Course Description:
From Bridget Jones, Sex in the City to Zack and Miri Make a Porno—what does the realm of popular culture tell us about what people expect of femininity and feminism today? This course introduces the study of women and popular culture from the perspectives of political economy and cultural studies. We critically examine women in positions of creative control in the production and exchange of popular cultural practices, in positions as symbols in the representation of cultural texts, and as audiences in the reception and construction of cultural meaning. While contemporary western capitalism is producing a popular culture rife with themes of popular female emancipation and empowerment, manifesto’s like Angela McRobbie’s *Aftermath of Feminism* challenge the assumption that feminism is therefore no longer needed. Political questions of identity, engagement and social justice in evaluating popular culture and “guilty” pleasures are addressed in this seminar.

Course Texts and Courseware:
Required:

Recommended:

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance and Course Participation: 10%
Mid Term (In Class Week 6) 20%
Final Exam (Take Home due Dec 10) 20%
Field Notes (2) (700 words each) (due Weeks 3 and 7) 20%
Essay (8-10 pages) (due week 12) 30%

Conceptual Outline for Seminar Discussions
a. Women. Political Economy and Production of Popular Culture
b. Women, Representation and Popular Culture Texts
c. Women, Reception and Resistance in Popular Culture

Prerequisites: WS 101 or 102. Prerequisites waived upon request.