

Photo: *The Tale*



Fall 2019  
Maxwell Library 117  
Tue/Thu 11 am-  
12:15pm

## COMM299: Sexual Consent and Violence in Film

### Contact Info

Professor: Dr. Michele Meek  
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Phone: 508.531.1410  
Office: Maxwell Library 215B  
Office Hours: Wed 11-12; Thu  
2:30-4:30, or by appointment.

### Course Materials

There are two **required books** for this course which can be purchased at the bookstore or online:

- *Sexual Consent* by Milena Popova, 2019, MIT Press
- *Independent Female Filmmakers* by Michele Meek, Routledge

Films are on Blackboard or at the BSU library on reserve. Many are also on Amazon, iTunes & Netflix.

### Class Atmosphere

In this class, we will be viewing films that contain violent and disturbing sexual situations. I aim to create a safe and supportive environment to discuss the issues that these films raise. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

### Course Description

This course will investigate representations of sexual consent and sexual violence through Hollywood and independent films from the 1960s (*Where the Boys Are*, *Lolita*) through more contemporary representations (*Superbad*). Films will be paired with a scholarly reading and clips to prepare students to analyze a range of sexual representations from straightforward nonconsent and consent to more ambiguous depictions of consent.

Since this is a writing intensive course, students will be expected to write personal reflections and short film analysis papers, in addition to completing a final paper at the culmination of the course.

### Course Requirements

- Film Background & Analysis Presentation 10%
- Research & Attribution Assignments 10%
- Film Analysis Essay 15%
- Quizzes 10%
- Attendance, Participation, and Citizenship 15%
- Annotated Bibliography & Abstract 10%
- Final Project Presentation 10%
- Final Project 20%

**Attendance:** As we meet only weekly, attendance is absolutely mandatory and counts directly towards your grade. If you notify me in advance, absences for religious holidays, athletic participation, or other university-sanctioned events may be excused. Other absences (for illness, accident, or personal tragedy) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped in the final grade calculations. Generally, unexcused absences will negatively affect the attendance portion of your grade (as well as your quiz grade), and students who miss a total of three weeks of classes (3 classes) might fail the course.

**Path to Success in this Course:** To succeed in this course, please do the following:

- Come to the class with curiosity about the subject and an eagerness to learn.
- Arrive each class having done the readings and other activities.
- Read the syllabus, course assignment sheets, and other guidelines. Ask questions when you have them!
- Participate in our class discussions and activities.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Put your best effort into every assignment. If you have difficulties, communicate that to me as soon as possible.

**Course Outcomes:** In this course, you will:

- Read, write, speak, and think critically about texts, films, and real-world situations that relate to sexual consent and violence.
- Develop film analysis and media literacy skills.
- Improve writing, reading, research and presentation skills.
- Support arguments effectively with evidence and to consider counter-arguments.
- Understand the intersection of gender with other social and cultural identities such as race, ethnicity, class and sexuality.

**Course Assignments:** Please see assignment sheets on Blackboard for more details. *All assignments must be completed to pass course.*

**Format:** All screenplays should follow the strict industry standard format in courier size 12 font. Screenplay assignments should be submitted in Final Draft or Celtx format. All other assignments, such as treatments, can be submitted as PDF, DOC, or RTF.

**Plagiarism & Academic Integrity:** It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and its consequences. Consult the [BSU Student Handbook](#) about academic honesty and related issues. Plagiarism consists of using someone else's work as your own (even if you have paraphrased it) without a citation. Cases of plagiarism warrant failure for the assignment and possibly the course and will be reported. See BSU's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

**Notice on Title IX and Sexual Violence:** BSU's Office of Equal Opportunity and the Title IX Coordinator work to ensure that all members of the campus community flourish in a supportive and fair climate. [Learn more](#) regarding resources for victim-survivors.

**Note on Access:** If you have any special circumstances that might impact your participation, success, and/or comfort in class, please contact me as soon as possible, so that reasonable accommodations can be made. These may include (but are not limited to) having a documented disability, involvement in upcoming religious observances, speaking English as a second language, etc. If you have not done so already, please register with the [Disabilities Resources Office in the Academic Achievement Center](#), which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

**Courtesy:** If you must come in late, please do not disrupt the class. Please turn off all cell phones and laptops except when explicitly approved for an in-class activity.

# COMM299 Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Please check Blackboard syllabus and announcements for changes.

