Gender Performance and Crime Dramas Analysis Assignment

**Arguments of Definition and Re-Definition:**

**Gender Performance and Prime Time Television**

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**Objectives:**

1. To develop an argument of definition by closely observing and analyzing specific media examples (as listed in the options below) that engage gender definitions.
2. Students will practice drawing specific textual and visual details to support their assertions.
3. To effectively organize an essay (thesis statement, focused paragraphs, introduction, conclusion) that forwards an argument using effective support and logical reasoning.

**Topic:**

This assignment asks you to look at how contemporary media defines us as a culture and/or specific subcultures and issues specifically as regards gender. Visual and textual mediums communicate a great deal to the public psyche about notions of who and what we are and what we should strive to become.  How we read and interpret these messages is based on our own subject positions—our own race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation and our cultural experiences, etc. Each of us is bombarded daily with messages regarding American ideals from a wide variety of sources, like family, friends, school, work, religion and the media. These messages often forward arguments of definition that shape and define who we are and what we value. While it's relatively easy to reject some of these messages based on differences of opinion as exhibited through generational, ethnic, racial, and gendered perspectives, etc., others are more difficult to ignore because of their insidiousness.

 The options for this assignment ask you to examine the ways in which contemporary media engage definitions of gender and the extent to which they might send mixed messages about who we are and what we should value.

If you are new to analyzing scenes, this video can provide insight into how to look closely at the camera angle and body language as it relates to power dynamics between characters.  [American Beauty Scene Analysis (Links to an external site.)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQFszMu0Q_s)[Shape, arrow

Description automatically generated](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQFszMu0Q_s)(this is just an example--you are not analyzing the film American Beauty)

**Writing Prompt: In a 1,000 word thesis driven essay respond to one of the following two options:**

**Option I:**

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Working from our readings and discussion threads on gender, analyze a single episode of one show: *Stumptown, Station 19, Bluff City Law*, *Criminal Minds*, *How to Get Away With Murder, Good Girls, Chicago P.D.* , *The Rookie,* *All Rise*within the last two years. **Closely observe the roles played, the interactions between male and female characters in terms of dialogue and body language, and how the characters and settings are visually presented.** Then write an argument of definition that assesses whether the episode you watched is ultimately more traditional or more progressive (non-traditional) in its depiction of gender roles. The first step will be to define traditional versus non-traditional (progressive) gender roles as you see it (the Aaron Devor essay in our textbook is a great resource to help define these terms). Your paper should not be a general overview or review of the show. Instead, you should include **close analysis of character actions and behaviors in two to four key scenes** from one single episode as support for your stance.

**Your thesis should identify the show you will analyze and it needs to present a stance that addresses this question: Is the program more traditional or progressive (non-traditional) in its depiction of gender roles?**

You may also use another CURRENT Crime Drama with prior approval from me. While there are many edgier shows out there, for a first gender analysis paper I focus on mainstream crime dramas where it is possible to read the lead characters several ways—this can lead to some interesting tension and analysis as to which way the program ultimately leans—more traditional or more non-traditional? Sometimes a show may seem very traditional or present a range of gender behaviors and roles but the episode's final scene ends/emphasizes on a less traditional note or vice versa—your thesis should argue for one stance--which view dominates.

[Gender Analysis Sample Thesis and Body Paragraph](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/courses/93772/pages/gender-analysis-sample-thesis-and-body-paragraph)

**Option II:**

Taking the *Surfer*magazine youtube video approach by Lisa Wade “Hegemonic Masculinity in Surfer Magazine” [Hegemonic Masculinity in Surfer Magazine (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrPrpNTRG5s)[](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrPrpNTRG5s)Select and closely analyze the gender codes in a current (January  2020 or newer) magazine of your choosing (you should not analyze a Surfer magazine as that has already been done in Lisa Wade’s video). Then write a paper in which you analyze the types of Masculinities and Femininities you find in the images and text of the editorial pages.  You are free to form your own categories but you will need to draw specific evidence from the images and texts in the magazine’s editorial pages from one issue.

**Your thesis should state whether you see the magazine as ultimately promoting more traditional or a more progressive non-traditional view of gender. (you should also identify the magazine and the issue in your thesis)**

**Remember: the majority of your paper (the body paragraphs) should focus on analyzing specific images in the magazine.**

**TIPS FOR SUCCESS:**

* **For both options I and II your thesis should offer a clear stance as to whether you see the single episode of a television show or single issue of a magazine as promoting more traditional or non-traditional gender roles and behaviors.—take a stance.**[**Gender Analysis Sample Thesis and Body Paragraph**](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/courses/93772/pages/gender-analysis-sample-thesis-and-body-paragraph)
* **Your paper should cite (quote in an engaged/thoughtful manner) at least two of the assigned readings for this unit and include a works cited page. If you consult other sources, you will need to give them appropriate credit following the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for intext citations and works cited pages. Purdue Online Writing Lab (google it) has examples and explanations of the MLA format. Here are additional**[**Resources for Revising and Editing**](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/courses/93772/pages/resources-for-revising-and-editing)**. Our textbook has a section on citing sources.**[**Writing Tips: Quotations**](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/courses/93772/pages/writing-tips-quotations)
* **Your essay should not contain reviews of the shows and its characters—the paper is to contain your analysis of a single episode and your assessment of the gender dynamics in key scenes from that episode—plagiarism will result in a “F” for the course**

Points to contemplate as you develop your essay:

* What pre-existing gendered ideas/stereotypes, etc. does the representation engage, support, or question?
* Embrace the complexity; your analysis will benefit immeasurably. This principle applies to choosing scenes and images as well. If the image/scene doesn't lend itself to an interesting analysis but to a banal an obvious one, the cogency of your argument will suffer.
* Your paper should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
* Make sure that your argument is focused with a clearly articulated thesis statement and that this statement appears somewhere in the first 1-2 paragraphs.
* Body paragraphs should have topic sentences and you should support all assertions with **specific evidence drawn from scenes within the television program or specific images from the magazine**. Do not rely on online reviews or summaries.
* Do not forget to include a works cited page.

**Peer Review:**

**To receive peer review and rough draft points (20), you must participate in peer review with a full draft (at least 600 words of the 1000 word total)and complete a peer review for your assigned student by Friday before the final draft due date. The system will assign a paper for you to review after the rough draft due date. Use this peer review work sheet to respond to a classmates' paper and attach file (your completed**[**Peer Review Worksheet**](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/courses/93772/pages/peer-review-worksheet)**) to their paper. Instructional links for locating and attaching the peer review are on the peer review worksheet--just keep in mind that you are reviewing the paper, not grading it and instead of the "rubric" option, you are attaching a file (peer review worksheet) with your responses.**

[(Links to an external site.)](https://guides.instructure.com/m/4210/l/141860-peer-reviews-video)