GSWS 205-3: GENDER AND POPULAR CULTURE:
SHOWGIRLS: PERFORMANCE, EMBODIMENT AND SEXUALITY

Professor: Dr. Mary Shearman
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Office hours: Tuesdays 13:30 – 14:20
Lecture: Tuesdays 14:30 – 17:20; BLU 10921

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Are erotic dancers shrewd workers or exploited by a patriarchal society? If femininity is a performance and not a ‘natural’ disposition, why is it still employed by so many people even though its history is sometimes conceived as synonymous with being oppressed? Can a feminist go-go dancer subversively use her performance to challenge the objectification of her body?

This course is designed to aid students in developing analytical skills by investigating and critiquing the formal and mundane performance of femininity. This will be achieved through gaining exposure to, and comprehension of performance studies and feminist theories that address the potential of the sexualized female performer. We will look at examples from venues such as burlesque dancing, performance art, punk music, and drag culture. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify ways in which people who seek to subvert gendered power relations can utilize the prescription of femininity.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS:
For more detailed information please see the GSWS website: http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/courses/Educational_Goals.html

COURSE TEXTS AND COURSEWARE:
Available on-line through the SFU Library

COURSE EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Mid-Term Test: 15%
Final Essay (Due last week of class): 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Participation in class and on-line: 35%

PREREQUISITE: Students who have completed WS 205 may not complete this course for further credit.
LISTS OF TOPICS COVERED/LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Crash Course in the Performance Studies

Week 2: Intersections of Feminist and Performance Theories

Week 3: Feminism, Nudity, and Erotic Dancing

Week 4: Audience Reception and Identification

Week 5: Performance Artists and the Obscene Body On-Stage

Week 6: “Disidentifcation”

Week 7: Carnal Art and Carnivalesque

Week 8: In Class Mid-Term Test

Week 9: Burlesque (and Neoburlesque)

Week 10: Icons Re-Envisioned

Week 11: Final Assignment Workshop/Brainstorm Session in Class

Week 12: On-Line Culture and ‘Alternative’ Pornography

Week 13: Riot Grrl and Pop Music/Final Exam Preparation