



## CIEE in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

<b>Course name:</b>	Screen Cultures
<b>Course number:</b>	VIST 3001 NETH
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Social Sciences + Business & Culture
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2018
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<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment

### Course Description

“Popular culture is the stage where we rehearse our identities.”

-- José Esteban Muñoz

Beginning from the premise that we live mediated lives, and that the visual media texts we consume on a daily basis shape our understanding of our own identity and the identity of others, *CIEE Screen Cultures* will explore the ways in which media at large – and film and television, in particular – produce meaning, articulate ideology and identity, and both reflect and effect cultural change, specifically as it concerns dominant and subversive articulations of gendered, raced, and sexual identity/ies. After a cursory overview of the major theoretical approaches that inform the study of gender, race, and sexuality in popular culture, this course will home in on the representation of discrete and historically situated lived identities across a wide range of film and television texts, hailing from the post-World War II period up to the present. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to illustrate how cultural theory and popular culture inform one another, paving the way for us to come to a renewed understanding of the complex dynamics that shape the changing representations of gender, race and sexuality – both *on* and *off* the screen.

### Learning Objectives

When students reach the end of this course, they will be expected to:

- Process, engage with, and interrogate theories of popular culture, specifically Marxist, psychoanalytic and (post)feminist interventions in the interpretation of images of women and men on the small and big screen;

- Demonstrate a keen understanding of the changing conceptions of masculinity and femininity in American film and television from the 1950s to the present – and the way(s) in which these are inflected by questions of race, class, and sexuality;
- Identify and be sensitive to the ways in which sexuality/ies are shaped and represented on screen;
- Apply theories of popular culture and feminist criticism to visual media texts, both orally and in writing;
- Understand and comment on the complex relationship between the creators, distributors, critics, and consumers of popular culture -- and how each encode and decode the film and television text in their own way;
- Have become more discerning and critical consumers of film and television.

### **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for *CIEE Screen Cultures* – except for an interest in film and television!

### **Method of Instruction**

*CIEE Screen Cultures* runs for 13 weeks (in other words, it spans the entire length of the semester) and meets twice a week for 2 hours. Every single class, students will be assigned one or two theoretical texts and one or more primary texts (i.e. one film or two to three episodes of a television series). This course is taught as a seminar, which means that we will discuss the primary and secondary texts together, and that students are encouraged to pose questions to the instructor and each other.

Although the discussion will be facilitated and moderated by the instructor, it is imperative that students contribute actively to the discussion. Seminar-style classes rise and fall by the participation of the students, which makes it essential that everyone comes to class prepared. At a minimum, students should have read the assigned texts, watched the assigned movie(s) and/or television show(s), and taken (extensive) notes on both.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

Students' final grades will be based on the following:

- Class participation: 10%
- Three pop quizzes: 15%
- One podcast episode: 15%
- Three response papers: 30%
- Final exam: 30%

### Class participation – 10%

As mentioned above, the success of seminar-style classes depends in no small part on the active – and informed – contributions of students; you will therefore be expected to come to class prepared and ready to engage with your fellow students on the assigned readings and visual media texts.

Note: Although all of you are experienced viewers of film and television, there is a difference between watching a movie in bed before you go to sleep and watching a movie in order to unpack its gendered underpinnings. While some of you may choose to watch a film two times, all of you will have to take copious notes and bring these to class in order to support your arguments with specific references to scenes, camera movements, dialogue, etc.

### Three pop quizzes – 15%

These three unannounced quizzes are designed to test that students have read the assigned readings and watched the assigned visual media texts, while also giving you an idea of which type(s) of questions you can expect on the final exam. Students will have 20 minutes to answer three questions (ranging in level of difficulty); one of these questions will cover the plot of the assigned film or television show, while one or more will interrogate students' understanding of the assigned readings.

### Podcast episode – 15%

Since their arrival on the cultural scene in 2004, podcasts have undergone a period of unprecedented growth, and have become one of the most popular and influential media in the dissemination of news, opinion, and critical commentary. Today, podcasts play an influential role in shaping the national conversation, specifically as it concerns the historical and contemporary analysis and reception of film and television, with podcasts ranging from weekly conversations about the state of popular culture in the US (e.g. *The Slate Cultural Gabfest*, *NPR's Pop Culture Happy Hour*, *Pop Rocket*) to in-depth discussions of every episode of a particular television series (e.g. *Talk the Thrones*, *Mission Log*, *Gilmore Guys*) to deep dives into specific eras of Hollywood cinema (*You Must Remember This*).

You will be asked to follow in the footsteps of (amateur and professional) podcast hosts across the United States by contributing to the discussion and analysis of American film and television with a focus on unpacking the gendered, raced, and sexual dimensions of an American pop cultural text. In a fifteen-minute podcast episode (if you opt for a podcast with two hosts) or a twenty-minute episode (if you choose to have three hosts), you will demonstrate your finely honed analytical skills by parsing a film or TV series of your own choosing.

Envisioned as an oral response paper, your episode will be evaluated on the same criteria; needless to say, you will not be asked to quote authors at length, but you will have to weave their theoretical insights into your conversation. Ultimately, your podcast episode should take the form of a thoughtful conversation between two or three well-read individuals, which will advance your listeners' understanding of the gendered, raced, and sexual issues raised by the film or TV series you select as the focus of your podcast episode.

You have to submit your podcast episode on Monday, October 30 in an audio format of your own choosing.

