

Teen Media (CIN260HF)
Fall 2022

Course Description: This course seeks to not only provide a history of the concept of the teenager (both within media and outside of it), but also to theorize the position teenagers occupy in regards to time, taste, and aesthetics. Frequently iterated in a pejorative register, media objects for teenagers have often been illustrated as disposable, mindless, or even immoral. Rather than take this understanding of maturity at its word, this course posits teen media as a challenge to adult sensibilities and subjectivities, as a mode that opens up strange, ambivalent, or otherwise speculative relationships to realism, “growing up,” and notions of expertise. By extension, the screenings will cover a broad range of approaches to teen media production and reception, imagining “teen media” as a capacious term that can be used to describe popular forms, experimental works, and art pieces that are made by teenagers themselves. In emphasizing the multiplicity of what can be construed as teen media, this course considers both how adolescence becomes such a fraught political and cultural space, as well as how audiovisual objects present versions of teen life unbound to the paranoid narratives of adults.

Course Schedule

Unit I (What is a Teenager?)

1. September 12: The Invention of the Teenager

Screening: *Teen-Age Girls* (March of Time, 1945, 17 min.), *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955, 111 min.)

Reading: Kelly Schrum, “Emergence of Teenage Girls,” in *Some Wore Bobby Sox: The Emergence of Teenage Girls’ Culture, 1920-45* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 11-22.

Michael DeAngelis, excerpt from “James Dean and The Fantasy of Rebellion,” in *Gay Fandom and Crossover Stardom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 19-35.

2. September 19: Universal Innocence (Guest Talk: Amanda Greer, PhD Candidate)

Screening: *Social Courtesy* (Coronet Instructional Films, 1951, 10 min.), *Habit Patterns* (Knickerbocker Productions, 1954, 14 min.) *Cindy Goes to a Party* (Herk Harvey with Centron Productions, 1955, 9 min.), *Boys Beware* (Sid Davis, 1961, 10 min.), *Girls Beware* (Sid Davis, 1961, 10 min.), clip from interview with Elizabeth Smart (2013, 8 min.), clip from *Nightline* coverage of Natalee Holloway disappearance (2019, 8 min.), *Suzanne, Suzanne* (Camille Billops and James Hatch, 1982, 25 min.)

Reading: Rebecca Wanzo, “The Era of Lost (White) Girls: On Body and Event,” *differences* 19, no. 2 (2008): 99-126.

3. September 26: Moral Panic/Media Panic

Screening: “Pilot,” *Euphoria* (Augustine Frizzell, 2019, 58 min.), “MONTERO (Call Me by Your Name)” (Lil Nas X, 2021, 3 min.)

Listening: Playlist of the PMRC’s “Filthy Fifteen” songs: “Darling Nikki” (Prince, 1984, 4 min.), “Sugar Walls” (Sheena Easton, 1984, 4 min.), “Eat Me Alive” (Judas Priest, 1984, 3 min.), “Strap On ‘Robbie Baby’” (Vanity, 1984, 4 min.), “Bastard” (Mötley Crüe, 1983, 3 min.), “Let Me Put My Love Into You” (AC/DC, 1980, 4 min.), “We’re Not Gonna Take It” (Twisted Sister, 1984, 4 min.), “Dress You Up” (Madonna, 1984, 4 min.), “Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)” (W.A.S.P., 1984, 3 min.), “High ‘n’ Dry (Saturday Night)” (Def Leppard, 1981, 3 min.), “Into the Coven” (Mercyful Fate, 1983, 5 min.), “Trashed” (Black Sabbath, 1983, 4 min.), “In My House” (Mary Jane Girls, 1984, 4 min.), “Possessed” (Venom, 1985, 5 min.), “She Bop” (Cyndi Lauper, 1983, 4 min.)

Reading: Lauren Berlant, "Live Sex Acts (Parental Advisory: Explicit Material)," *Feminist Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 379-404.

