

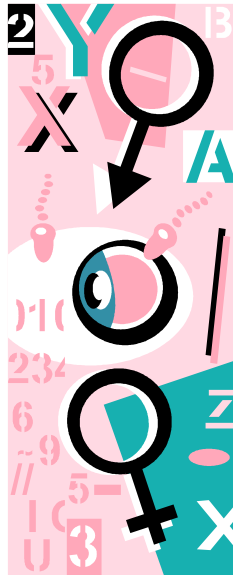
CMN 3903: Rhetoric of Gender and the Body
Spring 2019, Section 001, 3 credits
2440 Buzzard Hall
T/TH 9:30-10:45

Dr. Marita Gronnvoll

Email: mgronnvoll@eiu.edu

2534 Buzzard Hall

Office Hours: Monday, 12:00-2:00; Tuesday 12:30-1:30, Wednesday 1:00-2:00; by appointment



Catalog Description

This course is an exploration of the ways in which identity categories, such as woman and man, feminine and masculine, homosexual and heterosexual, are constructed and maintained through public and popular discourses. In part, we will study the theoretical literatures in communication, feminism, poststructural, and queer theory that “trouble” supposedly static categories of gender.

Course Overview

CMN 3903 is an exploration of the ways in which identity categories, such as woman and man, feminine and masculine, homosexual and heterosexual are constructed and maintained through

our social discourses. Through an examination of media discourses surrounding news events, and an examination of popular culture, we will scrutinize the constructions and disciplining of sexual and gender norms in our ever-evolving modern culture.

As a course offered by Communication Studies, we will take seriously the intersections of rhetoric with performance and media. While the emphasis will be on rhetorical methodologies of thinking about constructions of gender, we will discuss a wide array of media in which such arguments are articulated—including news media, film, television, and advertising, among others. This course is an approved course for the Women's Studies minor.

Course Objectives

- ✓ To develop an understanding of gender, particularly concepts of femininity and masculinity, as social, historical, and cultural constructions, rather than natural, biological "givens."
- ✓ To develop an appreciation for how gender interacts with other social constructions (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc.) and with human biology.
- ✓ To hone an ability to use the critical methodologies of rhetorical theory, feminist and queer scholarship to analyze how gender constructions shape the realities of women and men's lives, particularly in American society.
- ✓ To analyze heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality and how they influence a variety of cultural artifacts, from news media discourses to film.
- ✓ To develop an understanding of how images interact with discourses to produce and reproduce rhetoric that serves social disciplining functions designed to enforce a binary gender system, as well as rhetoric that "troubles" gender norms and expectations.

Readings

The readings in this class vary in length, difficulty, and source. Some readings will be easier to grasp than others, but all are extremely important to meet our objectives for this course. Our activities in class will be based upon my assumption that you have read and thought about the material. With this in mind, you should plan to give yourself plenty of time to read carefully, take notes appropriately, and be prepared to ask questions when necessary. You are expected to complete and process, to the best of your ability, any assigned readings before coming to class, and to bring that reading to class with you. Do not give up on a reading just because you're feeling challenged by it. You are in college, not elementary school. It's expected that you will struggle with some of the readings, but that doesn't constitute an excuse for not reading. Quizzes will be used to ensure that you are reading all assignments. I cannot stress this enough: If you do not read, you will not pass this class. Period.

REQUIRED READINGS

John M. Sloop, *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary U.S. Culture*
Additional readings uploaded to D2L

Class Climate

Discussion of gender invariably produces strong reactions in some students. We will be questioning assumptions that some of you may believe are beyond question. Some of these discussion may make you feel uncomfortable, but please remember that you are not in college so that you can be comfortable. Learning of any kind involves challenging assumptions and necessarily includes feelings of discomfort. Strong feelings are fine, but there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing those reactions. I will enforce a climate of respect and civility. In order for us all to glean the most from this course, we must create an environment in which individuals feel comfortable speaking their minds and relaying their experiences. Constructive criticism and responses are welcome and expected. Disrespect of any kind—including discriminatory speech that creates a hostile environment with respect to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, or ability—cannot, and will not, be tolerated. That said, avoid being overly sensitive. You do not have a constitutional right to not be offended.

Cell Phones, Text Messaging, and other Electronic Annoyances

Turn off cell phones, don't text message, don't IM during class. It's disrespectful, distracting, and extremely annoying. You may think you can multi-task but trust me, you can't. If I have to tell you more than once, I will start to deduct participation points.

Disability Concerns

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodation to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment. If you already have a letter from OSDS, please make sure that I am given a copy.

Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

E-Mail Policy

You are expected to check your official EIU e-mail everyday. I will, on occasion, send out e-mail reminders and announcements, so please stay current with your inbox. You have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. "I didn't check my e-

mail,” errors in foreign mail accounts, or e-mail that is returned with “mailbox full” are not acceptable excuses for missing communications sent via e-mail.

