Gender Studies Program

Fall 2010

Course Description Booklet
Graduate
325 O'Shaughnessy
631-4266
gender@nd.edu
Sinatra

TR 3:30-4:45pm, T 5-7pm
Attributes: Arts & Culture, Diversity
Pam Wojcik/FTT

This course is designed as an upper level undergraduate class. Graduate students will have additional readings and occasional additional meetings. This course examines the career and image of Frank Sinatra. As an entertainer who worked in numerous media -- radio, the music industry, television, cinema, and live performance -- Sinatra provides a lens through which to examine American 20th century media. Moreover, as an iconic figure, Sinatra enables an explanation of masculinity, American identity, ethnic identity, race, liberalism, and more. Sinatra will be paired with various other performers, especially Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, and Gene Kelly, to consider his star image comparatively. Sinatra will be situated within discourses on Italian immigration, urbanism, the Depression, prohibition and war. Students will listen to Sinatra music and radio programs, watch Sinatra films and TV shows, and read a wide range of materials – including contemporary accounts of Sinatra performances, analyses of his career and meaning, essays and articles about the star system, recording technology, film genre, acting styles, the mob, and more. Throughout, we will consider what model of American masculinity Sinatra embodies – ranging from early concerns that his female fans and lack of military service rendered him effeminate to his image as family man, and later incarnation as playboy. We will consider what Sinatra means today through an analysis of his entertainment heirs, like George Clooney, parodies, like Joe Piscopo’s, the use of his music in film soundtracks and advertising, and in performances like the Twyla Thorpe “Come Fly With Me.”

Feminist and Multicultural Theologies

TR 11:00am-12:15pm
Attributes: Religion & Family, Diversity
Mary Catherine Hilkert/THEO

An exploration of how the voices of women have helped to reshape theological discourse and to bring to light new dimensions of the living Christian tradition. Like other forms of liberation theology, feminist theologies take the experience of suffering and missing voices in the tradition as the starting points for theological reflection on the mystery of God and all of reality in relation to God. Using writings of feminist, womanist, Latina, mujerista, Asian, and Third World theologians, the course will focus on the significance of gender and social location in understanding the nature and sources of theology, theological anthropology, Christology/soteriology, the mystery of God, and women's spirituality in our day. Students with appropriate background will have the opportunity to join an optional reading group that will focus on key texts in the development of feminist theologies.

Queer Theory, Film and Literature

M 2:30pm-5:00pm
Attributes: Core Graduate Seminar, Arts & Culture
Carlos Jerez-Farran/GSC

This graduate course will introduce students to some of the critical perspectives and theories that enliven contemporary literary and cultural studies on Gay and Lesbian Film and Literature. The course materials come from a wide array of disciplines, and accordingly we'll be asking how different
genres (such as literature, film, psychoanalytic study, "theory," and documentary film) help frame sexuality in everyday, academic, and political contexts. Beginning with early sexologists like Havelock Ellis and Freud, our discussions will consider a series of questions surrounding the issues of desire, closets, cures, and etiologies, attempting to understand how medical theories on homosexuality have influenced cultural discourses represented in the films and literary texts we will be examining. Against this backdrop we'll juxtapose some contemporary queer theory by Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks, using this as a springboard from which to examine a variety of contemporary novels and films, from classic “high modernist” texts (such as Orlando) to non-canonical literature (such as The Hours). We will look closely at the relation between each author's textual innovations and their representation of sexual difference, asking the crucial question: is sexuality conceived as something that is natural, or is it understood to be a cultural construct? We will examine the various conceptual permutations the body and desire have experienced, paying close attention to how these representations intersect with the categories of gender and sexual identity in general.