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CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM 2001-2002

NON-GENERAL EDUCATION PROCESS A

***DEADLINES:** Deadline dates for 2001/2002 submissions: Regular proposals: October 19, 2001 to be implemented in Fall 2002; Short-Term proposals: December 7, 2001 to be implemented in Fall, 2002; Regular proposals February 15, 2002 to be implemented in Spring, 2003; March 22, 2002 for short-term courses to be implemented in Spring 2003.

PROPOSAL TITLE: IMAGES OF GENDER IN POPULAR CULTURE

SPONSOR(S): JULIE HAYNES AND CINDY COLLISON 0601-323

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNICATION STUDIES

COLLEGE: COMMUNICATION

IF LAS CHECK ONE: History/Humanities Math/Sciences Social/Behavioral Sciences

Check one: Undergraduate Graduate

THE ATTACHED **NON-GEN-ED** PROPOSAL IS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE ITEM(S) CHECKED.

New non-gen-ed course

Short-term non-gen-ed course

Minor curricular changes (fewer than three) to:

- existing non-gen-ed course
- non-gen-ed degree requirements
- major
- minor, specialization, concentration, track, certificate program

DEPARTMENT
(Signature indicates approval)

Dept. Curriculum Chair / Date Cynthia Lewis 10/11/01

Dept. Chairperson / Date Cynthia Lewis 10/15/01

ACADEMIC DEAN

Approved Not Approved Comments:

Dean's Signature/Date [Signature] 10/18/01

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date of open hearing (if necessary) _____ Approved Not Approved _____

Comments:

signature of College Chair/Date: Donald O'Hall 2/24/02

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date Received/Processed _____

Comments:

Curriculum Chair Signature Janette M. Reels Date Announced At Senate 1/29/02

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST

Approved _____ Not Approved _____ If no, reasons are as follows:

Student Credit Hours _____ Faculty Load Hours _____ Equalized Credit Hours _____

Official Copy & Approval Sheet Filed (Date): _____ Executive VP/Provost Signature/Date Allen J. Lee
1/29/02

REGISTRAR

Date Approved Course Description Received _____ Hegis Taxonomy & Course Number Assigned 0601-323

Registrar Signature/Date E.C. Egan 10/15/02

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

Senate Curriculum Committee Chairperson

Department Chairpersons

Academic Dean(s)

Registrar

DIS Council
CAP
Janet Reels
TM/10/24/02
____ Sponsor(s)

RUU

6. Course Description:

Communication Studies

Prerequisite: Composition II (1501.112)

This course examines the concept of gender as it is rhetorically constructed in contemporary popular culture. Students will analyze how various cultural texts (such as advertisements, popular songs, television shows, or video games) communicate what it means to be masculine and feminine in U.S. culture. The course will examine how these images have changed historically and how depictions of race, class, and sexual identity also contribute to our understandings of gender in popular culture.

Course Proposal

1. Details:

- a) Course Title: Images of Gender in Popular Culture
- b) Sponsor: Julie Haynes and Cindy Corison,
Department of Communication Studies,
College of Communication
- c) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours
- d) Course Level: 300 level undergraduate
- e) Curricular Effect: Recommended course as part of the Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism track in the Communication Studies specialization. Students in related majors may take the course.
- f) Prerequisites: Composition II (1501, 112)
- g) Suggested Time/
Scale of Implementation: Fall 2002/one section
- h) Resources: Current faculty are available to teach the course. Additionally, anticipated new hires in the next several years will provide further staff to teach the class. No new computer equipment or facilities will be necessary. Additional library acquisitions may be needed in the coming years.

2. Rationale:

The Department of Communication Studies is in the process of restructuring its curriculum, including the institution of two areas of emphasis: Interpersonal and Organizational Communication and Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism. Including a course on Images of Gender in Popular Culture is important to the development of the Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism emphasis.

Attention to the scholarly significance of popular culture and academic interest in the construction of gender are both relatively new areas of inquiry in the Academy. Yet for the past thirty years, both research agendas have earned a respected place next to the more traditional canons of knowledge. In particular, scholars in a variety of fields have realized the important role popular culture plays in the development of national, group, and individual identity and how the construction of gender is often influenced by these popular cultural texts. Researchers in Communication Studies are especially well suited

to offer insights into how popular culture influences--and is influenced by--notions of gender given their expertise in the systematic analysis of messages. Specifically, the areas of rhetoric and cultural studies provide unique contributions for understanding social constructions of masculinity and femininity.

