



CIEE Amsterdam, the Netherlands

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| Course title: | Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Popular Culture |
| Course number: | GENE 3001 AMNT |
| Programs offering course: | Contemporary Netherlands Studies |
| Language of instruction: | English |
| U.S. Semester Credits: | 3 |
| Contact Hours: | 45 |
| Term: | January 2020 |

Course Description

“Popular culture is the stage where we rehearse our identities.”
-- José Esteban Muñoz

Through this course, students will apply a critical lens to the representation of gender, race, and sexuality in popular cultural media including Dutch TV, film, radio, the Internet, music, magazines and literature. Comparisons will be made with similar representations in other European countries and the United States. Course materials pay special attention to questions of other identity markers such as race, economic status, disability and the body. The course combines key concepts and theoretical frameworks in critical theory and cultural studies with analyses of media and popular cultural sites. This course will include guest lectures from experts in the field, and site visits to community groups and NGOs promoting awareness of sexuality issues in the community.

Learning Objectives

When students have reached the end of this course, they are expected to:

- Be familiar with the history and dominant forms of popular culture, particularly in the Netherlands;
- Be able to address the mechanisms by which popular cultures serves as the dominant site of representations of identity;
- Have a basic understanding of the formal and institutional parameters of popular culture in the Netherlands, including the production, delivery and trade of visual and written media, as well as the rapidly changing practices of consuming popular culture in the internet age;
- Process, engage with, and interrogate theories of popular culture, specifically as they pertain to questions of identity formation
- Show a deep understanding of the creation, maintenance and pop-cultural representation of the interconnected social categories of gender, race, and sexuality;
- Apply theories of popular culture and identity to pop-cultural artifacts, both orally and in writing;
- Understand and comment on the complex relationship between the creators, distributors, critics, and consumers of popular culture, and the key role played by media conglomerates therein;
- Identify and be sensitive to the power relationships that undergird the representation of gender, race, and sexuality in American and Dutch popular culture -- and society at large;
- Have become more discerning and critical consumers of film and television.



Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Popular Culture – except for an interest in popular culture and its representation of gender, race, and sexuality.

Methods of Instruction

This course runs for four weeks, and will be divided into four corresponding units: (1) key themes in the study of popular culture; (2) theorizing gender, race, and sexuality; (3) representations of gender, race, and sexuality in popular culture and (4) connecting the dots: case studies in gender, race, and sexuality in Dutch, European and American popular culture.

While lectures by the instructor will anchor every unit and serve as the basis of class discussions, these will be amply supplemented by guest lectures from experts in the field, as well as guided site visits, which will both make clear how a theoretical understanding of gender, race, and sexuality informs the representation of gendered identities in popular culture, which in turn determines how issues of gender, race, and sexuality are perceived in the “real world.”

Since this class is dedicated to understanding how the representation of gender, race, and sexuality inflects notions of identity, students will be expected to either watch, read or listen -- and take extensive notes on -- a number of films, television shows, books, and songs.

Assessment and Final Grade

Students’ final grade will be based on the following:

1. Class participation: 15%
2. “Inside the Box” journal: 15%
3. “Outside the Box” presentation: 20%
4. Group presentation: 20%
5. Final paper: 30%

Class Requirements

1. Class participation and popular culture journal

The success of any class 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 pop-cultural texts.

In class discussions, your “Inside the Box” popular culture journal will serve as your lifeline: you should already have written down a number of questions and discussion points prior to each class, which will drive our discussions (you can read more about the popular culture journal below).

Although most (if not all) of you are experienced consumers of popular culture, there is a difference between watching a movie in bed before you go to sleep or reading a book on the bus, and watching a movie in order to unpack its ideological underpinnings. While some of you may choose to watch a film two times or do additional research online, 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 that you believe are meaningful and best illustrate your point of view.

For each of the assigned viewings and readings, students will have to identify, transcribe and comment on (at least) one or two key scenes/passages, and write down which topics or issues had an impact on you or raised question and discussion points. In addition to this, students are encouraged to jot down errant thoughts and observations, as well.

Use the journal entries as a basis for your paper assignments, outside the box presentations and class participation.

2. “Outside the Box” presentation

Students will give a maximum ten minute ‘outside the box’ presentation of their observations of Amsterdam/Dutch popular culture as seen in an event or a poster, street fashion, or encounters in the street, bar or at home. In this way, students test their abilities to observe and analyze what they see/hear/smell (what is your bodily experience?) and connect it to theory and readings in class. Students have to contextualize their observations verbally by using excerpts from the readings of week 1 and by linking them to the photos they take. They will be shown in class, so make sure to have access to them online during your presentation.

