**Course Description:**
This course examines various images of gender in media focusing on the late 20th century to the present. Using theories from cultural studies, gender studies, film and communication studies, we will explore different processes and practices of gender, specifically in terms of media representations of femininity and masculinity. The purpose of the course is to gain insight into the ways in which gender, and its intersections with race, ethnicity and class, is enacted, represented and has impact on cultural formations and communication. We will explore the socio-cultural mechanisms that shape our individual and collective notions of identity and essentially teach us what it means to be male or female. The media plays a major role in “constructing” gender and ‘popular’ views of what appropriate gendering is, in turn, shaping how we communicate with each other. The fact that gender differences can only result in a "battle of the sexes," or the view that men and women are basically alien to one another (‘Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus’), is a cultural myth that maintains binary differences (hence inequalities), and perpetuates stereotypes that do a disservice to both men and women. In examining these cultural myths as well as ongoing debates on gender construction, we will consider how gender is tied in with notions of power, identity, voice and other defining identity categories (race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc.)

**Course Readings:**
Course readings can be found on Blackboard. If you have problems downloading or accessing, please let me know asap.

**Course Requirements and Attendance:**
Please keep in mind this is an upper division theory course, and there is a heavy reading load. You are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in discussion. There will be screenings nearly each class session for which you also will be responsible. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class meeting and in each discussion meeting. Attendance grade may be affected by your promptness and level of attention during class lecture. You are allowed two absences without explanation, after which there is a deduction of a third of a grade off the final course grade for each unexcused absence.

All assignments must be completed and handed in on time at the beginning of class to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment or take an exam due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the term to sort things out. Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today’s technological culture, but they also can distract you and your peers from the class discussion and dampen participation. You may bring your laptops to class for note-taking ONLY. Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. If you abuse this privilege, you will be marked absent for that class period and laptops may be banned from the classroom and impact your final grade in the course.
Reaction Papers:
You are required to keep these reaction papers in a POCKET folder (no spirals or 3-ring binders, please). You will turn in your folder FOUR times during the semester with TWO papers inside the folder each time for a total of EIGHT papers. Due dates are marked below in the class schedule. If your entries are late, they will be marked down. Papers not turned in within a reasonable time frame will receive a “0”. You must keep ALL past entries in the folder each time you turn it in.

Each time you turn in your folder, it should include TWO entries (ONE reading entry + ONE media entry)
1) READING ENTRY: comment on, analyze or offer a balanced critique of the reading for that week found in the course reader (no class handouts). In this entry, you must demonstrate that you have done the reading and thought about it. You may choose to write on one article or more than one. This entry should be 1-2 pages.
2) MEDIA ENTRY: describe and analyze a media artifact(s) (film, television, magazines, newspapers, internet) outside of class screenings. Comment on the ways gender is portrayed and constructed in/by them. Comment on whatever you find interesting, engaging, hopeful, etc. about gender relations in contemporary media culture. This entry should be 1-2 pages.

Grades for the reaction papers will be based on a 10-point scale (9.5-10 being the highest grade, and 10 reserved for rare instances where expectations are exceeded).

More details regarding Reaction Papers can be found on Blackboard (in Assignments folder)

Assignments and Grading:
You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:
1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as evidenced in your written work and class participation)
2) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms
3) your ability to creatively explore those theories and methodologies

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:
1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
2) how well it articulates and structures its argument

The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:
Class participation 10%
Reaction Papers 15%
In-Class Exams (2) 15% each/30% total
Prospectus (hard copy in class) 10%
Paper (via Turnitin) 35%

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. Failure to complete ONE OR MORE of them will result in an F in the class.
Course Grading Policy:
Grades will be assigned as follows:
A outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material.
A+ (97-100) may be given to individual assignments in rare instances where expectations are exceeded.
A-/B+ above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of conceptual ideas
B/B- average work, needs improvement on ideas and argument
C+/C shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
C- and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:
A+ = 97-100 (note A+ is reserved for work that exceeds expectations)
A = 96-94
A- = 93-90
B+ = 89-87
B = 86-84
B- = 83-80
C+ = 79-77
C = 76-74
C- = 73-70
D+ = 69-67
D = 66-64
D- = 63-60
F = 59-0

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

Classroom Conduct and Respect

All students are encouraged to use the classroom as a safe space in which to speak and voice their opinions. My expectation is that you respect not only the professor, but also your classmates when they participate in discussion.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standardshttps://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the
university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

**ESL Students**

Please inform the instructors as soon as possible if you require special accommodations based on your understanding of the English language.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (open to revision)

Week 1:  **Nature-Nurture: Questions of Biology and Social Construction**

**January 13**  
Course Introduction

**January 15**  
Lise Eliot, “The Truth About Boys and Girls”  
Judith Lorber, “Believing Is Seeing: Biology as Ideology”  
Carol Cohn, “War, Wimps and Women”

