



ETS 192: GENDER & LITERARY TEXTS Fall 2017

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“One is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one.” - Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

“Like I’ve always said, ‘You’re born naked, and the rest is drag.’” - RuPaul

Course Overview

It has become commonplace within the social sciences and contemporary cultural criticism to speak of gender as a social construct and to see it as a kind of “compulsory performance.” What would it mean to think of gender (i.e., masculinities and femininities) in this way? In this course, we will begin with the premise that gender is a social construct—rather than a natural, ahistorical “essence” that somehow “expresses” our true “selves”—and examine the ways in which literature participates in the social reproduction of gender, as well as the difference that gender makes in the production and reception of literary texts. From Shakespeare’s drama to virtual genders in 21 century film, we’ll explore what gender comes to mean in such literary texts and its effects.

Gender, as a system of difference, typically marks divisions between “men” and “women” (i.e., how individuals learn to identify themselves and others), but it also organizes numerous other social relations, including those involving labor, sexuality, consumption, etc. Despite gender being a construct, there are material effects to gender, e.g., the sexual division of labor and notions of “women’s work” or “men’s work,” even in the realm of literary production. As a class, we will explore the difference that gender makes in one’s everyday life and how one’s gender identification or experience of gender might differ across race, class, sexuality, culture, or religion, for example. It matters, in other words, *which* women and *which* men we talk about or are represented in the literary texts we study, but how or why? We’ll look at literary texts such as Sherman Alexie’s *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, Junot Díaz’s *Drown*, Ta-Nahesi Coates’s *Between the World and Me*, and Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*, for example, for answers to those questions.

To begin developing our own critical perspectives on gender and its relationship to literature, we will be utilizing various theoretical frameworks for analysis, including feminist theory, which historically has been at the forefront in producing systematic analyses of gender, as for example in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* treatise and works of poetry from the Romantic period. We will also attend to the historical and cultural specificities of texts to better contextualize the

gendered representations that we study and consider how intersectionality as a theoretical tool can help us understand gender oppression and the diverse experiences of gendered subjects.

Some of the other questions that we will potentially address in this course as we engage with various literary texts include: How is gender “done” or “performed” across different cultures and historical periods? How might societal gender norms affect how we experience different literary and filmic texts as readers and viewers? In what ways might different literary genres be gendered? What kinds of cultural or ideological work might certain literary representations be performing? If literary texts can be said to participate in the reproduction of gender ideologies, can they also provide spaces of resistance for thinking about and reimagining gender norms and identities, particularly those norms that might be oppressive? To investigate, we’ll read/view canonical texts, such as William Shakespeare’s *Othello* and Charlotte Gilman Perkins’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, for example, and contemporary texts such as David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly* and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.

ETS 192 Course Learning Outcomes

- Develop skills in close reading, textual analysis, and effective historical and cultural contextualization of claims.
- Recognize how meanings are created through acts of critical reading.
- Analyze the ways texts construct categories of difference, particularly differences of gender but also those of race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, and class
- Formulate sustained interpretive, analytical, or conceptual arguments based on evidence drawn from texts

General Skills Learning Outcomes

- Organize ideas in writing
- Use clear and appropriate prose
- Express ideas and information orally
- Engage in analytical and critical dialogue orally
- Evaluate arguments
- Identify and question assumptions

NOTE: ETS 192 is a University-designated writing-intensive course that fulfills SU’s College of Arts & Sciences Liberal Arts core curriculum and skills requirement. As such, it is intended to familiarize students with the thought processes, structures, and styles associated with writing in the liberal arts.

ETS 192 is also cross-listed with WGS 192 (Women & Gender Studies) in the SU Course Catalog.