Unit II (What is Teen Media?)

4. October 3: Friendship/Spectatorship, or The Romance of High School TV

Screening: "Strangers in the House" and "Betrayal," *My So-Called Life* (Winnie Holzman, 1994-95, 96 min.)

Reading: Amy Holdsworth, excerpt from "Introduction," in *On Living with Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 1-13.

5. October 17: Boy Bands and the Feminization of "Bad Taste"

Screening: "Book of Love" (The Monotones, 1957, 3 min.), Concert from *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, 1964, approx. 6 min.), "Barbara Ann (The Beach Boys)," *American Bandstand* (1966, 3 min.), "I Wanna Be Free" (The Monkees, 1966, 3 min.), "Daydream Believer" (The Monkees, 1967, 3 min.), "I Want You Back (The Jackson 5)," *The Ed Sullivan Show* (1969, 3 min.), "I Think I Love You" (The Partridge Family, 1970, 3 min.), "Like a Cannonball" (Menudo, 1984, 3 min.), "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" (Wham!, 1984, 4 min.), "Take on Me" (a-ha, 1985, 4 min.), "Tonight" (New Kids on the Block, 1990, 3 min.), "I'll Make Love to You" (Boyz II Men, 1994, 4 min.), "MMMBop" (Hanson, 1997, 4 min.), "Everybody (Backstreet's Back)" (Backstreet Boys, 1997, 6 min.), "Pop" (*NSYNC, 2000, 4 min.), "Fantastic Baby" (BIGBANG, 2012, 4 min.), "Night Changes" (One Direction, 2014, 4 min.), "Dynamite" (BTS, 2020, 4 min.), "Blue Hour" (TXT, 2021, 5 min.)

Reading: Norma Coates, excerpt from "Teenyboppers, Groupies, and Other Grotesques: Girls and Women in Rock Culture in the 1960s and early 1970s," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 31, no. 3 (2003): 65-77.

6. October 31: Minor Status/Minor Aesthetics

Screening: *Me and Rubyfruit* (Sadie Benning, 1989, 5 min.), *Living Inside* (Benning, 1989, 5 min.), *Jollies* (Benning, 1990, 11 min.), *It Wasn't Love* (Benning, 1992, 20 min.), *Portrait of a Young Girl at the End of the 1960s in Brussels* (Chantal Akerman, 1994, 63 min.)

Reading: Patricia White, "Lesbian Minor Cinema," *Screen* 49, no. 4 (2008): 410-25.

Unit III (Teen Temporalities: Reflecting on Adolescence in the 21st Century)

7. November 14: Ephemerality and the Absent Archive

Screening: *Shirkers* (Sandi Tan, 2018, 96 min.)

Reading: Mimi Thi Nguyen, "Minor Threats," *Radical History Review* 122 (2015): 11-24.

8. November 21: Tarrying and the Coming-of-Age Narrative (*Research Essay is due*)

Screening: *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016, 111 min.)

Reading: La Marr Jurelle Bruce, "Shore, Unsure: Loitering as a Way of Life," *GLQ* 25, no. 2 (2019): 352-61.

9. November 28: Transform and Trans Form

Screening: *We're All Going to the World's Fair* (Jane Schoenbrun, 2021, 86 min.)

Erin Nunoda, University of Toronto

Reading: Eliza Steinbock, excerpt from “Disjunction and Conjunction: Thinking Trans through the Cinematic,” in *Shimmering Images: Trans Cinema, Embodiment, and the Aesthetics of Change* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 1-20.

Gabrielle Owen, “Adolescence,” and Tey Meadow, “Child,” *TSQ* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 22-4 and 57-9.

10. December 5: Leaving and Returning Home (*Take Home Test due Dec. 8*)

Screening: Let's Play of *Gone Home* (lolRenee, 90 min.)

Reading: merrit kopas, “On *Gone Home*,” in *Queer Game Studies*, eds. Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 145-52.