

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communications and The Arts
Programme:	American Studies Communications: Advertising & PR Digital Communication & Social Media
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	Celebrity, Fan Cultures, and the Media
Course Code:	COM 5102
Total Hours:	120
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course charts the development and critical context of contemporary celebrity fan cultures, as well as explores the connections between celebrities and the media industries. It outlines key theoretical approaches to fan cultures through a variety of media, from artists like Andy Warhol and Lady Gaga, to fanfic and other fan culture artifacts, as well as the creation and reception of celebrity texts (such as Harry Potter), and fanhood as a performative critique of celebrity. It will also examine the evolving role of celebrities in the media, from their beginnings in print media, through radio and television broadcasts to the role that digital media play today. Examining a range of examples, it will look at how PR, advertising, sponsorship, and other forms of marketing communication make use of and are used by celebrities.

Prerequisites:

GEP 4180 Research and Writing 2

Aims and Objectives:

The aims of this course are to

- Effectively problematize the concept and culture of celebrity
- Understand the development of celebrity and fan cultures within a framework of cultural history
- Interrogate their own and their peers' engagement with these cultures
- Provide an understanding of the relationship between the celebrities and media and how it has evolved
- Consider the role celebrities in entertainment and the nature of "infotainment"
- Explore the role which different media-related disciplines, including PR, advertising and journalism, play in contemporary celebrity cultures
- Consider current issues and debates about celebrities, entertainment and the media, including legal and ethical concerns, and discuss likely future development

Programme Outcomes:

American Studies: A5(ii), B5(ii), C5(i), D5(ii), D5(iii)

Communications: Advertising & PR: A5(i), A5(iii)

Digital Communication & Social Media: A5(i), A5(iii), C5(i), D5(ii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to

- Development of a detailed understanding of the ways in which celebrity is a cultural artifact - celebrities as networks of texts, and fan culture as a means of empowering fanhood through alternative texts.
- Students are expected to engage in a sophisticated, critical, and knowledgeable way with major thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms related to celebrity and fan cultures and put them to productive use
- Students are expected to deliver work in oral and written formats with limited direction or supervision, demonstrating the capacity to consider and evaluate their own work using justifiable criteria
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationship between celebrities and media and how it has evolved
- Show a critical knowledge of the relationship between different media-related disciplines – including PR, advertising, and journalism - and celebrity culture and how these disciplines are used in practice
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of current issues and debates about celebrities and the media, including legal and ethical concerns, as well as likely future developments.

Indicative Content:

- Defining and categorising celebrities
- The history and evolution of celebrity culture and fanhood
- The ethnography of fan culture
- Critiques of celebrity – expressed and implied
- The rise of the “celebritariat”: celebrity and politics
- Celebrities in an era of digital media
- Celebrity in Advertising and PR
- Advertising, sponsorship and celebrities
- The media and different kinds of celebrity; international comparisons
- Legal and ethical concerns
- Current issues and future trends

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

There would be a range of interactive lectures augmented with videos. Guest speakers from a variety of relevant backgrounds would cover a range of topics, and where possible there would be visits to relevant venues in London. There will be an emphasis on student engagement with the research process and the critical exploration of a variety of sources. Student work is assessed through a variety of ways using both formative and summative approaches.

Indicative Texts:

Cashmore, E, *Kardashian Culture: How Celebrities Changed Life in the 21st Century*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019

Rojek, C, *Presumed Intimacy: Parasocial Interaction in Media, Society and Celebrity Culture*, Polity, 2015

Jenner, Greg. *Dead Famous: An Unexpected History of Celebrity from Bronze Age to Silver Screen*, W&N, 2021

Redmond, Sean. *Celebrity (Key Ideas in Media & Cultural Studies)*, (Routledge, 2018).

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	