

Gender & Sexuality Studies 371
By Any Media Necessary: Gender, Sexuality, Race, & Media Activism
Instructor: Lauren Herold
Winter 2019
Northwestern University

Course Meetings: M/W from 9:30-10:50
Course Location: Parkes Hall 222
Office Hours: Monday from 12-1pm or by appointment
Office Location: 1815 Chicago Ave, 2nd floor
Email: LaurenHerold2015@u.northwestern.edu

Course Description:

In this class, we will explore how activists engage with and mobilize media technologies as tools to communicate political messages. We will examine significant moments in the history of media advocacy (roughly) chronologically, in three separate units that will each focus on specific types of media: 1) Print & Film, 2) Television & Video, and 3) Digital Media. We will discuss topics including the use of television in the Civil Rights movements, the narrative film and documentary from global movements for postcolonial and indigenous rights, AIDS alternative video, feminist zine-making, and the emergence of the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements, to trace the way in which advocates use media to challenge dominant cultural norms and politics. We will grapple with questions like: How did the media become a site of political contestation? What is media activism and what kinds of strategies does it entail? What is the relationship between the emergence of new media technologies and new modes of activism? What happens when both conservative and progressive activists use the same technologies for different political goals? Throughout the class, we will analyze how media can reflect and shape cultural views on gender, race, and sexuality and how activists have harnessed this power in order to create alternatives to the mainstream.

Learning Goals:

- 1) To connect historical and contemporary media representations and activist strategies.
- 2) To understand the role that race, gender, and sexuality in the evolution of media history, technology, and content.
- 3) To construct complex arguments around the relationship between media, activism, technology, and relations of power.

Required Materials:

All readings, unless otherwise noted, can be found on Canvas. Screenings can be found in Course Reserves on Canvas as well as linked to in the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

Reading reflections: Throughout the quarter, students will be required to turn in a one-page response commenting upon the readings of the class. These responses should demonstrate that

you understand the main points of the readings and are able to relate them to class lectures, discussions, screenings, and/or personal experience. Responses should reflect critically on the topic at hand; they may include questions provoked by the reading, connections made or tensions between the readings, confusion or disagreement with the author, etc. Students should turn in a hard copy of the response on day that readings are scheduled to be completed by. Students are responsible for writing five (5) responses throughout the quarter.

Midterm due February 6 (pick one option):

1. Short essay: Students will write a 5-page paper that will require you to work closely with the set of assigned readings. Prompts will be provided.
2. Creative project: Students will pick a contemporary advocacy issue and create a digital campaign for their cause using presentation software, such as PowerPoint, Prezi, iPhone video, and/or social media websites. Students will turn in a 3-page paper analyzing the textual aspects and sociopolitical stakes of their project along with the creative portion.

Final Essay due March 18: Students will turn in a final 8-12 page research paper on a historical or contemporary example of media activism. Students will use the concepts and ideas from the class to critically assess their topic. Students should make an appointment to discuss this topic with the instructor in the weeks before the paper is due. Students will turn in their research question two weeks before the paper is due as well.

Campus Events: Students are required to attend at least one of the following events on campus. After attending the event, students should write a short reflection about the event and turn it in during class time. This reflection can replace one of the 5 reading responses.

- Saturday Feb 2nd at 1pm at the Block Museum – *Jane: An Abortion Service* screening
- Thursday Feb 7th at 7pm at the Block – Avant Garde Africa with Manthia Diawara
- Friday Feb 22nd at 7pm at the Block – Technology Transformations: A Feminist History of the Supercut
- Saturday March 2nd: Queertopia Conference
- Friday March 8th at 6:30pm at the Block – *Birthright: A War Story* screening

Grade Breakdown:

- Prompt attendance and participation: 15%
- Reading responses: 15%
- Midterm: 30%
- Final essay: 40%

Class Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is essential for a robust and thoughtful class discussion. Two or more unexcused absences will negatively affect a student's grade. Excused absences include illness, family emergency, and religious holidays. Please email me in advance about any upcoming absences. Please be courteous to your classmates and arrive to section on time. If you have a scheduling situation that makes it difficult to arrive on time, come speak to me about it.