### Three response papers – 30%

Students will be asked to write three 2,000-word response papers (each worth 10% of the student's final grade), in which they will be given the opportunity to respond to that week's readings and viewings by providing an integrated analysis of both. These response papers should include:

- a title and subtitle
- an introduction, culminating in a thesis statement
- one or more paragraphs that refer to specific scenes from the student's chosen film and/or television show(s) and specific arguments made in the assigned reading(s) to support the thesis statement
- a conclusion, which may include further/future avenues of approach to the question(s) raised

These response papers must take the form of an argumentative research paper, which means that students must go beyond a mere one-to-one summary or application of the theory and the (visual media) text(s) under consideration and must instead craft and support an original argument about the chosen film or television show that is grounded in the assigned theoretical reading(s).

These papers must be formatted according to MLA guidelines, and must include a list of works cited; if a student is unfamiliar with the MLA annotation method, the instructor will provide the student with an overview of the most important MLA guidelines. In addition to this summary, students are encouraged to consult Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (or OWL), which offers a comprehensive and easy-to-use overview of the MLA citation method: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Crucially, students must write and submit one response papers in block 1 and one in block 2. Students who have prepared a response paper must hand it in (either via e-mail or in person) no later than 9AM on the day when their chosen film or television show(s) will be discussed. Additionally, students who have written a response paper may be asked to share the points they raise in their paper during the in-class discussion.

The third response paper you will write must engage with a film or TV show screened outside of class. After attending the screening in question, the student will be asked to write a comparative research paper, and bring one or more of the theoretical readings discussed in class to bear on both the assigned film or television show(s) and the film or television show(s) they watched at their chosen screening.

### Final exam – 30%

This written exam is designed to test students' understanding of the theories discussed in class, and, crucially, how these help viewers make sense of the changing representation of men and women in film and television texts from 1950 until the present. During this cumulative exam, which will cover material culled from the entire length of the semester, students will be asked to answer four questions (out of

seven questions that will be provided) and will have to demonstrate -- in a cogent and well-structured response -- their knowledge of the major changes in the lives and visual representations of men and women since the end of the Second World War.

### **Attendance, class participation and classroom policies**

Each student is expected to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance will be taken every week by the course instructor. Participation will be assessed according to the CIEE Amsterdam attendance policy outlined below:

1 absence = allowed

2 absences = extra assignment (1 page in consultation with the instructor)

3 absences = 1 point off the student's final grade

4 absences = student fails the course

- If a student comes in 15-30 minutes late to class, this counts as a ½ absence.
- At all times, the student needs to inform the instructor – before the start of class – in case he or she will incur an absence. Failure to notify the teacher in advance will result in an extra assignment.
- Note about all assignments: Late assignments will be marked down with 1 point off. Assignments that are more than 3 days (72 hours) late will not be accepted.

Students who make active connections to the concepts from the reading materials in class discussions, students who actively ask questions, and students who actively reflect on out-of-class experiences in class will receive extra points for participation. Participation points will be deducted when students do not participate in class or have not read the assigned reading materials before coming to class.

Since we will be discussing culturally sensitive issues in class, the classroom must be a safe space in which students are able to express their opinions openly. Discriminatory comments or language of any kind will not be tolerated.

Laptops are allowed, but only when they are used to take notes or to look up information directly related to the class discussion. The instructor reserves the right to prohibit laptop use in case this distracts other students or this privilege is abused.

Important: Please note that in case you are not present for a pop quiz or the final exam -- or fail to hand in a response paper on time because of illness -- you are required to hand in a written doctor's note with your teacher.

Resits are not offered for CIEE courses.

## **Screenings**

A number of screenings will be organized throughout the semester, which will give students the opportunity to see a variety of films or TV shows that serve as additional slash different illustrations of the theories discussed in class.

While students are encouraged to attend as many of the screenings as possible, they have to attend only one, which will serve as the basis of one of their four response papers (see the section on response papers above).

Since these screenings depend largely on the movies and TV shows that are shown in the movie theaters of the city of Amsterdam, most of these screenings will be announced on a rolling basis; students will be informed of an addition to the roster of screenings both via e-mail and in class.

## **Weekly Schedule**

- Week 1: Spectatorship, Power and Pleasure + Theorizing the (Female) Spectator I
- Week 2: Looking Back at Race and Gender I + Theorizing the (Female) Spectator II
- Week 3: Looking Back at Race and Gender II + Theorizing the (Female) Spectator III
- Week 4: Fixing Femininity in Post-World War II America + Consuming Unruly Femininity in the 1950s
- Week 5: Manufacturing Masculinity in Post-World War II America + Feminist Historiography and Counter-Memory in 1960s Cinema
- Week 6: Historicizing Intersectionality + Gender and Quality Television in the 1970s
- Week 7: Race and Relevance Television Programming in the 1970s + Horror in the 1970s
- Week 8: Reading Week (no class)
- Week 9: Feminism in Outer Space + The Feminist Backlash in 1980s Cinema
- Week 10: Millennial Masculinity + Postfeminism I
- Week 11: Postfeminism II + Women and/in Reality Television
- Week 12: Contemporary Small-Screen Masculinities + Situating the Latina in the Contemporary Sitcom
- Week 13: Queering Masculinity in Film + Queering Femininity on Television
- Week 14: Gender Trouble and the Politics of Drag + Transgender Television

## **Readings**

All the required readings listed above (along with a complete bibliography) will be posted on Canvas under "Files."