

Spring 2012
FS102*W2*
T/TH 3:00-4:15pm

Academic Discourse II: Gender and Relationships in Contemporary Film

Dr. Caputo's Contact Information:

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Office Location: Odd fellows 230

Office Hours: M 2:00-4:00pm; T 4:30-6:30pm; W 10:00-12:00pm; and by appointment

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Course Description:

In this course, students will explore, through significant and increasingly complex writing and speaking assignments, the ways in which romance narratives in contemporary American film construct evolving notions of gender. Specifically, students will consider the ways in which varying representations of gender in film work to reinforce, challenge, or subvert traditional ideas about sex and gender. Students will read a number of critical articles and consider the course topic from a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives; students will also be expected to attend screenings for a number of films outside of class. Designated "W," this section of FS 102 places particular emphasis on the practice of writing and offers specialized instruction to improve writing skills.

Course Goals:

As the second course in Allegheny College's three-semester seminar sequence, FS102 is designed to build on those skills learned in FS101 with particular attention to the following elements of academic discourse:

1. To develop skills in reading, writing, and presenting in an academic context.
2. To participate in a sustained conversation with other writers and speakers.
3. To learn to generate and effectively support, in writing and speech, strong thesis statements that address clearly defined problems.
4. To explore, particularly through writing, the ways in which popular films work to reflect, negotiate, and shape ideas about masculinity in contemporary American society.

Required Texts:

Fein, Ellen, and Sherrie Schneider. *The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right*. New York: Warner Books, 1995.

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference*. 7th ed. New York/Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. 6th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012.

Strauss, Neil. *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

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Assignments and Grading:

Writing:

I will evaluate your writing regularly over the course of the semester, and the quality of work produced at each stage of the writing process will impact your final grade. However, in a course of this nature, progress and depth of learning is paramount. Thus, your final grade will be determined largely by your overall progress in the course as reflected by the quality of writing in your final portfolio. You will write 4 major essays over the course of the semester; each of these essays will undergo a significant process of revision, all versions of which are to be included in a writing “portfolio” you will submit for evaluation at the end of the semester. Major writing assignments will include three shorter essays and a longer research paper.

Your final writing grade in the course will be based on the quality of your final essays and the significance of your progress as a writer as demonstrated by the strides made at each stage of revision. You must save and store each draft of each paper, with my comments and the comments of your peers, and submit each draft of every paper in the final portfolio. You must also save and submit in the final portfolio every peer review you have received from and written for your peers. By enrolling in a ‘W’ section, you have chosen to focus on improving your writing skills; thus, the written work you produce in this course will constitute 75% of your total course grade.

Speaking:

Though not the particular focus of this ‘W’ section of FS 102, speaking is still a fundamental and critical component of the entire FS sequence. You will deliver two formal speeches and have regular opportunities to speak in class. In addition, you will be expected to contribute regularly and energetically to class discussions. Seminars are discussion-based courses; thus, the success of this course depends largely on the quality of discussion and level of intellectual engagement you bring to the material and class meetings. In keeping with this principle, your contributions to class discussion and other in-class activities will be weighted heavily. Your speaking assignments constitute 25% of your total course grade.

Discussion Leading
Regular Contributions to Class Discussions
Formal Speech (6-8 minutes)

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Course Schedule (subject to change with due notice)

*All evening films will begin at 7pm in Quigley Auditorium

Date	Day	Readings and Assignments
1-19	Th	Introduction to the course—Sex, Gender, and other Ideological Labels
1-24	T	Elizabeth Schambelan—“Defining a Persona Within the Boundaries of Academic Discourse, or God, I Sound Like a Pretentious Ass” (handouts); <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 1
1-26	Th	Kate Millett—“Sexual Politics”; Diana Fuss—excerpt from <i>Essentially Speaking</i> ; “Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender” (from the <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>) (handouts) Draft of Essay #1 Due—Post to Sakai Forums before class
1-31	T	Gender Trouble—Discussion of Class Essays Evening film— <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>
2-2	Th	<i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 2; Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes, and Melissa A. Collier-Meek—“Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princess” (handout)
2-7	T	Revision of Essay #1 Due Evening film— <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>
2-9	Th	Karen E. Wohlwend—“Damsels in Discourse: Girls Consuming and Producing Identity Texts Through Disney Princess Play” (handout)
2-14	T	<i>The Rules</i> (read through Rule #20); <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 3 Evening film— <i>He’s Just Not That Into You</i>
2-16	Th	<i>The Rules</i> (read through Rule #35)
2-21	T	<i>The Game</i> (read Steps 1-3) Draft of Essay #2 Due Evening film— <i>Swingers</i>
2-23	Th	<i>The Game</i> (read Steps 4-6)
2-28	T	<i>The Game</i> (read Steps 7-11) Evening film— <i>Crazy Stupid Love</i>
3-2	Th	Revision of Essay #2 Due <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 4 (only pp. 94-104)
3-7	T	Writing Workshops <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 8
3-9	Th	Writing Workshops <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 10
3-14	T	Writing Workshops <i>Writing Analytically</i> Chs. 11 and 12
3-16	Th	Writing Workshops <i>Writing Analytically</i> Ch. 13
3-21	T	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
3-23	Th	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
3-27	T	Draft of Essay #3 Due

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		Evening film— <i>Erin Brockovich</i>
3-29	Th	Discussion of film
4-3	T	Evening film— <i>Brokeback Mountain</i>
4-5	Th	Harry Benshoff—"A Straight Cowboy Movie: Heterosexuality According to <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> " (handout) Revision of Essay #3 Due
4-10	T	Evening film (field trip)-- <i>The Hunger Games</i>
4-12	Th	First 2 pages of Research Paper Due
4-17	T	First 4 pages of Research Paper Due No Class—Individual Writing Conferences T and W
4-19	Th	Formal Speeches
4-24	T	Formal Speeches
4-26	Th	Formal Speeches
5-1	T	Individual Writing Conferences *Full Draft of Research Paper Due*
5-8	T	Final Portfolios Due