

Lesson Plan-Disney Fan Art and Gender, Race, and Media

WSCA Conference

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Relevant topics:

- Studying fandom can give us important insights into how society works (cultural ideals/dysfunctions, normalized identities of body type, whiteness, and gender roles)
- Reproduction of dominant cultural ideals such as thinness and gender normativity in Disney princesses
- Creative engagement and production of fantasies that highlight diversity and intersectionality, evidenced in fan art
- Benefits of critical analysis of fan art:
 - What does this tell us?
 - Why is it relevant/what is it saying? (Content analysis.)

Appropriate grade levels:

College juniors/seniors in 3000-4000 level classes.

Subject areas:

- Communication (Media Studies concentration).
- American Studies.
- Gender and Women's Studies.
- Anthropology.
- Sociology.
- Psychology.

Time allocated:

- This lesson plan will be executed over the course of three 1 hr. 15 min. class sessions.
- The plan will include readings and an optional essay assignment and/or journal assignment that will take place outside of class time.

Essential questions:

- What is fandom?
- What is a stereotype?
- What is community?
- How is a society defined?
- What is intersectionality?
- What is gender?
- What are the benefits of analyzing fan art? What does fan art communicate?
- What are the broader implications of fan art within society?

Learning objectives:

- Students will be able to identify these key terms:
 - Fandom
 - Stereotype
 - Community
 - Gender
- Students will be able to apply the terms and concepts to critically analyze a subculture (in this case, the art produced in Disney fan subcultures).

Brief description of content:

Students will read from three texts, as well as use online resources including Pinterest, tumblr, YouTube, and other social media websites.

Materials needed:

- Texts for assigned readings.
- Internet access.
- Whiteboard.

Readings:

- *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*
 - i. Chapter 18: "Culture" by George Yúdice.
 - ii. Chapter 30: "Gender" by Judith Halberstam.
 - iii. Chapter 59: "Society" by Glenn Handler.
- *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* - Introduction
- *Race/Gender/Class/Media 3.0: Considering Diversity Across Audiences, Content, and Producers, Third Ed.*; pp. 17-21.

Activities:

- Class discussion
- Assignments

Assignments:

- Journal
- Essay

Instructional methods:

VARK (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic)

- Class lecture (VA)
- Class discussion (AK)
- Assigned readings (VR)
- Journal assignment (VRK)
- Essay assignment (VRK)

Assignment 1

Essay: Remodeling a Disney Princess

In class, we have discussed how Disney fans frequently remodel Disney characters to include different ethnicities, to break from normalized identities of body type, whiteness, and gender roles. We have also viewed a number of examples of Disney fan art that reproduces dominant cultural ideals of thinness, gender normativity, and others.

For this assignment, choose a Disney princess that you might “remodel” to break cultural norms. Using the theories from your readings, include a 350-500 word “artist’s statement” that explains your rationale for choosing your character, as well as an explanation of any modifications you chose to make to that character.

Assignment 2

Journal/Scrapbook Assignment: Media Artifacts and Semiotics

For this assignment, you are to find three Disney-related clips from current events, articles, screenshots, and other media artifacts to create three total journal entries following the guidelines below.

For your clips:

Print each clip or cut and glue your selection to an 8.5 x 11 in. piece of white paper.

For your journal entries:

Provide a 250-300 word response/summary describing the relevance of the clip to the course materials presented. You must have a separate response/entry for each clip.

For example, you may choose a piece of Disney fan art and provide a typed semiotic analysis of the work that includes examples from your readings. The goal is to accurately explain the relevance of the artwork you selected to our course topics.

For the finalized journal/scrapbook:

- The clips and journal entries must be presented in a binder with a cover page that includes the following information:
 - Your first and last name.
 - Your preferred e-mail address.
 - The class date and meeting time.
- You must also include an **accurate word count** at the bottom of each written response/summary.
- You will be graded for correct usage of grammar and spelling.
- Presentation is important. Please make sure to adhere to the "Writing Assignment" guidelines in your syllabus for font, sizing, and other formatting.

Organize your journal as follows:

For each journal/scrapbook entry, place the media artifact FIRST (glued to an 8.5 x. 11 piece of white paper, unless printed out), followed by your typed and printed written response/summary.

Resources

- Burgett, Bruce, and Glenn Handler. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.
- DeBord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Sussex: Soul Bay Press Ltd., 1967 (2009).
- Delwiche, Aaron, and Jennifer Henderson. *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Fiske, John. "Television: Polysemy and Popularity." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. no. 4 (1986): 391-408.
- Giroux, Henry. *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999.
- Gray, Jonathan, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington. *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.
- Harris, John. "Guy DeBord predicted our distracted society: The Society of the Spectacle offered in 1967 an eerily accurate portrait of our image-saturated, mediated times." *Guardian*. 30 Mar. 2012.
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/30/guy-debord-society-spectacle>.
- Hinchey, Patricia H. *Becoming a Critical Educator: Defining a Classroom Identity, Designing a Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2008.
- Kellner, Douglas. "Critical Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and Radical Democracy at the Turn of the Millennium: Reflections on the Work of Henry Giroux." *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*. no. May (2001): 220-239.
- Lind, Rebecca Ann. *Race/Gender/Class/Media 3.0: Considering Diversity Across Audiences, Content, and Producers, Third Ed*. Chicago: Pearson Education, Inc., 2013. 17-21.