

ENGL 212*04: Topics in Critical Writing
Writing about Oppression on TV: *Orange is the New Black*
Winter 2015 – 2:30-3:50 – M/W SE 139

Professor: Dr. Kim Lacey (please, call me Kim!)

In-person office hours: M/W 1-2 pm,
Tu/Th 8:30-9:30 am, and by appointment

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Course hashtag: #212W15

Course questions: What are race, class, gender, and sexual orientation? How are they portrayed on-screen? Are these accurate depictions? How much liberty can one take when re-telling a true story? Do events on-screen change the way we think, feel, or believe?

Course Style: This course will be conducted as a seminar, meaning you are expected to come to class ready to participate. There will be very few lectures—your inquiry, confusion, and interests will drive our in-class conversations. Be ready to talk each day we meet.

A note about the content of our course: We will be dealing with very complex and mature subject matters this semester. A lot of the content we will be viewing is *extremely profane, graphic, violent, and/or sexually explicit*. If such topics bother or deeply offend you, this is probably not a course that best fits your needs. Please know that I do not expect you to agree with everything we read or view, but I do ask that you have an open mind and engage with the texts in an appropriately professional and academic manner.

Required Book to Purchase: This text has been ordered at the bookstore, but feel free to shop around online for the cheapest price. You do need the correct edition, however.

Media Messages: What Film, Television, and Popular Music Teach Us about Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation. 2nd Edition: ISBN: 9780765617576

Required Texts to Print/Have Access to In-Class: There are links to all of these texts on Canvas.
Smith, “A Life to Live, This Side of the Bars”

Kerman, “Prison, Day 1”

Nair, “White Chick Behind Bars”

The Feminist Griote “Orange is Not the New Black”

Shakarshy and Nailong, “OITNB Star Visits Kara Walker’s Exhibit, Misses Point: Some Notes for Our Fellow White Queers”

Excerpt from *Resistance behind Bars*

Allen, “How OITNB Tokenizes Transgender People”

Kerman, “For Women, A Second Sentence”

Excerpt from *Doing Time for Peace*

Other Requirements:

You are required to have a Netflix account (or access to one) to have success in this course. If you do not have a Netflix account, please go to netflix.com. New subscribers should be able to get one month for free. The cost of a Netflix account is approximately \$9/month, or \$36 for the semester. We will be watching both seasons of *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB) during the semester and viewing the episodes will be an essential aspect of this course. The first season is available on DVD, and I am happy to lend my copy to students on a rotating basis. If you cannot access Netflix, please see me and we will work something out.

Course Requirements (details for all assignments and exams will be discussed in detail in class):

Paper: Character Analysis: 10%

Paper: Real v. On-Screen: 12%

4 Media analyses exercises (see below): 12% (3% each)

4 viewing/reading quizzes: 20% (5% each)

Viewing journal (see below): 36% (18% per season)

Professional in-class work ethic (see below): 10%

Media Analyses Exercises: These short exercises will help us take inventory of the ways race, gender, class, and sexual orientation are portrayed in the media. They will also help us understand our reactions and relationships to these portrayals. You will bring these to class on the day they're due so we can discuss them. You can either complete the worksheet in the book or download a copy, print it, complete it, and bring it to class on the due date.

Media Analysis Exercise #1: "Comparing Character Portrayals in Entertainment Media" (MM 49)

Media Analysis Exercise #2: "Gender Ideology in Prime-Time Television" (MM: 114-115)

Media Analysis Exercise #3: "Childhood Television Favorites and Race" (MM: 312-313)

Media Analysis Exercise #4: "LGBT Characters and Themes in Film" (MM 468)

Viewing Journal: For each episode, you are to write a short analysis of a specific event/plotline relating it to something we discuss in class (a concept, term, idea, etc.). Post your response in the appropriate discussion boards, labeled for each episode. Each entry must be a minimum of 150 words and must be completed by the start of the new week. Due dates are listed below on the course calendar.