Week 1	
Thursday, September 5	
Introduction Course introduction, clips screening, and discussion/analysis.	
Week 2	
Tuesday, September 10	
Watch	<i>Where the Boys Are</i> (1960, Henry Levin)
Read	"The Illusion of Safety/The Safety of Illusion" (excerpt from <i>Bad Feminist</i> by Roxane Gay, 2014)
Thursday, September 12	
Watch	"Why We're Confused about Consent—Rewriting our Stories of Seduction" <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdSdyW8Lw_U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdSdyW8Lw_U</a>
Read	<i>Sexual Consent</i> (Popova)—Chapters "Introduction" & "Consent 101" (pp 1-36)
Week 3	
Tuesday, September 17	
Watch	<i>The Graduate</i> (1967, Mike Nichols)
Read	"Yes, Dustin Hoffman Assaulted Anne Bancroft and Katharine Ross. But the Rules Were Different Then" (Paul Iorio, 2017) <a href="http://bit.ly/graduate-hoffman">http://bit.ly/graduate-hoffman</a>
Thursday, September 19	
Read	<i>Sexual Consent</i> (Popova)—Chapter "Negotiating Consent" (pp 37-64)
Due	Attribution Draft on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 4

**Tuesday, September 24**

**Watch**      *Working Girls* (1986, Lizzie Borden)

**Read**      *Independent Female Filmmakers* (Meek)—Chapter on Borden

**Thursday, September 26**

**Read**      *Sexual Consent* (Popova)—Chapter “Sex and Power—Between Yes and No” (pp 65-96)

## Week 5

**Tuesday, October 1**

**Watch**      *Boys Don't Cry* (1999, Kimberly Peirce)

**Thursday, October 3**

**Read**      *Sexual Consent* (Popova)—Chapter “Culture and Consent” (pp 97-126)

**Due**      Attribution Revision on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 6

**Tuesday, October 8**

**Watch**      *Precious* (2009, Lee Daniels)

**Thursday, October 10**

**Read**      Excerpt from *Why we watch: the attractions of violent entertainment* (Jeffrey H. Goldstein, 1998)

**Due**      Research Assignment on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 7

**Tuesday, October 15**

**Watch** *Thelma & Louise* (1991, Ridley Scott)

**Read** Excerpt from *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture* (Sarah Projansky, 2001)

**Thursday, October 17**

**Read** *Sexual Consent* (Popova)—Chapter “Culture and Consent” (pp 97-126)

**Due** Film Analysis Paper Thesis Statement on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 8

**Tuesday, October 22**

**Watch** *Sixteen Candles* (1984, John Hughes)

**Read** “What about The Breakfast Club?” (Molly Ringwald, *The New Yorker*, 2018)  
<http://bit.ly/ringwald-comm299>

**Thursday, October 24**

**Read** “Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality: The Lessons Boys Learn (and Don't Learn) About Sexuality...” (Brad Perry, *Yes Means Yes!*, 2008)

**Due** Film Analysis Essay (on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 9

**Tuesday, October 29**

**Watch** *The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love* (1995, Maria Maggenti)

**Read** *Independent Female Filmmakers* (Meek)—Chapter on Maggenti

**Thursday, October 31**

**Read** *Sexual Consent* (Popova)—Chapter “Consent Knowledges, Consent Activisms” (pp 127-152)

## Week 10

**Tuesday, November 5**

**Watch** *The Tale* (2018, Jennifer Fox)

**Read** *Independent Female Filmmakers* (Meek)—Chapter on Fox

**Thursday, November 7**

**Due** Annotated Bibliography (on Blackboard (by 11:59 pm)

## Week 11

**Tuesday, November 12**

**Watch** *Water* (2005, Deepa Mehta)

**Read** *Independent Female Filmmakers* (Meek)—Chapter on Mehta

**Thursday, November 14**

**Read** Excerpt from “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (by Spivak, 2008)

## Week 12

**Tuesday, November 19**

**Watch** *The Hunting Ground* (2005, Kirby Dick)

**Thursday, November 21**

In-Class Final Paper Workshop Day | One-on-one meetings

## Week 13

**Tuesday, November 26**

In-Class Final Paper Workshop Day | One-on-one meetings

**Thursday, November 28**

NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Day

## **Week 14**

**Tuesday, December 3**

**Due**

Final Papers (on Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

**Thursday, December 5**

**Due**

Final Class Presentations on Projects: Group 1

## **Week 15**

**Tuesday, December 10**

**Due**

Final Class Presentations on Projects: Group 2