advertising, and speech. The module encourages learning outside the classroom and a ‘hands on’ approach to through crafts and activism. Overall, the module aims to give students the critical tools to assess and critique what they see, read, and hear about gendered bodies through the media in their everyday lives.

Prerequisite(s): Third or fourth year standing in any module.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Anti-requisite(s): MIT 3210F/G, Sociology 4485F/G taken in 2021/2022.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

• Demonstrate understanding of key theoretical and critical concepts and debates around gender, media, representation, ideology, and critical theories.
• Apply relevant theoretical concepts to analyse the ways in which gender is represented in the media.
• Be aware of ways in which scholars and activists have attempted to challenge, resist, and improve narrow gender representations
• Critically analyse the ways gender has been represented in the media through academic essays, reflective writing, and oral presentations.
• Develop well-structured and supported arguments using appropriate academic conventions and scholarly practices.
• Contribute to class discussions about gender and media, drawing both from key theoretical concepts and where relevant, personal experiences and observations.

Course Material:
There is no core book for this class. Weekly readings are assigned via OWL.

Communication:
Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (http://owl.uwo.ca) and student email on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

The best way to contact me is by email: Kaitlynn.mendes@uwo.ca

Method of Evaluation:
The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Presentations</th>
<th>Assigned in Week 1</th>
<th>30%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Essay Plan</td>
<td>25 Oct 2022</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Portfolio</td>
<td>29 November 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Essay</td>
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Evaluation Breakdown:
Class Presentation: Students will select a topic and individually or in a small group (2-3 people) will deliver a presentation in class (10 minutes per person) assigned in Week 1. Students are expected to ground their presentation in academic theory and apply it to contemporary issues or media forms. Students will also be required to present a one-page summary of their presentation with full bibliography of all sources used. Students should draw from a minimum of five academic sources for this assignment. Students are particularly encouraged to take a de-colonized approach to the assignment, think about issues of power and privilege, and draw from a wide range of ideas and scholarship, such as that produced by Indigenous scholars and those from the Global South.

Due: Assigned in Week 1 – ongoing throughout the semester
Weight 30%

**Academic Essay Plan:** Students will submit an essay plan, outlining their chosen topic relating to gender and media. Students can choose from pre-set questions, or negotiate their own essay with Dr Mendes. They will begin with brief introduction, outlining up to three key arguments, and identify a minimum of **four academic sources** they will draw from to support these arguments. The assignment should be double-spaced and no longer than 2 pages.

Due: 25 October 2022

Weight 15%

**Reflective Portfolio:** Students are required to submit a short, written reflection on a minimum of one topic addressed in this course. Students have freedom to be creative in their presentation (e.g. as a diary, a blog, a report, a letter, a video, a collage with commentary). Students are encouraged to draw from personal experiences in these reflections and comment on how information, theories, or ideas discussed in the course resonate (or not) with their lives. Students are given flexibility on what they reflect on, including lectures, required or further readings, or seminar presentations. In the assignment, students can focus on aspects they found particularly interesting, problematic, enlightening, or challenging. Although it is not as formal as an academic essay, students should still draw from a minimum of **two academic sources**. Here, students could address the usefulness/drawbacks/failings of a particular theory or discuss how these theories (do not) relate to their life experiences. Students are particularly encouraged to take a de-colonized approach to the assignment, think about issues of power and privilege, and draw from diverse sources, examples and experiences beyond Europe or the Global North. Recommended length 5-8 pages.

Due: 29 November 2022

Weight 25%

**Academic Essay:** Students should build from the essay plan in Assignment 2, conducting an in-depth exploration of one of the topics addressed in this course. In doing so, students should incorporate feedback from the original essay plan, building on these arguments drawing from academic literature. Students are also encouraged to draw from personal experiences or observations where relevant, and take a de-colonized approach to the assignment, thinking about issues of power and privilege. This includes drawing from diverse sources, media texts, or experiences such as those produced by Indigenous scholars, and those from the Global South. The paper should support its conclusions with secondary evidence. The paper should include a minimum of **eight academic sources**. Students must cite all relevant sources and include a full bibliography of works cited. The suggested page length is 8-9 pages.

