GSWS 318-4: SPECIAL TOPICS IN GSWS: GENDER AND CELEBRITY CULTURE

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Office hours: Tuesdays 12:30 – 13:30; or by appointment
Lecture: Tuesdays 8:30 – 12:20; SWH 10051

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Without question, celebrity culture is more pervasive than ever and has become a truly global phenomenon. Despite recent changes and challenges to the celebrity landscape, female celebrities in particular continue to be a flashpoint for various cultural debates about gender, notions of selfhood, parenting, feminism, notions of success and talent, sexuality and desire, body image, and so forth. This Special Topics course is concerned with charting and examining these issues, situating them within scholarly and popular contexts. The course is divided into three parts: i) introducing students to the academic study of celebrity culture, ii) exploring some key debates and common cultural narratives about celebrities, and iii) looking at the consumption of celebrity via gossip and fandom, paying particular attention to the gendered dimensions of these practices. Class time will consist of lectures, media, and both informal and structured discussion, and students will be invited to make critical connections between course topics and current events. This course is best suited to students who enjoy critically engaging with media, and want to better understand their own relationship to celebrity culture from a scholarly perspective. Students who are not interested in the topic will find the course challenging.

Course Objectives
• To introduce students to contemporary debates about celebrity culture, both scholarly and popular
• To familiarize students with some of the key scholarly concepts and tools needed to perform their own feminist critique of celebrity culture
• To provide students with a learning environment where they can develop their analytical skills and practice communicating ideas effectively

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

COURSE TEXTS AND COURSEWARE:
Assigned course readings will be available on the course Canvas.
Other assigned readings will be available online.

COURSE EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Attendance & Participation – 15%
In-Class Discussion Groups – 20%
Short Paper: Celebrity Profile Analysis – 20%
Final Paper Proposal – 5%
Peer Review – 10%
Final Paper – 30%

PREREQUISITE: 30 units, including three units in GSWS.