Week 2  **Children and Early Socialization**

**January 20**  
Michael Messner, “Barbie Girls and Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender”

**January 22**  
Ellen Seiter, “Buying Happiness, Buying Success: Toy Advertising to Parents”

Week 3  **Theorizing Identity, Power and Desire**

**January 27**  
Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”  
L.S. Kim, “Representations of Race”  
Roxane Gay, “Peculiar Benefits”

**January 29**  
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, “Spectatorship, Power and Knowledge”

**Reaction #1-2 due in class**

Week 4:  **Foucault and Theories of Resistance**

**February 3**  
Michel Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*  
(“We Other Victorians,” “The Repressive Hypothesis,” “Scientia Sexualis”)

**February 5**  
continue Foucault
**Week 5: Applying Foucault to Gender Studies and Media**

- **February 10**  
  Susan Bordo, “Introduction: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body”

- **February 12**  
  Susan Bordo, “Can a Woman Harass a Man?”  
  Sandra Lee Bartky, “Femininity, Foucault and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power”

  **GUEST: Kari Storla**

**Week 6: Beyond Gender: Understanding Intersectionality**

- **February 17**  
  Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, “Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew”  

- **February 19**  
  Angharad Valdivia, “Latinas on Television and Film: Exploring the Limits and Possibilities of Inclusion”

**Week 7: Masculinity Rules**

- **February 24**  
  Exam #1

- **February 26**  
  Herman Gray, “Black Masculinity and Visual Culture”  
  Michael Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia”  
  Willa Brown, “Lumbersexuality and its Discontents” (The Atlantic)  
  Anne Helen Peterson, “Long Live the Working Class Hunk” (The Awl)

**Week 8: Male Sexuality**

- **March 3**  
  Richard Dyer, “Male Sexuality in the Media”  
  Katherine Sender, “*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and the Neoliberal Project”

- **March 5**  
  Mary MacDonald, “Safe Sex Symbol? Michael Jordan and the Politics of Representation”

**Week 9: Sexualities and Discourses of Visibility**

- **March 10**  
  Guillermo Avila-Saavedra, Nothing Queer About Queer Television: Televised Construction of Gay Masculinities

- **March 12**  
  Danae Clark, “Commodity Lesbianism”  
  Candace Moore, “Getting Wet: The Heteroflexibility of Showtime’s *The L Word*”
Reaction 3-4 due in class

SPRING BREAK

Week 10

**The Politics of Post: Living in a “Post”-Civil Rights Era?**

**March 24**  
Ralina Joseph, “‘Tyra Banks is Fat’: Reading (Post-)Racism and (Post-)Feminism in the New Millennium”  
Roxane Gay, “Feminism (n.): Plural” and “Girls, Girls, Girls”

**March 26**  
Julia Himberg, “Multicasting: Lesbian Programming and the Changing Landscape of Cable Television”  
“Carly Rae Jepson: Post-Gay Pop Princess”  
“Anderson Cooper: The Fact Is I’m Gay”

**Reaction 5-6 Due in class**

**Week 11:**  
**Post-Feminism, “Pop” Feminism and Beyoncé Feminism**

**March 31**  
Rosalind Gill, “Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility”  
Susan Douglas, excerpts from *Enlightened Sexism*

**April 2**  
Aisha Durham, “Check On It: Beyoncé, Southern Booty and Black Femininities in Music Video”

**GUEST: Dayna Chatman**

**Week 12:**  
**Domesticity and Gendered Labor**

**April 7**  
Cynthia Duquette Smith, "Discipline—It’s a ‘Good Thing’: Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia”

**April 9**  
Diane Negra, “Introduction” + “Hyperdomesticity, Self-Care, and the Well-Lived Life in Postfeminism”

**GUEST: Tisha Dejmanee**

**Week 13:**  
**Unruliness and Resisting Norms**

**April 14**  
Kathleen Rowe, “Roseanne: Unruly Woman as Domestic Goddess”  
Linda Mizejewski, “Sarah Silverman: Bed Wetting, Body Comedy and a ‘Mouth Full of Blood Laughs”

**Prospectus due**

**April 16**  
Nicole Fleetwood, “Excess Flesh: Black Women Performing Hypervisibility”
Week 14: Production and Consumption

April 21
Mary Kearney, “Producing Girls: Rethinking the Study of Female Youth Culture”
Julie Ann Wilson and Emily Chivers Yochim, “Pinning Happiness: Affect, Social Media and Women’s Work”

April 23: Exam #2

Week 15: Self-Help and Self-Branding

April 28
Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Branding the Post-Feminist Self”
Tamara Shepard, “Gendering the Commodity Audience in Social Media”

April 30
Course Wrap Up

Reaction #7-8 Due in class

May 2-5: Study Days

May 12, 1pm: Paper Due*

* All papers will be turned in via Turnitin by or before 1pm on May 12. NO late papers will be accepted.