Professional In-Class Work Ethic: As a member of this course, you are responsible for participating responsibly. This means coming to each class with the reading and/or viewing completed and with interesting ideas to contribute to our conversation. Confusion is welcomed! Don't feel that you have to understand everything—being a professional member of a group includes understanding that learning is a process. In addition, you should show up on

time and respect others' opinions while in class. Opinions of all kinds are welcome, but disrespect will not be tolerated. Part of this grade will also be determined by your participation during in-class activities.

Grading Scale

↑95%: A
↑90%: A-
↑87%: B+
↑83%: B
↑80%: B-
↑77%: C+
↑73%: C
↑60%: D
0%: F

Course Policies: The decision to take this course is yours, but once you make that decision, you have responsibilities to everyone else in this community of learners. It is your responsibility to abide by the following course policies in order to contribute to our classroom's productivity.

Attendance: It is in your best interest to attend class regularly. Attendance means much more than simply showing up to class. Attendance in ENGL 212 means being present in class through active participation, sharing insightful ideas, completing homework, and willingness to ask questions. Attendance will be taken during each class meeting. **You are allowed two free absences. On your third absence, 2% will be deducted from your final grade. On your fourth absence, and additional 4% will be deducted from your final grade. If you miss more than four classes, you will be asked to drop and/or fail this course.** Please find a classmate and exchange e-mail addresses. In case you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what you missed. My office hours will not be used as a "make-up" class period.

Situations that Count as Absences:

- Arriving more than 10 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early
- Coming to class unprepared to participate

E-mail: Check your SVSU e-mail daily. It's the university's official mode of communication, and there is no excuse why you shouldn't check it often. You need to have internet access for this course. Our campus is wireless and many other locations off campus also have free Wi-Fi, so be sure to take advantage. If you are having difficulty connecting, make sure you call my office (989-964-2016). Not having access is not an excuse.

Grade postings: All grades will be posted on Canvas.

Prerequisite: All reading and writing Basic Skills requirements must be completed before enrolling in this course.

Technology Policy: I encourage you to use whatever note taking system you prefer. If, however, you choose to use a personal computing device, you are asked that it be used for class work only. Phones must be turned to silent during class time. If you are expecting an important phone call during class, please sit near the door so you can leave the room without disrupting others. I understand the need to feel connected, so cell phones are not banned in our class. However, you are required to be an active member of our learning community. If you feel that you can multi-task effectively and participate in class discussions, then feel free to do so. You are highly encouraged to Tweet during class with our course hashtag: #212W15. Just be aware that I will call on people at random if the discussion is dead. If you are not prepared to participate because you are distracted, this may affect your final professionalism grade.

Late Work: Late work is unacceptable. Please ensure that your work is submitted on time. The deadlines are clearly marked on all assignments and on the syllabus. If you know a due date conflicts with something outside of class, plan ahead and submit your assignment early. I will send a confirmation e-mail by 8 am the next morning. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail, I did not receive your paper.

Disability and Non-Discrimination Clause: Students with disabilities which may restrict their full participation in course activities are encouraged to meet with the instructor or contact the SVSU Office of Disability Services, Curtis Hall, Room C-112, Phone: 989-964-4168. SVSU does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical impairment, disability, or veteran status in the provision of education, employment, and other services.

Academic Integrity Policy: According to the *SVSU Student Handbook*, "Academic integrity is undermined whenever one is dishonest in the pursuit of knowledge. Dishonesty takes many forms, including cheating, plagiarism, and other activities for undermining the educational process.

"**Cheating** occurs whenever one attempts to gain an advantage through a violation of rules regarding the relevant behavior. It should be assumed that collaboration is cheating unless explicitly authorized" (16).

"**Plagiarism** involves intentionally or unintentionally presenting another person's expressions – ideas, opinions, illustrations, data, style – as one's own expression" (16).

Forms of plagiarism include directly transcribing (copying) without quotation and attribution, summarizing without attribution, paraphrasing or patchwork paraphrasing without attribution, patching electronic materials (including pictures, graphs, and/or charts) without attribution.

In ENGL 212 deliberate plagiarism or cheating in any form will result in the grade of zero (0) for the entire assignment and will be reported to the Academic Conduct Board for further sanctions.