Due: 8 December 2022
Weight 30%

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

Depending on the circumstances, accommodations might be made by providing an extension or re-weighting

Course Schedule and Readings:

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Intro: Why media and gender?</td>
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<td>Sept 20, 2022</td>
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<td>Masculinity and the Media</td>
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<td>Trans and Queer Identities in the Media</td>
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<td>Intimacy Coordination: The Art of Making Safe Spaces (Guest lecture from Dr. Tanya Horeck)</td>
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<td>The Gendered Politics of Anger and Voice in Contemporary Media</td>
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<td>Student Choice #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Nov 15, 2022</td>
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<td>#MeToo and Digital Feminist Activism</td>
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<td>Nov 22, 2022</td>
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**Week 1: Sept 13, 2022**

**Introduction – Why Media and Gender?**

- Introduction to the course, content, assignments and expectations
- Explore what ‘gender’ is and how it differs from ‘sex’
- Introduction to feminist and critical scholarship relevant to the course

**Key Reading:**


Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2015) *We Should All Be Feminists*. New York: Penguin. Also see her TED talk: [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda Ngozi_adichie_we should all be feminists?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda Ngozi_adichie_we should all be feminists?language=en)

**Further Reading:**


Baxter, Helen (2014) Everything that’s wrong with women in the media. TED Talk. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcpBFFClymY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcpBFFClymY)


hooks, bell (2006) Cultural Criticism and Transformation. Part 1. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLMVqnyTo_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLMVqnyTo_0)

Key Media’s Portrayal of Gender Roles (2010) YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2bYinZ6RX0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2bYinZ6RX0)


McKay, Finn (2021) *Female Masculinities and the Gender Wars: The Politics of Sex*. London: IB Taurus (Chapter 1: Let’s talk about sex and babies: What’s logical about biological sex?)


**Week 2: Sept 20, 2022**  
**Masculinity and the Media**

- What is (hegemonic) masculinity?
- How are masculinities represented in the media?
- How can representations of men and masculinity be harmful?

**Key Reading:**


Tough Guise 2: violence, manhood and American culture (2016) [https://ocul-uwo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991044671620405163&amp;context=L&amp;vid=01OCUL_UWO:UWO_DEFAULT&amp;lang=en&amp;search_scope=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&amp;adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&amp;tab=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&amp;query=any,contains,tough%20guise](https://ocul-uwo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991044671620405163&amp;context=L&amp;vid=01OCUL_UWO:UWO_DEFAULT&amp;lang=en&amp;search_scope=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&amp;adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&amp;tab=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&amp;query=any,contains,tough%20guise)

**Further Reading:**


**Week 3: Sept 27, 2022 Trans and Queer Identities in the Media**

- How are 2SLGBTQ+ communities represented in the media?
- How might media be used to ‘talk back’ to harmful representations?
- What role do digital technologies and dating apps play amongst 2SLGBTQ+ communities?

**Key Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


Fox, Jesse and Ralston, R. (2016) ‘Queer identity online: Informal learning and teaching experiences of LGBTQ individuals on social media,’ Computers in Human Behavior, 65: 635-642


**Week 4: Oct 4, 2022**

**Intimacy Coordination: The Art of Making Safe Spaces**

- We will have a special guest lecturer Dr Tanya Horeck from Anglia Ruskin University, UK speak about the way sex and intimacy is shown in the media, and the impact intimacy coordinators has had on the TV and film industries
- When British creative sensation Michaela Coel won the 2021 BAFTA for Best Leading Actress for the HBO/BBC drama, I May Destroy You, she singled out one individual for special thanks: intimacy coordinator, Ita O’Brien. In her acceptance speech, Coel highlighted the importance of intimacy coordination for the film and television industry and thanked O’Brien ‘for making the space safe for creating physical, emotional, and professional boundaries so that we can make work about exploitation, loss of respect, about abuse of power, without being exploited or abused in the process.’ With this
statement, Coel articulates the significant - and complex – relationship between the off-screen work of the intimacy coordinator and the on-screen portrayal of sex, sexual violence and themes of consent. In this talk, Tanya Horeck discusses the initial findings of her research study (with colleague Susan Berridge) on the role of intimacy coordinators in the UK film and television industry. Exploring common themes around care and consent that emerged in their interviews with intimacy coordinators and those who have worked with them (including, for example, actors, union workers, and agents), Horeck proffers an understanding of ICs as a community of artistic practitioners who are developing a set of ethical protocols for choreographing intimacy and keeping actors safe. Situating intimacy coordination in relation to wider shifting cultural norms and attitudes around sex and consent, Horeck asks how the art of making safe spaces on film and TV sets might reframe understandings of intimacy and interpersonal relations in a post #MeToo, post COVID-19 world?

Key Readings:


Week 5: Oct 11, 2022 Student Choice #1

This week, students will have a choice of topic for this lecture:

- Porn and Power
- Gender and Advertising
- Gender, Media, and Sexual Violence
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women
- Exploring the Manosphere
- Feminism in the Media
- Feminist Media Production
- Menstruation, Puberty and Menopause in the media
- Dating and Safety Apps

Week 6: Feb 16, 2022 The Gendered Politics of Anger and Voice in Contemporary Media

- This week we have a special guest lecture from Dr. Jilly Kay (University of Leicester. We will explore the ways female anger seems to be registering in ways that it has seldom
done in recent decades - and how social media platforms have played a central role in the circulation of this rage. In many ways this seems to be an astonishing development, because women's anger - and especially Black women's anger - has for so long been construed as deviant, monstrous or taboo.

- In this lecture we will explore debates within feminism about the value of anger - for example, whether rage is important for political justice, or detrimental to it. Consider claims that the digital media environment is contributing to a more angry, hostile and populist culture - and how we might understand this in relation to gender politics
- Features guest speaker Dr. Jilly Boyce Kay, University of Leicester.

**Key Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Week 7: Oct 25, 2022  Student Choice #2 -**

This week, students will have a choice of topic for this lecture:

- Porn and Power
- Gender and Advertising
- Gender, Media, and Sexual Violence
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women
- Exploring the Manosphere
- Feminism in the Media
- Feminist Media Production
- Menstruation, Puberty and Menopause in the media
- Dating and Safety Apps

**Reading Week: 1 Nov 2022 - No Classes**

**Week 8: Nov 8, 2022  Student Choice #3**

This week, students will have a choice of topic for this lecture:

- Porn and Power
- Gender and Advertising
- Gender, Media, and Sexual Violence
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women
- Exploring the Manosphere
- Feminism in the Media
- Feminist Media Production
- Menstruation, Puberty and Menopause in the media
• Dating and Safety Apps

**Week 9: Nov 15, 2022  #MeToo and Digital Feminist Activism**

- Look at the prevalence of sexual violence, misogyny and rape culture in society
- Explore the creative ways feminists have harnessed digital technologies to challenge sexist oppression
- Explore the potential, promises, and pitfalls of digital feminist activism

**Key Readings:**


Phipps, Alison (2020) *Me, Not You: The Trouble with Mainstream Feminism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Chapter 2: Me, Not You)

**Further Readings:**


Han, X. (2018) Searching for an online space for feminism? The Chinese feminist group Gender Watch Women’s Voice and its changing approaches to online misogyny, Feminist Media Studies, 18:4, 734-749, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2018.1447430

Jeong, Euisol & Lee, Jieun (2018) We take the red pill, we confront the DickTrix: online feminist activism and the augmentation of gendered realities in South Korea, Feminist Media Studies, 18(4); 705-717.


**Week 10: Nov 22, 2022 Gender, Activism, and Media Production – Creative Session**

- This week we will explore why and how activists have created their own media to challenge gender norms, including zines, newspapers, and blogs.
- We will get the chance to create our own media artefacts for activist purposes.

**Key Readings:**


Clarke, Lewis, Cummings, James, Hakim, Jamie, Redfern, Laura, and Young, Ingrid (2021) Digital Intimacies Zine. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SHz9_3nPHogXc4EwrUxRpn-Kp8hocUND/view?usp=sharing

**Further Readings:**


**Week 11: Nov 29, 2022**  
**1-1 Assignment Meeting Support**

- Instead of having class this week, you will get the chance to have a 1-1 meeting to go over questions for your academic assignments.

**Week 12: Dec 6, 2022**  
**Course Wrap Up**

- This week will give us the opportunity to wrap up, answer any final questions, or review key ideas from the course.
- We will also go over expectations for your final assignments.

**Important Policies**

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work:** Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). The student medical certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of
their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

**Accessibility Options:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

**Scholastic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

**Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (https://www.turnitin.com/).

**Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: Academic Counselling - Western University (uwo.ca).
Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.