Participation: This class is a seminar in which class time will be based around conversation. Participation includes verbal contributions *as well as* active and courteous listening. Students are

expected to read the assigned articles, watch the assigned screenings when noted, and to consider them carefully prior to the beginning of class. It is helpful to take notes on readings as well as to formulate questions that can contribute to the class discussion. This is meant to be a safe, supportive, and respectful space. Abusive and/or aggressive language and behavior are not welcome here and will not be tolerated.

Technology: Please silence and put away cell phones. You may use laptops or iPads in class if these technologies aid your learning.

Communication with instructor: If you have any questions, problems, or difficulties, feel free to contact me via email or during office hours. Contacting me as early as possible will allow me time to assist you more effectively, so please don't wait until the last minute to ask for help. I will do my best to respond to any questions within 24 hours.

Late papers: Late papers will be excused only in the case of a health or family emergency. You should discuss any special circumstances for a late paper with me at least **48 hours in advance**. If you turn in a late paper without having talked to me first, your grade for the assignment will **drop ½ letter grade** for every day that it is late (e.g., an A paper become as A- one day late, then a B+ two days late).

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

Jan 7: Defining media activism(s): Introductions & Course Overview

Unit 1: Print and Film Activism

Jan 9: Alternative print cultures

- Maria DiCenzo and Leila Ryan, “Neglected News: Women and Print Media, 1890-1928”
- Ruth Feldstein, “‘I wanted the whole world to see’: Race, Gender, and the Construction of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till”
- Jan Radway, skim section II and III (pg 7-24) of “Girl Zine Networks, Underground Itineraries, and Riot Grrrl History: Making Sense of the Struggle for New Social Forms in the 1990s and Beyond” (whole article recommended)

Week 2:

Jan 14: Responding to Stereotypes

- Louis Menand, “Do Movies Have Rights?”
- Chon Noriega, “These Stereotypes Must Die: Social Protest and the Frito Bandito”
- Matt Connolly, “Liberating the Screen: Gay and Lesbian Protests of LGBT Cinematic Representation, 1969-1974”

Jan 16: Revolutionary Cinema

- Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema"
- Amy Lawrence, "Women's Voices in Third World Cinema"
- Screen at home: *Surname Viet Give Name Nam* (Trinh Minh-Ha, 1989)

Week 3:

Jan 21: No Class (Observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Jan 23: Experimental Film & Documentary

- Samantha Shepperd, "Bruising Moments: Affect and the L.A. Rebellion"
- Faye Ginsburg, "Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media"
- Screen at home: *Foster Child* (1987) https://www.nfb.ca/film/foster_child/
- Screen in class: *Cycles* (Zeinabu irene Davis, 1989)

Week 4:

Jan 28: Film audiences as activists

- Mary Carbine, "The Finest Outside the Loop: Motion Picture Exhibition in Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1905-1928"
- bell hooks, "Oppositional Spectatorship"

Unit 2: Television & Video Activism

Jan 30: CLASS CANCELLED

Week 5:

Feb 4: 1960s Social movements on TV

- Aniko Bodroghkozy, "The March on Washington and a Peak into Racial Utopia"
- Christine Acham, "Was the revolution televised? Network news and *Black Journal*"
- Screen at home: first episode of *Black Journal* (PBS, 1967):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7g9ROouhpQ>

Feb 6: AIDS video activism & Cable TV

- Eric Freedman, "Public access/private confession: Home Video as (Queer) Community Television"
- Alexandra Juhasz and Juanita Mohammed, "Knowing each other through AIDS video: a dialogue between AIDS activist video makers"
- Screen at home: episode four of *Our Time* (1983):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O5Vwyj4OOg

****Midterm Due****

Week 6:

Feb 11: Feminist & lesbian video movements

- Lucas Hilderbrand, “Joanie and Jackie and Everyone They Knew: Video Chainletters as Feminist Community Network”
- Patricia White, “Lesbian minor cinema”
- Screen in class: tapes from <http://www.joanie4jackie.com/>