The outside the box presentation requires that students broaden the scope of the discussion by drawing connections that go beyond the assigned readings and/or viewings in class.

3. Group presentation

As part of the overall assessment of their final grade, students will prepare and give a group presentation for a maximum of 25 minutes. There will be 3 groups based on the total of the expected number of students in class, and the groups will be determined by the instructor by the end of week 1.

Each group will give a presentation by following these two steps:

Step 1: look up real life or online examples of Dutch/ European expressions of popular culture with racialized and or gendered overtones, describe what you see and draw on any of the theoretical concepts used in class.

Step 2: analyze them by adopting one or more of the theoretical frameworks that were dealt with in class. Students should go beyond merely applying the theory by embedding it in a cogent argument that convinces the classroom of the validity of their analysis.

Students can and should cite any of the articles used in class (please refer to or cite at least 2-3 different articles), but should also venture outside the confines of the required reading list.

4. Final paper and presentation (2,000 words)

This paper is designed to test students’ understanding of the theories discussed in class, and, crucially, how these help viewers make sense of the representation of both men, women, as well as gendered, racial and other minority groups in popular culture texts from the

Netherlands, Europe, and the United States. Students should select a topic that is aligned with the material discussed during the course.

The paper 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, site visits and discussions and must instead craft and support an original argument about the reading materials offered during the course but also using one or two external reading materials.

These papers must be formatted according to APA or MLA guidelines, and must include a list of works cited; if a student is unfamiliar with these annotation methods, the instructor will provide the student with an overview of the most important APA/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/> or APA citation method: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

This paper will be presented during class in a 10-15 minute presentation, followed by questions and discussion points from the class members (circa 15-20 minutes per presentation). A successful final presentation will show the students' ability to connect theory and praxis and bring everyday life to a meta-level. Students will enter into a critical dialogue with the topic showing how the subject at hand is not limited to a handful of readings, or simply their chosen pop-cultural text.

In General

Students are expected to do their homework and to hand in their assignments before the given deadline.

All assigned homework is mandatory, including homework that does not have to be handed in. The teacher will check whether students have done their homework on a regular basis.

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. If a student is found guilty of plagiarism, he or she will fail the course with no chance of a resit.

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 class session by the course instructor. Absences will be penalized 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 = 10 points (out of 100) are deducted from the student's final grade

4 absences = the 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 by 1 point (out of 10) for every day the assignment is late. 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 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.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

- Class 1.1 Introduction and outline of the program, assignments;
What is popular culture, and why study it? What does popular culture mean to you?
Cultural Studies and the legacy of Stuart Hall
Readings:
Storey, John. (2012) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. Introduction, pp. 20-46

Hall, S. (1998) Notes on deconstructing the popular, pp. 442-453

- Class 1.2 Understanding popular culture in terms of production, representation and consumption
Representation and its significance in media studies
Readings:
Hall, S. (2003) *Representation*; Introduction – pp 1-7; Chapter 1 - The Work of Representation. Pp 15-28

Week 2

- Class 2.1 Student presentations and group discussion
Homework: During the weekend, prepare for “Outside of the box” presentations on Monday
Take photos from Amsterdam street life/posters/shops etc. which to you are examples of popular culture and upload them to the Canvas assignment under the file name “Outside your name” before the class on Monday
- Class 2.2 Theorizing ‘the other’
Politics of Difference in the European Context (An Introduction)
Readings:
“Chapter 4 - The Spectacle of the Other”. In: Stuart Hall, *Representation* (2013), pp. 225-290.
(Sections 1, 2 and 4 are important; the others are optional)

Use this reading as a reference reading for the entire week's topics.

Class 2.3 Discussions on Race and Racism in the Netherlands

Readings:

Philomena Essed & Sandra Trienekens (2008) 'Who wants to feel white?' Race, Dutch culture and contested identities, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31:1, 52-72

Bosma, U. (2008) Postcolonial immigrants and identity formation: Introduction

Class 2.4 Watch documentary Colonial Hangover by Sunny Bergman, plus discussion

Workgroup: discourse analysis of documentary.