Required Course Texts

- Assigned Unit anchor texts provided as pdfs or print copies
- *Othello* by William Shakespeare
- *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Required Assignments

2 Types of Reading Responses (min. 6 reading responses total; 2-3 typed pages each):

- **Close Reading Responses:** selection of a short passage from a literary text for analysis, incorporating course concepts and practices
- **Thinking through Theory or Synthesis Responses:** critical summaries of primary theoretical readings or syntheses of theoretical perspectives introduced in anchor texts

Formal Essays:

Students will need to compose 2 major essays, due midsemester and at the end of the final unit of the semester. These formal essays require sustained close readings and textual analysis as well as critical engagement with the concepts and interpretive strategies introduced in the theoretical anchor texts for the course units.

Presentation and Critical Reflection essay:

Students will present individually or in paired groups on selected topics and course readings (20-30 minutes max.). Students will need to establish their own lines of inquiry and presentation objectives in advance of the presentation. In designing the presentation, the goal should not be simply to summarize a text, context, or topic but rather to apply the course lenses and interpretive approaches to a particular text or topic in order to advance a new understanding of or critical argument about that text or topic.

Students will follow up their presentation with a brief critical reflection essay (~2-3 typed pages) that introduces their lines of inquiry (e.g., what kinds of questions were they trying to address/answer and why), articulates their presentation objectives (i.e., what's at stake or what makes this presentation useful or significant), summarizes any research conducted or any challenges involved with their interpretive practices, and that expands upon any insights gained or questions remaining, including any insights or points of contestation from the classroom exchange itself that may have shifted or enhanced students' understanding of the course materials and presentation topic. The critical reflection essay is due within a week after the presentation.

Quizzes, Dialogic Journals, and Other Informal Writing:

In addition to potential reading quizzes, informal writing assigned may consist, for example, of in-class freewrites, dialogic journals, virtual discussion board threads or blog posts, etc.

Participation/Attendance:

Attendance is required. You are responsible for attending all classes, arriving on time, having read all assigned materials, and being prepared to discuss those materials in class. Since participation, i.e., active listening and engagement with one's peers and the course materials, is part of your course grade and integral to the development of your written assignments and other coursework, absences will result in a lower course grade. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the material covered in that class and for any assigned work.

Grade Distribution

Reading responses (minimum of 6 total) 2-3 typed pages each (including <i>minimally</i> 3 close reading responses & 3 thinking through theory or synthesis responses)	30%
Midterm Essay (5-6 typed pages)	20%
Final Essay (7-8 typed pages)	25%
Presentation & Critical Reflection	15%
Quizzes, Informal Writing (dialogic journals, etc.), and Class Participation	10%

Course Policies:**Special Needs and Accommodations**

Syracuse University welcomes people with disabilities and, in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Students who require special consideration due to a learning or physical disability or other situation should make an appointment to see the course instructor right away.

Use of Student Academic Work

It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in this course constitutes permission by the student for the instructor to use for educational purposes any student work produced in the course, in compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). After the completion of the course, any further use of student work will meet one of the following conditions: (1) the work will be rendered anonymous through the removal of all personal identification of the student(s); or (2) written permission from the student(s).

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. SU students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

This class will use the plagiarism detection and prevention system Turnitin. You will have the option to submit your papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you use have been properly acknowledged and cited before you submit the paper to me. I will also submit all papers you write for this class to Turnitin, which compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at SU and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

For a more detailed description of the guidelines for adhering to Syracuse University's academic integrity policy, see: <http://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/>.

COURSE CALENDAR

NOTE: This calendar is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to attend class and to be aware of any schedule changes.

UNIT ONE: De/constructing Gender

Gender is seen as a construct, established through the relationship of the individual and one's role in society. The texts in this unit will examine the individual within a social and power relationship, and we will consider the elements that contribute to the construction of gender.

