

## Media, Gender, and Body Politics (summer term 2014)

Department for Media Culture and Theater

Day and time: Friday, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Room: S 93

Instructor: Dr. Peter Scheinpflug

 peter.scheinpflug@uni-koeln.de

 0221 470 3610

 Mo: 4 p.m. in 3.09

(Meister-Ekkehart-Str. 11, 3rd floor)

Who cares whether Lady Gaga has a penis or not? Who cares about Robbie Williams claiming to be 49% gay? Who cares about Britney Spears' body being digitally airbrushed in her new music video? Obviously, many people! Gender and body politics are social issues which are permanently processed in our culture. Especially popular culture has proven to have a major impact onto our understanding of how a 'real' man is supposed to behave, what constitutes the 'typical' female and what an ideal body ought to look like.

In this course we will analyze exemplary cultural phenomena across different media and from various cultures in order to understand the many cultural mechanisms by which certain concepts of gender are being constructed, distributed and linked to body politics as an essential cultural form of power. The course materials will include films like "Excision" (2012), television shows like "Big Bang Theory" and "Burka Avenger", as well as superhero comics, pin-ups, commercials and, of course, stars like Lady Gaga. These analyses will be assisted by our discussion of key theoretical writings covering many different theories and approaches such as cultural studies, gender studies, queer studies, feminist theory, postmodern theory etc.

In preparation for each lesson, students will have to prepare approximately two hours of film, television shows, comics etc. Additionally, students will have to read several short essays.

This course, including course materials and class discussions, will be in English language!

### I Attendance:

All students are expected to participate actively in each lesson! Furthermore, it is highly recommended that students take notes in class. The success of this course depends primarily on you. Thus, your attendance and participation in class discussions are very important. If you are ill or have an emergency, please inform your instructor prior to class by e-mail that you will not be able to attend. Verification of the absence may be requested by the instructor, if you miss more than two lessons of the same course.

### II Homework:

**Homework assignments** will consist of readings and preparing the exemplary media texts. These will serve as important preparation for discussions during the subsequent course lessons. Therefore, you need to fulfill your homework assignments!

**The readings** are available online via ILIAS. For joining the group in order to have access to the materials please register to ILIAS using your email-account, then search for the course and join it. The required password is: *[to be announced during the first lesson]*

### III academic paper:

In order to successfully complete the course you will need to hand in an academic paper about a **topic of your own choosing** but which should be **related to the overall theme of the course** or a specific topic covered by any lesson. If you wish to discuss your paper with your instructor please see him during his office hours. However, you are not demanded to discuss the topic with your instructor as long as you are aware of the expectations regarding an academic paper. The paper shouldn't exceed a length of about **8 pages**. You are free to write your paper **either in German or in English**. Because of the canonical theme of this course and the multitude of printed studies regarding sex, gender and body politics, **online/internet materials are considered to be illegitimate sources for citation!** German language papers have to follow the instructions of the departmental guide lines for academic papers: <http://www.mekuwi.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/10801.html>. English language papers have to meet the requirements of the MLA handbook/style. Please send the instructor a **digital copy** of your paper and hand him a printed version of the same paper **no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> 2014!**

### IV Credit Points:

If you are a regular student at the University of Cologne you will receive 4 CP upon successful completion of the course. If you are an exchange student please talk to the instructor of the course and your Erasmus coordinator in order to discuss the number of credit points.

### V Office Hours:

You need to register for the office hours online: [http://phil-services.uni-koeln.de/profile/peter\\_scheinpflug](http://phil-services.uni-koeln.de/profile/peter_scheinpflug). Before using the program you will have to register to it; for doing so you find a link "Registrierung Student" on the right side of the page. Office hours are being held in office 3.09 on the third floor of Meister-Ekkehart-Straße 11 (location: <http://www.uni-koeln.de/bin2/where.pl?parent.geb112>).

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Lesson	Date	Topic	Texts	Readings
0	11.04.	Introduction		
--	18.04.	<i>No lesson due to Easter holidays.</i>		
1	25.04.	analyzing gender and body politics in media culture	<i>Students will have to bring materials such as texts, images, movie clips, music videos etc. to class, which they would like to analyze and discuss!</i>	none
2	02.05.	body politics: hard bodies	Commando, USA 1985, D: Mark L. Lester.	Susan Jeffords: Hard Bodies. Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era. New Brunswick/ New Jersey 2004. p. 24-64.
3	09.05.	feminism & melodrama	All That Heaven Allows, USA 1955, D: Douglas Sirk.	Thomas Elsaesser: Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): Film Genre Reader III. Austin 2003. p. 366-395.
4	16.05.	the second sex	Miss Congeniality, USA 2000: D: Donald Petrie.	Simone de Beauvoir: The Second Sex. (Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier. With an Introduction by Sheila Rowbotham). London 2011. p. 3-17, 293-307.
5	23.05.	gender trouble & the phallus	Blue Steel, D: Kathryn Bigelow, USA 1989.	Judith Butler: Gender Trouble. Abingdon/New York 2010. p. 183-193. Lionel Bailly: Lacan. (Oxford Beginner's Guide). Oxford 2009. p. 75-76.
6	30.05.	cross-dressing	Mulan, USA 1998, D: Tony Bancroft/Barry Cook.	Marjorie Garber: Vested Interests. Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety. New York/London 1992. p. 1-17.
7	06.05.	copula and male bonding	How I Met Your Mother, USA 2005-..., The Three Days Rule, S04E21, Creators: Carter Bays and Craig Thomas, first airing: 13.10.2010.  <i>[will be watched in class]</i>	Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick: Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire. New York 1985. p. 1-5, 21-27.
--	13.06.	<i>No lesson due to Whitsun holidays.</i>		

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8	20.06.	the male gaze	Spring Breakers, D: Harmony Korine, USA 2012.	Laura Mulvey: Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Screen, Vol. 16, Nr. 3 (autumn 1975). p. 6-18.
9	27.06.	the monstrous feminine	Excision, USA 2012, D: Richard Bates Jr.	Barbara Creed: The Monstrous-Feminine. Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis. London/New York 1993. p. 1-15.
10	04.07.	queer studies	<p>Big Bang Theory, USA 2007-..., The Infestation Hypothesis, S05E02, Creators: Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady, first airing: 22.09.2011. <i>(last five minutes)</i></p> <p>Big Bang Theory, USA 2007-..., The Pulled Groin Extrapolation, S05E03, Creators: Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady, first airing: 29.09.2011. <i>(first five minutes)</i></p> <p>Big Bang Theory, USA 2007-..., The Transporter Malfunction, S05E20, Creators: Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady, first airing: 29.03.2012.</p> <p><i>[materials will be watched in class]</i></p>	<p>Harry M. Benshoff: Gay, Lesbian and Queer Cinema. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film. Detroit et al. 2007. Vol 2. p. 277-286.</p> <p>Michael DeAngelis: Queer Theory. In: Barry Keith Grant (ed.): Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film. Detroit et al. 2007. Vol 3. p. 363-368.</p>
11	11.07.	virtual bodies	---	Hilde G. Corneliussen: World of Warcraft as a Playground for Feminism. In: Hilde G. Corneliussen and Jill Walker Rettberg (Hg.): Digital Culture, Play, and Identity. A World Of Warcraft Reader. Cambridge/London 2008. p. 63-86.
12	18.07.	<i>Counseling for term/academic papers (in German).</i>		