

Humanities Seminars Program
Spring 2016

"Men In Tights, Women Who Fight: Gender, Race, & Superheroes"

Monica J. Casper



Details

Tuesdays, 10 AM - Noon

March 1 - April 5 (no class on March 15)

Dorothy Rubel Room, UA Poetry Center

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Description

Superman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Batman, Captain America, Green Lantern, Iron Man, Black Widow--the list of America's superheroes is long. Comic books, TV, and cinema have long built up the appeal of superheroes, and they remain ever popular. Embodiments of cultural meanings, social practices, and political imaginaries, superheroes creatively tell us stories about ourselves. Historically, representations of superheroes have been connected to national security and the Cold War, changing gender roles, racial stereotypes, and environmental issues. In this course, we attend to gender, race, and sex as they play out in the bodies, lives, and storylines of America's superheroes. We ask, for example: What can Wonder Woman's history tell us about gender and sex in the 20th century? How do Batman and Superman differently represent masculinity? What can Monica Rambeau, Storm, and Ms. Marvel tell us about intersections of race and gender? And what do superheroes reveal about national identity, cultural memory, and collective hope?



Required materials are available at the UA Bookstore, except where otherwise noted.

Week 1, March 1

Read

Lepore, Jill. *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. Vintage, 2015. ISBN-10: 0804173400. Read pp. xi - 180.

In-Class Viewing

"Wonder Woman: Season 1 Tribute"

Week 2, March 8

Read

Lepore, Jill. *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. Vintage, 2015. ISBN-10: 0804173400. Read pp. 181 - 297.

In-Class Viewing

"Supergirl: First Look"

"Max Max: Fury Road clip"

Week 3, March 22

Read

Deconnick, Kelly Sue and David Lopez. *Captain Marvel Vol. 1: Higher, Further, Faster, More*. Marvel, 2014. ISBN-10: 0785190139.

Wilson, G. Willow and Adrian Alphona. *Ms. Marvel Vol. 1: No Normal*, 2014. ISBN—10: 078519021X.

In-Class Viewing

"Wham! Bam! Islam!" trailer/interviews

Week 4, March 29

Read

Aucoin, Julianna. 2014. "The Superhero Diversity Problem." *Harvard Political Review*, October 24.

DC Comics. *Batman. A Simple Case (#44)*. 2015. ISSN: 2164-8735.

[Note: This text is available for sale at "Heroes and Villains" at 4533 E. Broadway Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85711.]

In-Class Viewing

"Can you Name 7 Superheroes of Color?"



Week 5, April 5

Read

Fletcher, Brenden, Cameron Stewart, and Babs Tarr. *Batgirl Vol. 1 – The Batgirl of Burnside*. DC Comics, 2015. ISBN-10: 1401257984.

Mey. 2015. "[DC Comics Steps Up Its LGBTQ Representation with Batgirl, Harley and Ivy, Renee Montoya, and More!](#)" *AutoStraddle*, June 15.

In-Class Viewing

"A History of Queer Characters in DC Comics"



Recommended Reading

Breslaw, Anna. 2013. "[Lest We Forget, Brown Kids Absolutely Deserve More Brown Superheroes.](#)" *Jezebel*, June 15.

Hatfield, Charles, Jeet Heer, and Kent Worcester. 2013. *The Superhero Reader*. University Press of Mississippi.

Howard, Sheena C. and Ronald L. Jackson II. 2013. *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Kibblesmith, Daniel. 2015. "17 Black Superheroes and Where to Read More About Them." *Buzzfeed*, February 9.

Lepore, Jill. 2014. "The Last Amazon: Wonder Woman Returns." *The New Yorker*, September 22.

Lepore, Jill. 2014. "The Surprising Origin Story of Wonder Woman." *Smithsonian Magazine*, October.

Misiroglu, Gina. *The Superhero Book: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Comic Book Icons and Hollywood Heroes*. Visible Ink Press, 2012.

Nama, Adilifu. 2011. *Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Peters, Mark. 2014. "Superhero Switch-ups: A History of Race and Gender Switches in Comics." *Salon*, July 19.

Robinson, Lillian S. 2004. *Wonder Women: Feminisms and Superheroes*. Routledge.

Smith, Matthew J. 2014. "A Brief History of Racial and Gender Diversity in Comic Book Movies." *Washington Post*, October 31.

Stabile, Carol A. 2009. "'Sweetheart, This Ain't Gender Studies': Sexism and Superheroes." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6(1): 86-92.

Sumner, Mark. 2014. "Race, Gender, and Comic Book Films." *Daily Kos*, August 3.

Tilahun, Na'amen. 2014. "The Greatest Black Women in Superhero Comics (Who Aren't Storm)." *Kinja*, September 12.