Required Core Unit readings:

- Judith Lorber - "Night to His Day": The Social Construction of Gender"
- Sojourner Truth - "Ain't I a Woman"

Date	Weekly Agenda	Homework: DUE DATES
<p>Week One September 6-8</p>	<p>Day 1: Course Introduction and Syllabus review Day 2: Group discussion of school-wide summer reading text Day 3: Distribute and review handouts on <i>Writing Analytically</i> techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Theory? address reading/reactions • MTV video, "Five Gender Stereotypes That Used To Be The Opposite" 	<p>9/8: Read and annotate "Why Theory"</p>

<p>Week Two September 11-15</p>	<p>Day 1: Sojourner Truth: "Ain't I a Woman?": Notice and Focus (NF)/Discussion; Begin reading "Patriarchy"</p> <p>Day 2: TTT with "Patriarchy" submitted on Classroom Excerpts of Judith Butler's "Imitation and Gender Insubordination": Paraphrase X 3 (in class work)</p> <p>Day 3:</p>	<p>9/13 Read "Patriarchy" (Allan Johnson)</p> <p>9/14: "Night to His Day" (Judith Lorber) TTT posted on Classroom</p> <p>9/14 Judith Butler – "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" excerpts Paraphrase X 3</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and Discuss posted TTT on Lorber; review key points of text; connect to day to day experience 	<p>9/18 Read "X" (Lois Gould); QTI</p> <p>9/20 Response paper 1 "Barbie Doll" (Marge Piercy) or "How to Watch Your Brother Die" (Michael Lassell) CCR</p>
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<p>Week Three September 18-22</p>	<p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Think-Pair-Share responses to "X"/share one with class <p>Days 2-3, and Day 1 next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing and discussion of <i>Ma Vie En Rose</i> • In class write: "<i>Ma Vie</i> . . . seems to be about X, but is really about Y." Support position with references to the film's style, characterization, imagery, etc. 	<p>9/20 and 9/22: RRJ for <i>Ma Vie En Rose</i></p>
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<p>Week Four September 25-29</p>	<p>Day 1: Complete "Ma Vie. . ." work above</p> <p>Day 2: "Learning to Be Gendered" discussion in relation to "So What" responses</p> <p>Day 3: "Tell the Women . . ." discussion in relation to "Learning to be Gendered"</p>	<p>9/26: "Learning to Be Gendered" (Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginett); Asking "So What"</p> <p>9/27: "Tell the Women We're Going" (Raymond Carver) Flashpoint: representation of gender in your reading</p> <p>9/28: Response paper 2: CCR for "Bicycles, Muscles, Cigarettes" (Carver).</p> <p>10/2 "Ideology," chapter 6 of <i>The Theory Toolbox</i>, TTT posted on Classroom</p>
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UNIT TWO: Literature, Ideology & Gendered Subjects

The relationship of art to its social context is complex. Throughout this unit, we will examine the symbiotic relationship of art and culture. How does the text reflect its culture? How does it have an impact on its culture? Analysis of the style and tone of the works, in addition to their contents, will deepen our understanding of the role and power of literature.

Required Core Unit readings:

- Excerpts from Jonathan Culler - "Reading As a Woman"
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick - *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* excerpts
- Judith Fetterley – "The Politics of Literature" (Rip Van Winkle);
- *Theory Toolbox* chapters – "Ideology," and/or "Differences"
- Margaret Anderson/Patricia Hill Collins;"Why Class, Race, and Gender Still Matter"