Discuss Group Presentations to be held at the end of week 3

Readings:

Wekker, G. 'Introduction'. In: *White Innocence. Paradoxes of colonialism and race*, pp. 1-29

Essed, P and Hoving, I 'Innocence, smug ignorance, resentment: an introduction to Dutch Racism.' In: *Dutch Racism*. 2015, 9-21

17:45 Film Screening, Transcreen Festival, Kriterion Cinema

Brazil in Focus: Shorts + Q&A

Week 3

Class 3.1 Gender and Popular Culture

Key Concepts in Feminism and Gender Theory. An Introduction

Readings:

Storey, John. (2012) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. Chap 7; Gender and Sexuality, pp. 283-345

Mikkola, Mari, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition) (*optional*)

Class 3.2 Watch Documentary Paris is Burning, plus discussion

Guest Lecture: Alex Thinius on Gender and Performativity

Readings:

Judith Butler. "Gender Is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion". In: Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, 1993, pp. 121-140. (2011 Edition)

Sara Ahmed. Interview with Judith Butler. In *Sexualities* 2016, Vol. 19(4) 482–492
Cristan Williams. Gender Performance: The TransAdvocate interviews Judith Butler (link on Canvas) (*optional*)

Class 3.3 Stereotypes in Popular Culture

Screening of RuPaul's Drag Race Episode and analysis

Readings:

"Chapter 3 – The Role of Stereotypes". In: Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*, 2003, pp. 11-18.

McIntyre, Joanna, and Damien W. Riggs. "North American Universalism in RuPaul's Drag Race: Stereotypes, Linguicism, and the Construction of "Puerto Rican Queens"." RuPaul's Drag Race and the Shifting Visibility of Drag Culture. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017. 61-75.

Class 3.4 Masculinities

Workgroup: Screening of 3/4 episodes of *'HER STORY' (a webseries) followed by a discussion.*

Readings:

"Chapter 5 - Exhibiting Masculinity". In: Stuart Hall, Representation. 2013. (Sections 1, 2 and 4. Approx. 14 pages)

Excerpts from "The Social Organization of Masculinity" by R.W. Connell (From, Stephen M. Whitehead, Frank J. Barrett eds. *The Masculinities Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) 10 pages

R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt. Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (Dec., 2005), pp. 829-859

Class 3.5 Group presentations and discussion

Discuss final assignment

Maximum 25 minutes of presentation and 10 minutes of discussion; Upload the presentations to Canvas under the file name "Group your names" before the class

Week 4

Class 4.1 Work on Final Paper in class

Guest lecture: Kimberlè Crenshaw at UvA, Roeterseiland

Readings:

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics [1989]." *Feminist legal theory*. Routledge, 2018. 57-80.

Class 4.2 Guest lecture on Islam and Muslims in Europe

Work on presentation/paper in class

Readings: TBD

Class 4.3 Site visit Black Archives

Readings: N/A

Class 4.4 Student presentations

Short informal presentations on your final papers. These will give you the opportunity to run your thoughts by your teacher and the rest of the class and get feedback.

Week 5

Submit final paper to Canvas

Course Materials

Readings

Bosma, U. (2012). Introduction. 'Post-colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands.' In: *Postcolonialism in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, IMISCOE series, 7-26.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-17

Carah, N. and Louw, P.E. (2015) *Media & society: production, content & participation*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Crenshaw, K. et al (2013). 'Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory.' In: *Du Bois Review Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), pp. 303–312.

Donaldson, M, What Is Hegemonic Masculinity? In: *Theory and Society, Special Issue: Masculinities*, October 1993, 22(5), 643-657.

Essed, P and Hoving, I. (2015) 'Innocence, smug ignorance, resentment: an introduction to Dutch Racism.' In: *Dutch Racism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 9-21

Hall, S., Evans, J. and Nixon, S. (2013) *Representation. Second edition*. London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1998) 'Notes on deconstructing the popular.' In: John Storey (ed.): *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*. Essex: Pearson. pp. 442-453

Hoogland, r. (2009) 'The arena of sexuality: the tomboy and queer studies', in: Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin (eds.). *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 99-112

hooks, b. (1996) "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators.". In: John Belton (ed.) *Movies and Mass Culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, pp. 247-265.

Jouwe, N. (2015). Intersectionality: A travelling concept. In: Dear university, let's talk diversity! <https://omslag.nu/lets-talk-diversity/intersectionality>

McRobbie, A. (2004) 'Postfeminism and Popular Culture.' In: *Feminist Media Studies*, pp. 255-264

Mulvey, L. (1975). "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3, pp. 6-18.

Ponzanesi, S. (2014). 'The Postcolonial Cultural Industry: Notes on Theory and Practice', in: *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 8-48.

Storey, J. ed. (2009). *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. An Introduction*. Fifth ed., Essex: Pearson.

Strinati, D. (2004) *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.



Van der Pijl, Y. and Goulordava, K. (2014) 'Black Pete, Smug Ignorance, and the Value of the Black Body in Postcolonial Netherlands.' In: *New West Indian Guide* 88, pp. 262-291.

Wekker, G. (2016) 'Introduction'. In: *White Innocence. Paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 1-29

Woodward, K. (1997) *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage.