

## **GH 101: The Beauty Myth**

Instructor: Barbara Ashwood

Class Meeting: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Section 27: 11:00-12:15 Simpkins 114

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Office Hours: T/TH: 1:00-2:45, W: 1:00-1:30

### **Course Description:**

Flip through Vogue or Cosmopolitan or Glamour. Peruse Maxim or Men's Health or GQ. Watch TV for an hour. How many images of beauty do you see?

Many of us recognize that the portrayal of beauty in the media is often unrealistic and unobtainable, yet these standards continue to permeate our culture. This course encourages you to consider why.

To help answer that question, we will study Naomi Wolf's book *The Beauty Myth* that explores conceptions of beauty and their effects on people, particularly women, in Western society. We will analyze the beauty myth that Wolf writes about and also read and discuss some contemporary responses to her argument. Can a person use cosmetics and care about fashion without being a victim to the beauty myth? Are there any problems with Wolf's reasoning and methodology? How are men affected by this myth? These are just a few of the questions that we will pursue throughout the course.

### **Required Texts:**

*Ways of Seeing*, John Berger

*The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf

*Survival of the Prettiest*, Nancy Etcoff

*Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism*, Linda M. Scott

You will also be responsible for reading some short pieces that are available online.

## **Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:**

**Analytical Essay:** (900-1500 words) --20%

**Reflective Personal Essay:** (900-1500 words) --20%

**Research Paper** (1500-2100 words) --25%

**Group Discussion Leader** -- 15%

**Reading Quizzes/ Informal Writing:** --10%

**Participation/ Group Work** --10%

In this section of GH 101, you will be doing frequent in-class free writes. You may be as creative with these informal writing assignments as you like by experimenting with different narrative styles and forms.

If you are absent on a day when we have a quiz or informal writing assignment (whether scheduled or “pop”), you will only be allowed to make up the missed work once. Any additional missed quizzes or writing assignments will result in a zero unless your absences are due to illness. In that case, you must bring me a doctor’s note.

Participation indicates more than just speaking out in class discussion; it also reflects your dedication to the class. Good participation means coming to class on time having read the material assigned for the day, being prepared to contribute your views on the assigned reading, collaborating appropriately, and showing respect to your classmates and to me. Writing Center appointments (with verification from the Writing Center) are considered participation. Active listening and questioning are important components of participation. Should there be anything hindering your ability to participate, please speak with me and we will work together to resolve the situation.

Group work is a significant component of this class. If you dislike working with others, it would be in your best interest to switch to another section of GH 101.

## **Grade Scale:**

100-95: A (4.0)

94-90: A- (3.7)

89-87: B+ (3.3)

86-82: B (3.0)

81-79: B- (2.7)

78-76: C+ (2.3)

75-73: C (2.0)

72-68: C- (1.7)

67-65: D+ (1.3)

64-60: D (1.0)

59-57: D- (.7)

56-0: F (0)

## **Course Policies:**

Attendance is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. You may be absent up to four times for any reason. Absences for university-sanctioned events **will** count towards your absence limit, so please plan accordingly. Each absence after four will result in the lowering of your final grade by a full letter grade. Seven absences will result in failure for the course.

Tardiness is disruptive to the classroom environment and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive tardiness will result in an unexcused absence.

Academic Dishonesty is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Please refer to Western Illinois University's Academic Integrity Policy for more information (<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>).

In addition to handing in a paper copy of their assignment, each student is required to email an electronic copy of their essay to [beauty.myth.essays@gmail.com](mailto:beauty.myth.essays@gmail.com) on the day the essay is due. Essays should be sent as an attachment AND copied and pasted into the body of an email. **Any student who fails to email their essay to me will fail the assignment.**

Student Work must be completed and submitted on time. All assignments should be turned in during the class period when they are due. **Late work will not be accepted, and you will receive a zero for the assignment.** All writing assignments must be typed and double spaced with one-inch margins and a reasonable font (like Times New Roman 12 point). You must also include a word-count for your writing assignment on the first page.

You are expected to be respectful to your classmates and me. If you are disruptive and/or rude, you will be asked to leave class and will receive an absence for the day.

Cell Phones are to be turned off and ignored for the entire class period. If I catch you texting during class, you will be marked absent for that day.

## **Additional Information:**

Students may take GH 101 for ENG 180/280 credit. These students will have additional criteria for the essay assignments.

## **Resources:**

Me. Take advantage of my office hours. I am here to help!

The Writing Center. The WIU Writing Center (<http://www.wiu.edu/uwc>) is available to provide writing tutoring and consultation. You may set up an appointment by calling 298-2815 or by going to the center at 341 Simpkins Hall.

Disability Support Services. In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.

Leslie F. Malpass Library:

<http://www.wiu.edu/library>

Information regarding student rights and responsibilities:

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

And lastly, all assignments, texts, and due dates are subject to change.

## GH 101 CALENDAR

All assigned readings for the day should be completed by the beginning of class

Assignments, texts, and due dates are subject to change.

### **(1-20) Day 1: Introductions**

- Introduction to course, texts, and syllabus

### **(1-22) Day 2: Rhetorical Analysis**

- Rhetorical Situation, Rhetorical Appeals
- Open registration ends on 1/26

### **(1-27) Day 3: *Ways of Seeing***

- *Ways of Seeing*: 1 (7-34)

### **(1-29) Day 4: *Ways of Seeing***

- *Ways of Seeing*: 2 & 3 (36-64)

### **(2-03) Day 5: *Ways of Seeing***

- *Ways of Seeing*: 4 & 5 (66-112)

### **(2-05) Day 6: *Ways of Seeing***

- *Ways of Seeing*: 6 & 7 (114-155)

### **(2-10) Day 7: Thesis Statements, Quotations, and Introductions & Conclusions**

- In-class exercise: The Evolving Thesis/Integrating Quotations/Introductions and Conclusions

### **(2-12) Day 8: No Class (Lincoln's Birthday)**

- Please continue to work on your analytical essay

### **(2-17) Day 9: Peer Review**

- Bring two copies of your polished and well-written essay to class

**(2-19) Day 10: Paper 1 Due/ Screening of Jean Kilbourne's *Killing Us Softly***

- Please bring a paper copy of your essay to class in addition to emailing it to beauty.myth.essays@gmail.com
- *The Beauty Myth*: "Introduction" through "The Beauty Myth" (1-19)

**(2-24) Day 11: *The Beauty Myth***

- *The Beauty Myth*: "Work" through "Culture" (20-85)
- Dorothy Allison, "Two or Three Things I Know For Sure" (handout)

**(2-26) Day 12: *The Beauty Myth***

- *The Beauty Myth*: "Religion" (86-130)
- bell hooks, "Straightening Our Hair" ([http://www.africanholocaust.net/news\\_ah/straightening-our-hair-by-bell-hooks.pdf](http://www.africanholocaust.net/news_ah/straightening-our-hair-by-bell-hooks.pdf))

**(3-3) Day 13: *The Beauty Myth***

- *The Beauty Myth*: "Sex" (131-178)
- Margaret Atwood, "The Female Body" (<http://web.stanford.edu/~jonahw/AOE-SM10/Readings/Atwood-FemaleBody.pdf>)
- Brenda Miller, "Table of Figures" (handout)

**(3-5) Day 14: *The Beauty Myth***

- *The Beauty Myth*: "Hunger" (179-217)

**(3-10) Day 15: *The Beauty Myth***

- *The Beauty Myth*: "Violence" through "Beyond" (218-291)
- Lisa Miya-Jervis, "Hold That Nose" ([http://www.howardism.org/appendix/Hold\\_That\\_Nose.html](http://www.howardism.org/appendix/Hold_That_Nose.html))
- Alice Walker, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self" (<http://public.wsu.edu/~hughesc/alice-walker.htm>)

**(3-12) Day 16: *Screening of Tough Guise (Part 1)***

- *Survival of the Prettiest*: "Introduction" (1-27)

**(3-17) Day 17: Spring Break (No Class)**

**(3-19) Day 18: Spring Break (No Class)**

**(3-24) Day 19: Screening of Tough Guise (Part 2)**

- *Survival of the Prettiest*: “Beauty Bait” through “Pretty Pleases” (29-88)

**(3-26) Day 20: Survival of the Prettiest**

- *Survival of the Prettiest*: “Cover Me” (89-130)
- Julia Alvarez, “I Want to be Miss America”  
([www.oncoursesystems.com/school/webpage/.../downloadFile.aspx](http://www.oncoursesystems.com/school/webpage/.../downloadFile.aspx))

**(3-31) Day 21: Survival of the Prettiest**

- *Survival of the Prettiest*: “Feature Presentation” through “Size Matters” (131-204)

**(4-2) Day 22: Survival of the Prettiest/ / Paper 2 Due**

- *Survival of the Prettiest*: “Fashion Runway” through “Conclusion” (205-231)
- Please bring a paper copy of your essay to class in addition to emailing it to [beauty.myth.essays@gmail.com](mailto:beauty.myth.essays@gmail.com)
- Last day to drop course: 4/6

**(4-7) Day 23: Fresh Lipstick**

- *Fresh Lipstick*: “Introduction” through “Dress Reform and Domination” (1-51)
- Optional Reading: *Fresh Lipstick*: “Making the Myth” through “Reading the Popular Image” (53-125)

**(4-9) Day 24: Fresh Lipstick**

- *Fresh Lipstick*: “The Power of Fashion” (127-163)

**(4-14) Day 25: Fresh Lipstick**

- *Fresh Lipstick*: “Sex, Soap, and Cinderella” through “Rethinking Necessities” (165-222)

**(4-16) Day 26: Fresh Lipstick**

- *Fresh Lipstick*: “Freudian Feminism and Commercial Conspiracy” through “Something Different” (224-280)
- Marge Piercy, “Barbie Doll” (<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/barbie-doll>)

**(4-21) Day 27: Fresh Lipstick**

- *Fresh Lipstick*: “Style and Substance in the Second Wave” through “Fresh Lipstick” (281-331)

**(4-23) Day 28: Conducting Research at the Library**

- Meet at the library

**(4-28) Day 29: Evaluating Sources, Summarizing Sources, and Research Paper Organization**

- Bring sources and notes to class

**(4-30) Day 30: Review Sample Essays**

- In-class Exercise: Review Sample Essays

**(5-5) Day 31: Optional Conferences Day**

- Optional Conferences will be held in my office (Simpkins 107)

**(5-7) Day 32: Peer Review**

- Bring two copies of your polished and well-written essay to class

**\*Your final essay is due during the final exam period (5/14 @ 10:00)**