In ENGL 212, any student who engages in any of these behaviors that undermine the educational process will be asked to leave the class immediately, and lose any possible credit for that class period. To return to the class, the student will be required to schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss his or her plans for modifying their behavior in question.

Writing Center Information: One of the many advantages of this University is the Writing Center. You are strongly encouraged to meet with a tutor to discuss your writing. Sessions at the Writing Center are available on a first come, first serve basis. Please stop by the Writing Center anytime you need additional help.

Writing Center Hours: M-R 9am-7pm; F 10am-2pm

Location: Zahnow 308 (3rd floor of the library)

Phone: 989-964-6061

Website: www.svsu.edu/writingcenter

Course Schedule

All readings must be done before class.

Anytime the schedule notes that we will be discussing an episode (for example, "Discuss epi. 1"), you must come to class having already watched that episode. Anytime the schedule notes that we will be watching an episode (for example, "Watching epi. 3"), we will be watching the episode together in class.

This schedule might change. If it does, I will notify you in class and in writing.

Date	Reading/Viewing	Episode Guide	Major Assignments Due
Season One			
M, 1/12	Intro to course Theme song analysis		
W, 1/14	Introductions Syllabus details Course questions December celebrations		
M, 1/19	No class: University closed		

W, 1/21	Smith, "A Life to Live, This Side of the Bars" Kerman, "Prison, Day 1"	Watching epi. 1	
M, 1/26	Media Messages (MM): pgs. 13-26	Discuss epi. 2	Viewing journal epi. 1
W, 1/28	Discussion of Media analysis exercise #1 MM: pgs. 407-414	Discuss epi. 3	Media analysis exercise #1
M, 2/2	MM: pgs. 416-426	Discuss epis. 4 & 5	Viewing journal epis. 2, 3 Quiz #1
W, 2/4	MM: pgs. 230-249	Watching epi. 6	
M, 2/9	n/a	Discuss epis. 7 & 8	Viewing journal epis. 4, 5, 6
W, 2/11	MM: pgs. 140-150	Discuss epi. 9	Media analysis exercise #2
M, 2/16	n/a	Watching epi. 10	Viewing journal epis. 7, 8, 9
Tu, 2/17	<i>Special event: Laverne Cox (Sophia Buset) speaking on campus!</i>		
W, 2/18	MM: 82-111	Discuss epi. 11	Quiz #2
M, 2/23	Nair, "White Chick Behind Bars" The Feminist Griote "Orange is Not the New Black"	Discuss epi. 12	Viewing journal epis. 10, 11
W, 2/25	n/a	Watching epi. 13	Paper: Character Analysis
M, 3/2	No class: Spring break		
W, 3/5	No class: Spring break		
Season Two			
M, 3/9	n/a	Watching epi. 1	Viewing journal epis. 12, 13
W, 3/11	MM: 29-51	Discuss epi. 2	
M, 3/16	MM: 290-298	Discuss epi. 3	Viewing journal epis. 1, 2
W, 3/18	MM: 453-476	Discuss epi. 4	Quiz #3
M, 3/23	n/a	Watching epi. 5	Viewing journal epis. 3, 4
W, 3/25	Shakarshy and Nailong, "OITNB Star Visits Kara Walker's Exhibit, Misses Point: Some Notes for Our Fellow White Queers"	Discuss epi. 6	Media analysis exercise #3
M, 3/30	Excerpt from <i>Resistance behind Bars</i>	Discuss epi. 7	Viewing journal epis. 6, 7
W, 4/1	Allen, "How OITNB Tokenizes Transgender People"	Discuss epi. 8	Quiz #4
M, 4/6	n/a	Watching epi. 9	Viewing journal epis. 7, 8
W, 4/8	n/a	Discuss epi. 10	

M, 4/13	Kerman, "For Women, A Second Sentence"	Watching epi. 11	Viewing journal epis. 9, 10
W, 4/15	n/a	Discussing epi. 12	Media analysis exercise #4
M, 4/20	Excerpt from <i>Doing Time for Peace</i>	Watching epi. 13	Viewing journal epis. 11, 12
W, 4/22	Last day of class		
W, 4/29			Paper: Real vs. On-Screen Viewing journal epi. 13