

WGS 272
Feminism and Film
Hollywood Pregnancy

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00
and by appointment

Course Description:

From the Nineteenth Century until the late Twentieth Century, pregnancy was considered a medical condition and/or something to hide from public view. Recently, however, pregnant bodies regularly cover the most popular magazines, whose reporters are constantly on the lookout for the telltale “baby bump.” And, a slate of films about pregnant girls and women have come out of Hollywood in the last couple of years (including *Knocked-Up*, *The Waitress*, *Saved!*, *Juno*, and *Baby Mama*). In this course, we will examine changing attitudes toward pregnancy and the pregnant body evidenced by these popular images. We will explore how pregnancy has gone from shameful and pathological to romantic and liberating. The focus on women’s bodies in popular culture is nothing new. But, the focus on, even obsession with, pregnant bodies calls for philosophical interpretation. To this end, we will discuss recent films about pregnant girls and women in light of philosophical and sociological analyses of changing attitudes toward pregnant bodies. This course will combine feminist film theory, French feminist philosophy, sociology and feminist historical approaches to the pregnant body. We will begin with a brief overview of the romantic comedy genre because most of the recent films are extension of this Hollywood genre, only now the pregnant body becomes a vehicle for romance and fulfillment. We will conclude with extended discussions of how new reproductive technologies are changing the way we think about pregnancy and having children.

Required Reading:

Tamar Jeffers McDonald, [Romantic Comedies](#)
Clare Hanson, [A Cultural History of Pregnancy](#)
Liza Mundy, [Everything Conceivable](#)
[Additional Readings available through OAK online](#)

Method of Evaluation:

1. You are required to watch films OUTSIDE of class as homework.
 - a. There will be film screenings each week on Tuesday evenings in Buttrick 015.
 - b. Also, the films are on reserve at the main library and you can view them there.
 - c. Or you can purchase them to view at home.
2. All class participants are expected to come to class prepared to discuss both the films and the readings. Participation will count for 10% of the final grade.
3. Each participant will do one short in-class presentation (5-10 minutes maximum) on one of the readings for the course.
 - a. This will count for 20% of the final grade.
4. Each participant will turn in a midterm and a final paper (5-6 pages each) on topics distributed in advance.
 - a. The midterm will count for 30% of final course grade.
 - b. The final essay will count for 40% of the final course grade.

Schedule 2010

1/13 Intro & Romantic Comedies Documentary

1/19 Film Screening, Buttrick 015: 6:30pm *My Man Godfrey*, & *Bringing Up Baby*

1/20 McDonald, Romantic Comedies, Intro, Chapters 1-2

1/26 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Pillow Talk*, & *Lover Come Back*

1/27 McDonald, Romantic Comedies, Chapter 2; McCallum “Mother Talk” (packet)

2/2 Film Screening: 6:30pm *The Graduate*, & *Annie Hall*

2/3 McDonald, Romantic Comedies, Chapter 4

2/9 Film Screening: 6:30pm *You’ve Got Mail*, & *Down With Love*

2/10 McDonald, Romantic Comedies 5 & Conclusion

2/16 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Miracle at Morgan’s Creek*, & *People Will Talk*

2/17 Hanson, A Cultural History of Pregnancy, Intro & Chapter 1-2

2/23 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Rosemary’s Baby*, & *The Astronaut’s Wife*

2/24 Hanson, A Cultural History of Pregnancy, Chapters 3-5. MIDTERMS DUE

3/2 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Junior*, & *A Slightly Pregnant Man*

3/3 Cuomo, “The Scientific Appropriation of Female Reproductive Power in *Junior*”; & Maher, “A pregnant man in the movies: the visual politics of reproduction” (in packet)

3/10 Spring Break

3/16 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Citizen Ruth!* & *The Waitress*

3/17 Young, “Pregnant Embodiment” & Lundquist “Rejected Pregnancy” (in packet)

3/23 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Knocked Up*, & *Fools Rush In*

3/24 Mundy, Everything Conceivable, Prologue, chapters 1-5

3/30 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Manny&Lo* & *Saved!*

3/31 Mundy, Everything Conceivable, chapters 6-10

4/6 Film Screening: 6:30pm *My Sister’s Keeper* & *Away We Go!*

4/7 Mundy, Everything Conceivable, chapter 11-Afterward

4/13 Film Screening: 6:30pm *Juno* & *Baby Mama*

4/14 Guest Lecture on *Sex and the City*

4/21 Come to class with outlines of final paper and thesis statements for peer review.

4/23 Extra Office Hours: 2:00-3:00pm, Furman 103

4/26 Extra Office Hours: 3:30-4:30pm, Furman 103

4/28 Final papers due under my door by noon, Furman 103.