

## **Women and Popular Culture**

Women's Studies 205

Section: D100

Term: 2009 Fall

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Murray

Discussion Topics: From Bridget Jones, Sex in the City to Zack and Miri Make a Porn what does the realm of popular culture tell us about what people expect of femininity and feminism today? This course introduces the study of women and popular culture from the perspectives of political economy and cultural studies. We critically examine women in positions of creative control in the production and exchange of popular cultural practices, in positions as symbols in the representation of cultural texts, and as audiences in the reception and construction of cultural meaning. While contemporary western capitalism is producing a popular culture rife with themes of popular female emancipation and empowerment, manifestos like Angela McRobbie's *Aftermath of Feminism* challenge the assumption that feminism is therefore no longer needed. Political questions of identity, engagement and social justice in evaluating popular culture and guilty pleasures are addressed in this seminar.

Grading: Attendance and Course Participation: 10%

Mid Term (In Class Week 6): 20%

Final Exam (Take Home due Dec 10): 20%

Field Notes (2) (700 words each) (due Weeks 3 and 7): 20%

Essay (8-10 pages) (due week 12): 30%

Required Texts: Suzie OBrien and Imre Szeman. 2009. *Popular Culture: A Users Guide*. 2nd ed. Toronto. Thomson Nelson. ISBN-10: 0176104674

Catherine Murray, 2009. Custom Courseware.

Recommended Texts: Angela McRobbie. 2008. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. Sage.

Materials/Supplies:

Prerequisite/Corequisite: WS 101 or 102. Prerequisites waived upon request.

Notes:

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