University of Waterloo  
Department of Women's Studies  
WS 201  
Images of Women in Popular Culture  
Fall 2018  
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:30-10:20am, PAS 1229

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr. Sasha Cocarla  
Office: HH353  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30am-12pm or by appointment  
Email: scocarla@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description
"The course examines contemporary images of women and their historical foundations in a range of media, including books, magazines, film, television and the internet. The effects of these images on women's self-esteem and body image, as well as the strategies used to challenge these effects, will also be discussed."

This course will examine the multiple relationships that exist between women and popular culture, including (but not limited to) visual representations, sites of creation and consumption, political movements and consequences, personal and social challenges and triumphs, and resistance and recuperation. Situating our conversations within a feminist and Cultural Studies perspective, this course will position "popular culture" as a site of social and cultural power, recognizing the ways in which popular culture has (and continues to be) incredibly influential in shaping/perpetuating our dominant ideals, politics, and pastimes. Weaving throughout each theme in the course, intersectionality in popular culture (gender, race, sexuality, dis/ability, age, body size, and so forth) will be discussed and highly focused on. Finally, this course will provide students with a space to dialogue, learn, and reflect on their relationships to feminism/Women’s Studies, and popular culture, positioning themselves within our conversations.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

A. Think critically and engage with course content in a thoughtful manner by asking questions about and/or challenging dominant assumptions, recognizing power dynamics, and drawing connections across multiple topics, events, happenings, and histories  
B. Utilize intersectionality to uncover the multiple ways in which identity, power, and oppressions exist within popular culture
C. Evaluate your own relationship to various perspectives and happenings regarding women, gender, sexuality, and popular culture
D. Recognize the relevancy and importance of studying popular culture in the academy

Readings and Other Material
- Readings will be available through e-reserve. See our course website on LEARN
- Occasional readings and content may be posted on LEARN by the instructor that relate to our class content and discussions (i.e.: news pieces, pop culture examples)
- Media content will be a part of our course and will be just as important as the lectures and course readings. If you miss a viewing, it is your responsibility to either obtain and view the missed media on your own time, or, ask your fellow classmates for notes

Course Requirements and Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation (if known)</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini-Journals</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Reviews</td>
<td>October 26th or November 9th</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Take-Home</td>
<td>October 12th</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of-Term Project</td>
<td>In-class portion: December 3rd; Written portion: December 10th</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Total 100%

In-Class Participation
In-class participation will be comprised primarily of small group-work/conversation and occasional written responses to questions posed by me during lecture. These will happen at different points throughout the term and attendance will be used to keep track of this. More detailed instructions will be made available both in-class and on LEARN.

Mini-Journals
Throughout the semester, you are required to submit 5 mini-journal entries reflecting on your chosen week’s topic. Beginning with the week of September 10th, students can select any 5 weeks out of the term (excluding the week of the midterm and December 3rd), and each entry should do the following: briefly summarize (in your own words) the main points of that week’s lectures, briefly discuss one article from the week, and then reflect on the week’s topic. Aside from the brief discussions of lecture and one reading (which combined, should be approximately 1pg), the second page (your reflection) can be on anything at all related to the week’s topic – feelings on the topic, likes/dislikes, connections to your life, and so on. This is your chance to show me your critical thinking skills and the connections you are making week to week. In addition, this is a great opportunity to ask any questions of clarification about that specific week’s topic and/or readings (though questions should only be one small aspect of your overall reflection). Reflections cannot be submitted on a previous week’s topic, nor can all five reflections be submitted at once. You have from after class on Fridays until Sunday night (11:59pm) to reflect and submit. Each mini-journal should be 2-3pgs, double-spaced, and is worth 4% each. No late
mini-journals will be accepted. More detailed instructions will be made available both in class and on LEARN.

**Film Reviews**

Based on in-class viewing of 2 films, students are required to submit 1 film review (weighted at 20%), analyzing the film in relation to the larger topic of our course – women and popular culture. As there are 2 film options, students have the opportunity to choose which 1 out of the 2 films they will write on. Students will be encouraged to review these films through a critical lens by specifically connecting class concepts and readings to their analysis of the film. Reviews will be submitted one week after the viewing and should be 4-5 pages in length (excluding the bibliography). Proper MLA citation is required for all sources you site. More detailed instructions will be made available both in class and on LEARN.

**Midterm**

Our midterm will be a take-home exam that will be due October 12th, 2018 by 10:30am via LEARN. The exam will be discussed on October 5th, and students will need to draw on course content from the first 4 full weeks of class. As this is an exam, no extensions will be given nor will late midterms be accepted (unless official documentation is provided). Further explanations will be given in class.

**End-of-Term Project**

This project will consist of both an in-class portion/discussion (on December 3rd) as well as a submitted assignment (due on December 10th, by 11:59pm). While further details will be provided after week 3, this project will ask students to synthesize what you have learned in WS201 throughout the term in connection to 3 separate mediatized spaces – online, on screen, and public. What can the images in these spaces tell us about gender? What can the images in these spaces tell us about other identity positionalities? What can the images in these spaces tell us about cultural norms and ideals? The project will also include a reflection component in connection to both the course and your in-class discussions on your project. More detailed instructions will be made available both in class and on LEARN.

**Course Outline**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 7th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings Due</td>
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<td>October 8th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving <em>no class</em></td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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<td>October 9th</td>
<td>Study Days <em>no classes</em></td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 12th</td>
<td><em>No class</em></td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22nd, 24th, and 26th</td>
<td>Sexuality + LGBTQ* Representation (Film review on “Chick Flicks/Lit and Romance” due on October 26th, 11:59pm)</td>
<td>Jackson, Sue and Tiina Vares. “‘Too Many Bad Role Models for Us Girls’: Girls, Female Pop Celebrities and ‘Sexualization’”. <em>Sexualities</em> 18.4 (2015): 480-498.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>and November 2nd</td>
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<td>and 9th</td>
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* A poll will be posted on LEARN on September 20th where students can vote on whether our film for this week will be from either the “action” or “horror” genre. The poll will come to a close on September 23rd, and the results will be announced on the 24th. Readings for this week (depending on which theme is chosen) will be posted shortly thereafter. (In-class film screening for film review)
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<tr>
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<td><em>Studies 10.3 (2010): 335-352.</em></td>
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|                       |                            | Podnieks, Elizabeth. “‘The Bump is Back’: Celebrity Moms, Entertainment Journalism, and the ‘Media
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Readings Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 3rd (last class)</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up + In-class Portion of End-of-Term Project</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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**Late Work**

A late penalty of two percent (2%) per day will be applied to all late assignments for up to five (5) days (including weekends) – afterwards, no assignments will be accepted. Projects must be submitted on LEARN unless otherwise discussed with me. If you have concerns regarding approaching deadlines, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. For late assignments due to illness, appropriate documentation must be provided (i.e.: doctor's note).

**Information on Plagiarism and Academic Conduct**

The University has an established policy with respect to plagiarism on assignments and examinations, which the student is required to know. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism. Students are cautioned that plagiarism and academic misconduct carry a variety of penalties. For more information, please see the institutional-required statements below. In addition, students are encouraged to refer to the library's helpful outline on academic integrity including tips to avoid plagiarizing ([Academic Integrity Tutorial](#)).
**Electronic Device Policy**
For the time being, laptops will be permitted in class for the use of taking class notes only. All other electronics (cell phones, MP3 players) are not allowed during class time unless needed for accessibility issues (if this is the case, please come talk to me).

**Other Notes**
- The educational materials developed for this course (lecture notes and slides, exam and assignment descriptions, and material posted on LEARN) are my intellectual property. These have been developed solely for this course and students registered in the course, and are not intended for wider dissemination
- PowerPoint slides will be made available on LEARN before lecture. These will not be the full lectures; it is students' responsibility to take notes as you see fit
- Make sure your name and student number appear on all work you submit (including any in-class written work) and be sure to keep copies of your submitted assignments
- All assignments should be uploaded as either a Word (preferably) or a PDF document
- Students are responsible for checking LEARN regularly for any course updates
- I welcome students to reach out to me both in person and via email (I will do my best to reply within 24hrs) with any questions/concerns/thoughts you may have about the course.

**Content Note**
Some of the articles and images we will be discussing/viewing may contain challenging and/or upsetting material, including (but not limited to) topics on sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, fatphobia, ableism, violence and rape culture. While these are important topics and necessary conversations to have, if you find yourself needing to step out of class due to the possibly upsetting/emotionally challenging nature of the content, please do not hesitate to do so. You are still responsible, though, for any missed material. If you would like to discuss any concerns you have regarding specific content that may be upsetting/emotionally challenging for you, please feel free to talk with me before that subject comes up in class. Also, as students at the University of Waterloo, you are entitled to many great services that might be helpful in dealing with some of the challenging material we will be covering in class – please make use of these (see listed below) or see me for more information.

In addition, since we are dealing with a variety of sensitive topics, respect for those you are sharing the space with is incredibly important. In order to make this class a comfortable learning space, please be conscientious of how you use this space, take the time to attentively listen to each other, and keep kindness and respect at the forefront while participating.

**Student Services**
- **Writing Centre** – Student Success Office, South Campus Hall, second floor, 519-888-4567 ext. 30436
- **Health Services** – Health Services Building, 519-888-4096 to schedule an appointment, 1-866-797-0000 for free 24/7 advice from a health professional
**Counselling Services** – Needles Hall Addition, NH 2401, 519-888-4567 ext 32655 to schedule an appointment; counserv@uwaterloo.ca

Counselling Services also provides a list of additional resources, including community and emergency contacts – **Counselling Services - Resources**

Full details and resources can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website]

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

**Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre** – Room 228 at St. Paul's University College

**AccessAbility Services** – see note below

**Feds Food Bank** – Student Life Centre (SLC) 2104

**GLOW Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity** – Student Life Centre (SLC) 2102

**The Women's Centre** – Student Life Centre (SLC) 2101

**University of Waterloo Shuttle Service**

**Equity Office** – 1st floor of the Mathematics and Computer (MC) Building; 519-888-4567 ext. 48633 or equity@uwaterloo.ca

**Waterloo Public Interest Research Group - WPIRG** – Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement #4209, Conrad Grebel University College

For more campus services see: [UWaterloo Offices and Services](#)

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**Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009**

**Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

**Discipline**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).
Grievance
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals
A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com
Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.