Attendance and Participation

Participation points are given for both quality and quantity of your participation. Quality means that you are attentive, respectful, and not engaging in so-called multi-tasking during class (e.g., texting, internet surfing, doing homework for other classes, sleeping, etc.). Quantity means that I expect every student to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis. So if you’re not here, your participation will necessarily suffer. You may not make up any work you have missed in class, so it is to your best interest not to miss class. By the way, there are no class periods that are OK for you to skip without good reason, so please do not ever ask me if you will “miss anything” if you do not come to class.

Participation points are given at my discretion and are not subject to dispute.

Grade Disputes

There are times when students receive a grade that they genuinely believe to be in error and/or unfair. Should this occur, there is a strict procedure that must be followed. First, we will abide by the “24-hour rule.” This means that after I’ve returned your assignment (NOT after the grade has been posted on D2L), you must reflect upon it for 24 hours before you attempt to e-mail me or talk to me about your grade. Second, after 24 hours have passed, you must contact me to request an appointment to talk about your grade (don’t make your argument in an e-mail; I want you to talk to me in person). Finally, you must meet with me with your argument for why you think your grade should be higher. Be specific in your argument if you want a fair hearing.

After one week all grades are final.

A Note About Grades: I realize that grades are a high priority for most students. Please be aware of where you stand throughout the semester. Do not wait until the last few days of the semester and then suddenly have a panic attack because your grade is not where you thought it would be. Once the semester is over, it’s over, and no more points will be allotted. I will not accept appeals for more points, or to be “bumped up” to the next letter grade.

Grading scale and criteria:

450-500 = A
400-449 = B
350-399 = C
300-349 = D
0-299 = F

Deadlines

Assignments are due on the date they're due, at the beginning of class, handed to me by you, printed off and stapled. I will not accept e-mail attachments, or work handed to me by a classmate unless you arrange it with me ahead of time and have a good reason for not following procedure. By the way, a malfunctioning printer or computer does not constitute a "good reason." Don't wait until the last minute to print off your assignment; printers break all the time, especially when assignments are due.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that all students have read and understood the University Student Conduct Code. If you have misplaced your copy, you can obtain one at <http://www.eiu.edu/~judicial/conductcode.pdf>. It is of utmost importance that you understand what is meant by cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, fabrication, plagiarism, etc. It is also important for you to understand your rights should I, or any other instructor, accuse you of academic dishonesty. Every graded assignment, unless otherwise indicated, requires you to do original, independent, and creative work. In addition to copying someone else's words or ideas, reusing your own work from other courses is considered academic dishonesty. At various times in the semester, you will be asked to summarize the materials of others—if you are using more than 3 words of that text, they need to be in quotations marks and include the corresponding page number. Violation of the Code will result in swift and severe consequences—typically failure for both assignment and the course. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs where they will become part of your permanent academic record. Cheating is just not worth it.

Assignments

Active Participation (200 points): This is a very small class and that presents both advantages and challenges. The advantages include more in-depth and intimate discussions, and we will get to know each other better. A challenge is that there is nowhere to hide! If you come to class unprepared it will be immediately obvious as you will have nothing to contribute. Being silent in a class of 25 may go unnoticed. Being silent in a small group will be noticed. Most of our learning will take place in our discussions, which is why I have assigned so many points to participation. It's not just about coming to class and sharing your personal stories (although that can definitely contribute to rich discussions). This is about doing your part to make every discussion a deep dive into some truly cutting-edge theories and concepts. It's also extremely important that you show up for class. Being habitually absent or late will dramatically impact the success of this class. This is your class; make it work for you.

Reading Journal (20 @ 5 points each = 100 points): For every reading and film that is assigned for this course, you will write a short but meaningful journal entry. In order to receive credit, each entry must contain, *at minimum*, the following: 1) A properly, APA, formatted citation of the work (Don't guess about this! Use a style guide and do it right!); 2) A few sentences summarizing the central argument of the piece; and 3) Your response to the reading/film. By this, I do not mean "I

liked it!" or "It was good!" I expect your response to be thoughtful and reflect upper-level thinking. Your response could be reflecting upon the things this piece made you think about that you never thought about before, or the connections you noticed between this piece and other readings/films/class discussions, or even questions this piece raised for you for which you would like to find answers. I will collect and grade your journals twice during the semester; once at midterm, and once on the last day of class. These will be graded all or nothing. That means that to get credit your journal entry must contain at a minimum the three points noted above. If any part is omitted, you will receive no credit.