Feb 13: Television Comes Out: Broadcast TV & the Gay ‘90s

- Anna McCarthy, “Ellen: Making Queer Television History”
- Ron Becker, “Prime Time Television in the Gay 90s”
- Screen at home: “The Puppy Episode” of *Ellen* (1997)

Week 7:

Feb 18: Cultural workers as activists -- Skype with an activist

- Julia Himberg, “Diversity: Under-the-radar activism and the crafting of sexual identities”
- Ralina Joseph, “Do Not Run Away from Your Blackness: Black Women Television Workers and the Flouting of Strategic Ambiguity”

Feb 20: Television viewers as activists

- Henry Jenkins, “*Star Trek* Rerun, Reread, and Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching”
- Andre Cavalcante, “You Have to Be Really Strong: Practicing Resilient Reception”
- *Optional reading*: Faithe Day and Aymar Jean Christian, “Locating Black Queer TV: fans, producers, and networked publics on YouTube”

Unit 3: Digital Media Activism

Week 8:

Feb 25: Hashtag activisms

- Black Lives Matter, “What We Believe”
- Brandy Monk-Payton, “#LaughingWhileBlack: Gender and the Comedy of Social Media Blackness”
- Carrie Rentschler, “#MeToo and Student Activism against Sexual Violence”
- Mia Fischer, “#Free_CeCe: the material convergence of social media activism”

Feb 27: Visibility and community online

- Tobias Raun, “YouTube is my hood: creating a sense of community”

- Lori Kido Lopez, “Asian American YouTube Celebrities Creating Popular Culture Networks”
- Dustin Bradley Goltz, “It Gets Better: Queer Futures, Critical Frustrations, and Radical Potentials”

****Research Question Due for Final Paper****

Week 9:

March 4: Digital misogyny and conservatism

- Sarah Banet-Weiser, “The Fun House Mirror” and “Competence: Girls who Code and the Boys who Hate Them”
- Screen at home: Anita Sarkeesian video “Damsel in Distress: Part 1”
<https://feministfrequency.com/video/damsel-in-distress-part-1/>

March 6: Hacking and alternative computing – Lecture by Whit Pow

- Michael Betancourt, “The Invention of Glitch Video: *Digital TV Dinner*”
- Kara Keeling, “Queer OS”
- micha cárdenas, “Trans of Color Poetics: Stitching Bodies, Concepts, and Algorithms”

Week 10

March 11: Digital TV & Alternative Distribution

- Aymar Jean Christian, “The Value of Representation: Toward a Critique of Networked Television Performance”
- Amanda Lotz, “Revolutionizing Distribution: Breaking Open the Network Bottleneck”
- Screen at home: First episodes of *Seeds* (<https://www.weareo.tv/originals/seeds>), *Her Story* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkHicPm7C6Q&list=PL397e9fZhTd6Jdi6OBv8oMviMY_lowAIIm), and *The T* (<https://www.weareo.tv/originals/the-t>)

****Final Exam Due: Monday March 18 via email****

University Policies:

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

For more information visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/faculty/general-information/index.html>

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment where students are safe and free from sexual misconduct. Confidential resources are available to those who have experienced sexual misconduct. Faculty and instructors are not confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct, whether discussed in your assignments or in person, to the Title IX Coordinator, who can provide information about resources and options. I encourage students who have experienced sexual misconduct to talk with someone to get support. For more information, including how to request interim protective measures and academic accommodations or file a complaint, see the Get Help page.

Northwestern University's Policies on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment apply to all members of the University community, including students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, genetic information or any other classification protected by law, should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access at (847) 491-7458 or the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office at (847) 467-6571. Additional information about the University's discrimination and harassment policies, including the campus resources available to assist individuals with discrimination or harassment concerns, is available online on the Human Resources Equal Opportunity and Access website.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. (<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>) If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to the instructor before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others' answers, providing information to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student's paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply, including academic suspension. The guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the website.

For more information on Northwestern's academic integrity policies, see:

<http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/integrity/>.