

WGSST 2306: Girlhood

Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, The Ohio State University

Spring 2019

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The category of “girl” increasingly finds itself at the center of many debates- from conversations on education and entrepreneurial success to those on sexualization, low self-esteem and violence. However, what is often unexamined in these conversations is the question of who is a girl. What assumptions of race, class, sexuality, ability and nationality underlie this category of girl? Which girls are invisibilized within dominant representations of girlhood? As part of this introductory course to Girlhood Studies, we will grapple with these questions to think about construction of the category of “girl” within various sites, including popular media and development discourses. We will analyze how the meanings associated with girlhood come to symbolize various anxieties as well as possibilities. We will also engage with the various responses to these constructions, looking at ideas of “girl power”, agency and citizenship. Through an investigation of the experiences of girls within schools, homes, malls and juvenile detention, we will look at how girls negotiate with the various structures of power that they encounter in their daily lives.

While most of our texts will be located in the context of the US, we will also widen our lens in an effort to think about how the category of girl has been constructed within development discourses through an examination of the “third world girl”.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course aims to equip students to

- Identify some of the key debates of girlhood studies, including sexualization, agency, at-risk etc.
- Critically analyze the construction of girlhood- who is a girl? how is the category of girl analyzed at the intersections of race, sexuality, nationality, ability?

- Closely read academic and popular culture texts to critically reflect on the representations of girlhood and the ideologies and assumptions that underlie these representations.
- Critically think about the different structures of power within which girls are located and how they negotiate with these structures at various sites in their lives.

Readings

WEEK 1

Jan 7- Jan 13

Introductions

What is Girlhood Studies?

Kearney, M. C. (2009). Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies. *NWSA Journal*, 1-28.

WEEK 2

Jan 14- Jan 20

Who is a Girl?

Driscoll, C. (2008). Girls Today-Girls, Girl Culture and Girl Studies. *Girlhood Studies*, 1(1), 13-32.

Harris, A. (2004). *Future Girl: Young Women in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge. (selected portions)

WEEK 3

Jan 21- Jan 27

Where are the Girls?

Chakraborty, K. (2009). 'The good Muslim girl': Conducting Qualitative Participatory Research to Understand the Lives of Young Muslim Women in the Bustees of Kolkata. *Children's Geographies*, 7(4), 421-434.

Harris, A. (2004). *Future Girl: Young Women in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge. (selected portions)

WEEK 4

Jan 28- Feb 3

Representation of Girls

Watch Mean Girls (dir. Mark Waters) (assigned on Secured Media Library)

Hains, R. C. (2012). *Growing Up with Girl Power: Girlhood on Screen and in Everyday Life*. New York: Peter Lang. (selected portions)

Chesney-Lind, M., & Irwin, K. (2004). From badness to meanness: Popular constructions of contemporary girlhood. In A. Harris (ed.) *All About the Girl: Culture, Power and Identity*, pp. 45–56. New York: Routledge.

Driver, S. (2007). Willow's Queer Transformation on Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Coming of Age, Coming Out, Becoming Powerful'. In S. Driver *Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting and Creating Media*, pp. 57-90. New York: Peter Lang.

WEEK 5

Feb 4- Feb 10

The Sexualization Debates

Kehily, M. J. (2012). Contextualising the Sexualisation of Girls Debate: Innocence, Experience and Young Female Sexuality. *Gender and Education*, 24(3), 255-268.

WEEK 6

Feb 11- Feb 17

Girls Make Media

Lindsey, T. B. (2013). "One time for my girls": African-American Girlhood, Empowerment, and Popular Visual Culture. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17(1), 22-34.

Kearney, M.C. (2006). *Girls Make Media*. New York, NY: Routledge. (selected portions)

WEEK 7

Feb 18- 24

Complicating Agency

Brown, A., & Thomas, M. E. (2014). "i just like knowing they can look at it and relize who i really am": Recognition and the Limits of Girlhood Agency on MySpace. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 39(4), 949-972.

Subramanian, S. (2019) (Dis)Respectable Selfies: Honour, Surveillance and the Undisciplined Girl. In A. Aneja (Ed.) *Women's and Gender Studies in India: Crossings*, pp. 247-257. New Delhi: Routledge.

WEEK 8

Feb 25- Mar 3

When Girls Resist

Taft, J. K. (2010). *Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas*. New York: New York University Press. (selected portions)

WEEK 9

Mar 4- Mar 10

Girlhood and Citizenship

Caron, C. (2011). Getting girls and teens into the vocabularies of citizenship. *Girlhood Studies*, 4(2), 70-91.

Lee, J. (2006). Locality, participatory action research, and racialized girls' struggles for citizenship. Y. Jiwani, C. Steenbergen, and C. Mitchell (eds). *Girlhood: Redefining the Limits*, 89-108. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

WEEK 10

Mar 11- Mar 17

SPRING BREAK!

WEEK 11

Mar 18- Mar 24

Mapping Black Girlhood

Brown, R. N. (2009). *Black Girlhood Celebration: Toward a Hip-Hop Feminist Pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang. (Introduction)

Weekes, D. (2003). Keeping It in the Community: Creating Safe Spaces for Black Girlhood. *Community, Work & Family*, 6(1), 47-61.

WEEK 12

Mar 25- 31

Mapping Black Girlhood

Cox, A. M. (2015). *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (selected portions)

Simmons, L. M. (2015). *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. (selected portions)

WEEK 13

Apr 1- Apr 7

The Girl in International Development

Watch "Girl Rising" (dir. Richard Robbins)

Cobbett, M. (2014). Beyond 'Victims' and 'Heroines': Constructing 'Girlhood' in International Development. *Progress in Development Studies*, 14(4), 309-320.

Sensoy, O. & Marshall, E. (2010) Missionary Girl Power: Saving the 'Third World' One Girl at a Time. *Gender and Education*, 22(3), 295-311.

WEEK 14

Apr 8- Apr 14

Queering Girlhoods

Pasko, L. (2010). Setting the Record" Straight": Girls, Sexuality, and the Juvenile Correctional System. *Social Justice*, 37(1), 7-26.

WEEK 15

Apr 15- Apr 21

Girlhood and Incarceration

Wun, C. (2016). Against Captivity: Black Girls and School Discipline Policies in the Afterlife of Slavery. *Educational Policy* 30, 171–196.

Dhillon, J. K. (2015). Indigenous girls and the violence of settler colonial policing. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 4(2), 1-31.