<p>Week Five October 2-6</p>	<p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unpack <i>Theory Toolbox</i> chapter 6: Ideology: TTT ● Distribute Jonathan Culler/Mary Wollstonecraft readings <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fetterley discussion: shared QTI <p>Days 3 and 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culler/Wollstonecraft discussion 	<p>10/3: Judith Fetterley "Palpable Designs, An American Dream: <i>Rip Van Winkle</i>" 2 QT</p> <p>10/5: Read and NF Jonathan Culler's "Reading as a Woman" and Mary Wollstonecraft's <i>Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> (excerpt)</p> <p>10/6: Response paper 3: Culler/Wollstonecraft TTT/S</p> <p>On-going: work on midterm essay (5-6 pages); due 10/26</p>
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<p>Week Six October 9-13</p>	<p>Day 1(short session):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share flashpoints from Anderson/Collins <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "The Story of an Hour" Think-Pair-Share ● Read "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman NF <p>Day 3:</p>	<p>10/9: "Why Class, Race, and Gender Still Matter" (Anderson/Collins) 2 flashpoints</p> <p>10/13 Response Paper 4: CCR of "The Yellow Wallpaper" Charlotte Perkins Gilman/TTT/S of Anderson/Collins</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Angel in the House” William Makepeace Thackeray and “Goblin Market” Christina Rossetti comparison/contrast <p>Day 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socratic seminar on “The Yellow Wallpaper” and Anderson/Collins essay 	<p>On-going: work on midterm essay</p>
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<p>Week Seven October 16-20</p>	<p>Days 1 and 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trifles</i> by Susan Glaspell read aloud/NF discussion <p>Day 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Killing Us Softly,” Jean Kilbourne TTT/S Bordo • Excerpts: <i>Gilda</i> and <i>LA Confidential</i> <p>Day 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guyland</i> excerpt TTT/S Sedgwick • <i>Theory Toolbox</i>, Chapter 10, “Differences,” excerpts Paraphrase X 3 	<p>10/16: Bordo “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity” excerpt QTI</p> <p>10/20 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Between Men” 2 Flashpoints 10/19 and 10/20 Work on midterm essay; bring thesis and proposal to class</p>
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<p>Week Eight October 23-27</p>	<p>Day 1 and 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual conferences for midterm essay <p>Day 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTV: “WTF is Intersectional Feminism?” • Kimberle Crenshaw: TED Talk: “The Urgency of Intersectionality” 	<p>THURSDAY, OCT 26: MIDTERM ESSAY DUE AT START OF CLASS</p> <p>10/30: bell hooks “Reconstructing Black Masculinity” 2 Flashpoints posted on Google doc</p>
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UNIT THREE: Intersections of Race, Class & Gender

An awareness of intersectionality provides a way of examining the complexity of identity. The chosen texts will uncover the interplay among race, gender, and class. As we read *Othello* towards the end of the unit, we will consider the protagonist’s limited awareness of the complexity of his identity. Prior to this, we will read *Between the World and Me*, a text that articulates the multiple factors that shape identity. Moving from a contemporary, explicit statement to a classic work will underscore the theoretical pieces, such as “Eating the Other,” that we will have already read.

Required Core Unit readings:

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw – “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, ...”
- Kevin Powell - “Confessions of a Recovering Misogynist”
- Sherman Alexie - “I Hated Tonto (Still Do)”
- bell hooks - “Reconstructing Black Masculinity”

<p>Week Nine October 30-November 3</p>	<p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reconsider Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” through the lens of intersectionality ● “Girl” (Jamaica Kincaid) <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unpack “Reconstructing Black Masculinity” (bell hooks) through posted flashpoints <p>Day 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “On the Subway” Sharon Olds ● “I Hated Tonto” in relation to “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” <p>Day 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Powell: Uncover assumptions/Rules he lived by; revisit “Tell the Women We’re Going” 	<p>10/30: bell hooks “Reconstructing Black Masculinity” 2 Flashpoints posted on Google doc</p> <p>10/31 “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” (Sherman Alexie) NF</p> <p>11/3: Response Paper 5: Powell: “Confessions of a Recovering Misogynist” QTI</p>
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<p>Week Ten November 6-10 (no class Nov 8, 9, 10)</p>	<p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diaz discussion ● Partner work: Connect reading of Diaz to another text; outline and present points of comparison/contrast to class <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excerpt from <i>Crash</i>: Written response and discussion: Who has power? What confers power? How does an awareness of intersectionality contribute to the exchange? 	<p>11/6: "How to Date a Brown Girl" Junot Diaz NF</p> <p>11/13 Part One of <i>Between the World and Me</i> (Ta-Nehisi Coates) Dialogic journal, three entries; for dialogic journal, there are to be three entries for each section. Cite a passage from the text that connects to theory read or strikes you as particularly illustrative of points raised. Comment on the effect and how it's created or analysis</p>
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<p>Week Eleven November 13-17</p>	<p>Days 1-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Between the World and Me</i>: Review Coates assignment: class divided into 3 sections; responsible for leading Socratic Seminar for assigned part ● Socratic Seminar/one day for each section of the text 	<p>11/13 Part One of <i>Between the World and Me</i>" (Ta-Nehisi Coates) Dialogic journal, 3 entries and two questions for Socratic Seminar for your assigned section</p> <p>11/15 Part Two as above for Part One</p> <p>11/16 Part Three as above for Part One</p> <p>**Due Dec. 8: Response Paper 6: TS: Powell, hooks, Sedgwick, <i>Othello</i></p>
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<p>Week Twelve November 20-24 (including Thanksgiving break)</p>	<p>Days 1 and 3: <i>Othello</i>: assign reading parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read aloud/Act I 	<p>11/21: RR to Act I</p>
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<p>Week Thirteen</p>	<p>Day 1:</p>	
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<p>November 27-December 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud/Act II <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud/Act III • Connections to theory <p>Day 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud/Act IV <p>Day 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud/Act V <p>Conference with students on thesis statement/connection to theory</p>	<p>11/28 RR to Act II</p> <p>11/29 How are elements of theory becoming evident by Act III TS</p> <p>12/1 RR to Act IV; draft of thesis statement posted to Google Doc</p> <p>12/8: Response Paper 6: TS, Powell, hooks, Sedgwick, <i>Othello</i></p>
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UNIT FOUR: Global Genders

