GSWS 320-4: SPECIAL TOPIC: FEMINIST TELEVISION STUDIES

Professor: Dr. Natasha Patterson  
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Office hours: TBD  
Lecture: Mondays 13:30 – 17:20; Harbour Centre 1530

Course Description:
This special topics course introduces students to some of the key debates and issues in feminist television studies. Television continues to be a major cultural force and communicator of ideas about gender, race, class, sexuality, and so on, in our everyday lives. Feminist television scholarship offers an important and much needed critical lens through which we can better understand its enduring cultural appeal. Specifically, students will learn how to critically analyse the construction of gender, sexuality, and race via various TV formats (soaps, dramas, reality TV), and will also consider television’s role in mediating contemporary ideas about feminism in a postfeminist media culture. We will also consider the changing landscape of television, and what this might mean for the politics of representation.

Students are encouraged to critically reflect upon their own relationship to television as a cultural medium both in class and in their writing assignments, as well as engaging with TV via social media, which has become a common feature of contemporary TV viewing (social TV). The course assignments are cumulative, culminating in a final creative project that asks you to develop your own concept for a (feminist) TV show that actively engages with, and takes up, ideas learned throughout the semester.

Class time will consist of a combination of lecture, screenings, presentations and class discussion. Students may need access to a Netflix account for some viewings outside of class. Students are expected to do their weekly readings and come to class prepared so that they can contribute to class discussions.

Educational Goals:
• Become familiar with feminist critiques of television; its key themes and concerns  
• Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and interpret television using a feminist lens  
• Apply class learning to develop a creative piece of work for the final project  
• Communicate ideas effectively through in-class assignments and social media

Course Texts and Courseware:
• Additional readings available on Canvas.

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance and In-class Participation – 15%
Social Media Component – 10%
Short Critical Paper (x 2 @ 15%) – 30%
Creative Course Project (45% of final grade):
1. Pitching Feminist TV Show Paper – 25%
2. TV Show Pitch Proposal and presentation – 10%
3. TV Show concept final presentation – 10%

Prerequisite: 15 units
Students who have completed WS 301, Fall 2008 may not complete this course for further credit.