During the past two years, three sections of the Senior Seminar in Communication Studies at Rowan have focused on Images of Gender in Popular Culture. Students have noted that the material has particular relevance to their lives, not only as Communication Studies majors, but also as consumers of popular culture and as men and women. Changing the course to a 300 level elective would allow a variety of students to take the course, including Radio, Television, and Film majors and Composition and Rhetoric majors who have an interest in cultural critique. For these majors, the class would provide a broad look at the analysis of gender in a variety of media (and thus would complement rather than significantly overlap with courses such as Images of Women in Film). The course would also be suitable for Women's Studies and American Studies majors and may be cross-listed with the approval of these programs. In particular, this course could provide an extension of the principles students learn in their introductory courses for these concentrations. Finally, majors in other liberal arts departments may benefit from the course.

3. Essence of the Course:

a) Objectives:

The proposed course has the following objectives:

- (i) To develop students' critical thinking and evaluation skills regarding the rhetorical construction of masculinity and femininity in popular cultural texts.
- (ii) To facilitate student discussion and analysis of the ways in which images of gender in popular culture have changed historically and rhetorically.
- (iii) To provide students with the opportunity to research and analyze the rhetorical construction of gender in specific popular cultural texts of their choosing.
- (iv) To enable students to see the connections between rhetorical constructions of gender with depictions of race, class, and sexual identity.

b) Topical Outline:

The course includes the following:

- (i) Course Introduction: Students will review basic principles and theories of mass

media, rhetorical criticism, and cultural criticism. The rhetorical construct of gender will be defined and discussed.

- (ii) Gender and Rhetorical Constructions of the Body: The course will discuss the rhetorical construction of the male and female body in popular culture, particularly as it is portrayed in advertisements.
- (iii) Images of Motherhood and Fatherhood in Popular Culture: The course examines the ways in which motherhood is connected with femininity in popular culture and how texts portray “good” and “bad” mothers. The course explores the changing rhetorical constructions of fatherhood in popular culture, examining how fathers are linked to masculinity.
- (iv) Gender and Romance: The course examines the rhetorical connections between romance, masculinity, and femininity in cultural texts. It also explores the importance afforded romance in popular culture, and if and how depictions of romance and gender have changed historically.
- (v) Images of Domestic Violence in Popular Culture: Students will discuss how images of violence in relationships are portrayed. The course will also explore how certain texts work as rhetorical protest to challenge domestic abuse.
- (vi) Gender and Work in Popular Culture: The course examines if and how work is rhetorically constructed as “male” or “female” in popular culture texts.
- (vii) Gender and the Politics of Friendship: Rhetorical constructions of same-sex and opposite-sex friendships in popular culture are explored.

c) Course Assignments:

Course assignments are designed to aid in the development of students’ critical awareness and evaluation skills. Assignments include:

- (i) Three analysis papers in which students analyze different forms of popular culture in terms of its construction of gender: One essay examining a print advertisement, one essay examining a children’s media text, and one essay analyzing some form of music or music video.
- (ii) An extended research/analysis paper, completed in stages, in which students research, survey literature, and provide an original analysis of a media text as it relates to the cultural construction of gender.
- (iii) Classroom activities and oral presentations that help foster participation and active learning.

d) Sample Course Outline:

- Week 1 Introduction to course; review syllabus.
Discuss principles and theories of mass media, rhetorical criticism, and cultural criticism.
Discuss what gender “means.”
- Week 2 Examine advertising and rhetorical constructions of gender.
Explore how the body (such as shape, size, and color) is rhetorically constructed in advertisements.
- Week 3 Describe as a class the “ideal” man and woman according to current popular culture. Discuss how this image has or has not changed historically.
- Week 4 Explore media depictions of motherhood and what constitutes a “good” or “bad” mother.
- Week 5 Discuss changing images of fatherhood. Watch relevant films (such as the *Terminator* films) to explore constructions of femininity/motherhood and masculinity/fatherhood.
- Week 6 Continue discussions of films.
Discuss Gender and Romance in Popular Culture.
- Week 7 Continue exploration of gender and romance.
Watch romantic comedy, such as *Sleepless in Seattle* or *His Girl Friday*
- Week 8 Examine rhetorical constructions of romance “gone awry.”
Discuss what makes potential mates unsuitable (such as different political beliefs, classes, or races).
- Week 9 Explore the issue of domestic violence in popular culture.
Watch appropriate music videos as case studies.
- Week 10 Discuss media depictions of work and work issues related to gender (as well as race and class).
- Week 11 Explore media portrayals of sexual harassment.
- Week 12 Examine how same-sex friendships are constructed in popular culture.

- Week 13 Discuss how opposite-sex friendships are depicted in popular culture. Analyze relevant examples from situational comedies such as *Friends* or *Will and Grace*.
- Week 14 Discuss mainstream images of homosexuality.
- Week 15 Students give their final presentations.

e) Evaluation and Grading Procedures:

Faculty will evaluate final course grades based upon students' performance throughout the duration of the class. Faculty will assess written work in the form of analysis papers, the semester-long research/analysis paper, and the quality of participation during class discussions, oral presentations, and in-class activities.

f) Course Evaluation:

The course will be evaluated using the College of Communication's student evaluation forms to obtain feedback on course content, course texts and assignments, and teaching effectiveness. The Department of Communication Studies will continue to evaluate the course through faculty peer observations and on-going discussions of the Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism track.