We will be reading texts about, and through them, exploring cultures that exist outside of our everyday experiences. The points of view of the novel *White Teeth* will underscore the diverse experiences of characters within a common landscape. The long-range implications of colonialism will be addressed in relation to the literary texts.

Required Core Unit readings:

- Jan J. Pettman - "Women, Racism & Colonialism"

<p>Week 14 December 4-8</p>	<p>Assign final paper due 1/12</p> <p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpack Pettman's "Women, Racism & Colonialism" <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected poems from <i>E-Mails from Scheherazad</i> (Mohja Kahf) <p>Days 3 and 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick research on major cultural groups in London through late 20th to early 21st centuries • Begin reading <i>White Teeth</i> 	<p>12/4 Jan J. Pettman: "Women, Racism & Colonialism" paraphrase X 3</p> <p>Begin reading <i>White Teeth</i> (Zadie Smith) by assigned date: "Archie 1974, 1945" 12/11 "Samad 1984, 1857" 12/15 "Irie 1990, 1907" 12/21 "Magid, Millat, and Marcus 1992, 1999" 1/2</p> <p>Dialogic journal: 5 entries for each section</p>
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Weeks 15 and 16 December 11-15 December 18-22	Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of part one of <i>White Teeth</i>: “Seems to be about . . . “ • Days 2-6 Discussion of novel focusing on elements of narrative voice, cultural, and historical context and relationship to gender 	Continue reading sections of <i>White Teeth</i> by assigned date: “Archie 1974, 1945” 12/11 “Samad 1984, 1857” 12/15 “Irie 1990, 1907” 12/21 “Magid, Millat, and Marcus 1992, 1999” 1/2
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Week 17 January 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding discussion of <i>White Teeth</i> • Conference for final paper 	Thesis and direction for final paper due
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UNIT FIVE: Gender Futures

In this brief unit, we will consider which elements might shape concepts of gender in the future. We will consider how a broader understanding of elements that shape culture and a multifaceted identity, and how such an awareness can inform both an individual's and society's perceptions.

Required Core Unit readings:

- Excerpts from J. Halberstam - *Female Masculinity*

Week 18 January 8-12	“Female Masculinity” (J. Halberstam) TTTTS with Fetterley: what is the future American Dream? “What Makes a Woman?” Elinor Burkett, <i>NYT</i>	Final paper due Jan. 12
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Week 19 January 15-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clips from <i>Ex Machina</i> • Assign presentation and partners • Work on presentation 	Work on presentation and critical reflection
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Week 20 January 22-26	Final presentations	
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