Facilitation (100 points): At the end of the second week of class, you will sign up for one day to lead class discussion. In preparation for your facilitation, you will provide discussion questions to the class ***no later than one class period prior to the date of your facilitation***. You should feel free to create a multi-media presentation. Our topics are all interesting and engaging, so do your part to avoid making them boring! Your presentation should be designed to spur class discussion for the entire class period.

Essay Exam (100 points): This take home written exam will respond in essay form to a series of questions that I will provide in week 15 of class. More information will be provided in class.

Class Schedule

Note: It is expected that you will read the assigned reading BEFORE coming to class for the day, that you will take appropriate notes, and that you will bring the readings with you to class so that we can discuss them fully. We may alter some of the readings as the semester progresses depending upon the needs of the class.

DG: Disciplining Gender

D2L: Reading uploaded to Desire2Learn

1/7: Course overview

UNIT #1: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS



1/9: Gender: Overview

D2L: Allen, *Difference Matters*, Ch. 3

1/14: Intersectionality

D2L: Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"

1/16: Black Feminism

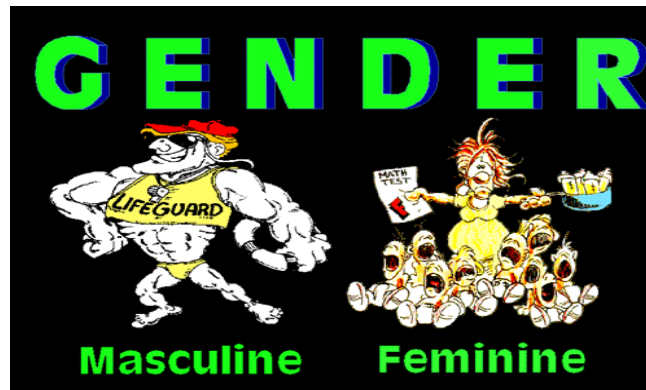
D2L: Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, part 1

1/21: NO CLASS, MLK DAY

UNIT #2: GENDER PERFORMANCE

1/23: Film: *But I'm a Cheerleader*

1/28: Finish watching *But I'm a Cheerleader*



1/30: *DG*: Introduction

2/4: Disciplining Femininity

D2L: Butterworth, "Katie wasn't only a girl..."

2/6: Disciplining Masculinity

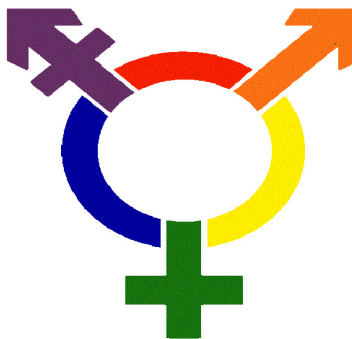
DG: "The Disciplining of Female Masculinity," Ch. 4

UNIT #3: QUEER BODIES

2/11: *DG*: "Disciplining the Transgendered," Ch. 2

2/13: Film: *The Brandon Teena Story*

2/18: Finish watching *The Brandon Teena Story*



2/20: *D2L*: Ryle, "How does gender matter for how we think about our bodies?"

2/25: Trans-bodies

D2L: Bornstein, from *Gender Outlaw*, Ch. 7

2/27: Film: *Genderf*kation*

3/4: Finish watching *Genderf*kation*

3/6: Floating snow day

JOURNAL DUE

3/11-3/15: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

3/18: DG: "So Long, Chaps and Spurs, and Howdy..." Ch. 3

3/20: Sexing the Body

D2L: Brookey, "Biology of Homosexuality"

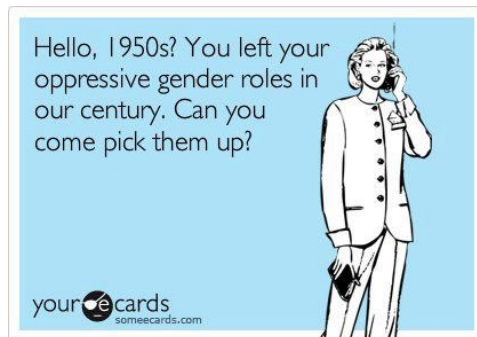
3/25: Fixing Bodies

DG: "Re-membering David Reimer," Ch. 1

3/27: Drag Kings

D2L: Halberstam, "Drag Kings"

UNIT #4: CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER "NORMS"



4/1: Black Masculinity

D2L: hooks, *We Real Cool*, preface & ch. 1

4/3: Film: *Moonlight*

4/8: Finish *Moonlight*

4/10: Violent Masculinity

D2L: Neroni, "Expressions of masculinity"

4/15: Film: *Tough Guise*

4/17: Film: *Tough Guise*

4/22: *Tough Guise* discussion

4/24: *DG*: "Conclusion," Final exam questions distributed

JOURNAL DUE

FINAL EXAM DUE MONDAY, APRIL 29TH, BY NOON IN MY OFFICE