4. Results of Consultations:

a) Consultants:

Janet Moore Lindman, Coordinator, Women's Studies
Ned Eckhardt, Chair, Radio/Television/Film
Dianne Ashton, Director of Advising for American Studies

b) Consultant's Statements: See attached documents

5. Additional Supporting Materials:

a) Recommended Texts:

Inness, Sherrie A., *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

Jeffords, Susan, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

Jhally, Sut, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity*,

(Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2000). [video]

Roberts, Robin, *Ladies First: Women in Music Videos*, (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1996).

Trujillo, Nick, "Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and American Sports Culture," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8, (September 1991): 290-308.

Walker, Nancy, *Women's Magazines, 1940-1960: Gender Roles and the Popular Press*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Walters, Suzanna Danuta, *Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

b) Supplemental Texts:

Bordo, Susan, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Cohan, Steven, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1997).

Cohan, Steven and Ina Rae Hark, *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, (London: Routledge, 1993).

Douglas, Susan J., *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*, (New York: Times Books, 1994).

Dow, Bonnie, *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement Since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

Garr, Gillian G., *She's a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock and Roll*, (Seattle: Seal Press, 1992).

Hall, Jeanne and E. Deidre Pribram, "'M. F. E. O.': Nora Ephron's *Sleepless in Seattle*," *Creative Screenwriting*, 1, (Spring 1994): 81-104.

Haskell, Molly, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Kitch, Carolyn, "Changing Theoretical Perspectives on Women's Media Images: The Emergence of Patterns in a New Area of Historical Scholarship," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74, (Autumn 1997): 477-

LaFrance, Edward, *Men, Media, and Masculinity*, (Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt Publishing, 1995).

Modleski, Tania, *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*, (New York: Routledge, 1991).

Rapping, Elayne, *Movie of the Week: Private Stories, Public Events*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

Van Zoonen, Liesbet, *Feminist Media Studies*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).



History Department

October 12, 2001

TO: Members of Curriculum Committee
FROM: Janet Moore Lindman, Coordinator, Women's Studies
SUBJECT: New Course Proposal, "Images of Gender in Popular Culture"

I am writing in support of the course proposal, "Images of Gender in Popular Culture." As part of the curricular restructuring in the Department of Communication Studies, this course will be an essential and compelling part of the Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism specialization. This course offers an in-depth and substantive look at the rhetorical construction of gender in popular culture and the uses of gender in a variety of mass media. As such, it will provide students with fundamental tools to critically analyze the multivalence of social constructs such as gender as well as other indices including race, class, and sexuality identity. "Images of Gender in Popular Culture" will be a valuable addition to the core courses in the Women's Studies concentration. I heartily endorse the approval of this course by the Curriculum Committee.



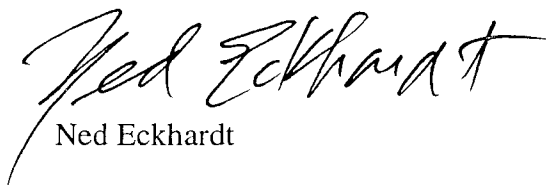
Radio/Television/Film Department

To: Cindy Corison, Chair Department of Communications Studies and Julie Haynes
From: Ned Eckhardt, Chair Department of Radio/Television/Film
Subject: New Course: Images of Gender in Popular Culture
Date: October 16, 2001

Dear Cindy and Julie,

I've had a chance to read your proposal for a new course: "Images of Gender in Popular Culture." The course looks exciting and academically sound. It clearly fits into your new specialization in Rhetoric and Cultural Criticism. I also think it compliments but in no way infringes academically on our Radio/TV/Film course, "Images of Women in Film."

Good luck with this new course.


Ned Eckhardt



Dr. Julie Haynes
Communication Studies
Bozorth Hall
Rowan University
Glassboro, N.J. 08028

October 17, 2001

Dear Julie,

I have just read your proposal for the course, Images of Gender in Popular Culture. It is clear from the proposal that you mean American popular culture, and the course itself looks to be a fine addition to our approved list for American Studies students. I am pleased that it will be a 300 level course as the conceptual level is fairly sophisticated and complex. It promises to further student's ability to critique American culture and to become educated citizens. It will sharpen their written and oral communication skills.

For all those reasons, I am happy to support this proposal and I look forward to recommending it to our students.

Best of luck with your endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dianne Ashton".

Dianne Ashton, Professor
Coordinator of Liberal Studies
Director of Advising for American Studies