

LIBS 340.01E: Critical Inquiry: The Taylor Swift Phenomenon
Dr. Emily Newman
East Texas A&M University

Tues/Thurs: 12:30-1:45PM, Fall 2025

Classroom: BA 244

Email: Emily.Newman@etamu.edu

Office: Talbot Hall 203

For Office Hours, email to schedule an appointment (F2F or Zoom)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES

This course examines the intersections of gender and visual culture through the lens of Taylor Swift's career, exploring how her music, music videos, and public persona reflect and shape contemporary understandings of gender and identity. Students will analyze Swift's evolving image and artistic choices, considering how her work negotiates themes of femininity, feminism, identity, and empowerment within the broader cultural and media landscape.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- discuss and analyze gender representation
- explore the construction and deconstruction of identity in popular culture
- learn to analyze the relationships among content, context, and style
- acquire a working knowledge of intersectionality, particularly emphasizing the interactions between gender, race, class, and sexuality
- investigate the role of the male and female gaze in visual media
- become able to analyze important videos, documents, magazines, and criticism
- enhance visual literacy and critical thinking skills

ASSESSMENT

Students' ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, class participation, course discussion, and various projects.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Elly McCausland, *Stars Around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*.
Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2025, 979-8881600815.

Rachel Feder and Tiffany Tatreau, *Taylor Swift by the Book: The Literature behind the Lyrics from Fairy Tales to Tortured Poets*, Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2024.
ISBN: 1683694740.

Kimberly Bellflower, *John Proctor is the Villian*, 2019 ISBN: 978-0-8222-4484-4.

All other readings and videos will be available on D2L, with some exception as certain films we will watch are only available via Netflix, Disney+, or to rent. The cost for this should not exceed more than \$30 for the semester.

WORKLOAD:

The rule of thumb for time required for course study and preparation each week for a face-to-face class or an online course during the spring and fall semesters is three times the number of credit hours (or 9 hours per week) for the course. You need to plan accordingly. If you find yourself unable to complete course requirements in a timely manner, refer to the University's withdrawal policy and the appropriate dates. Incomplete grades are only granted for extreme emergencies. Being "overloaded" either from other class assignments or job commitments are not considered to be emergency situations. For this class, you should expect an hour to an hour and a half of work for each class period (so around three hours a week). If you desire, you can work ahead and start the projects early, just remember to follow due dates and engage in conversation in discussion posts!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Engagement: Each person is expected to participate fully in class, by following the guidelines listed below.

- **Preparation:** reviewing readings and material before class
- **Focus:** avoiding distractions during in-person and online activities
- **Presence:** engaged and responsive during all activities
- **Asking Questions:** in class, out of class, online, offline
- **Listening:** hearing what others say, and also what they are not saying
- **Specificity:** referring to specific ideas from reading and discussions
- **Synthesizing:** making connections between reading and discussions

Attendance: Each student in this course is allowed no more than **three** unexcused absences. Each absence after this results in the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. When a student accrues **more than eight unexcused absences** the instructor has the right to drop the student from the course or to give them a failing grade. Unexcused absences require no explanation. For an absence to be considered excused, appropriate documentation must be presented. Excused absences are defined in The Student Guidebook and various university policies, but the policy employed in this class is confined to the following: (1) Participation in pre-approved University activities such as athletic events, sponsored field trips, and travel for specific University-related academic reasons; (2) Verifiable legal proceedings; (3) Documented cases of illness, injury, or emergencies. **All such excuses must be shown to the instructor in original, written, documentary form within 7 days of the absence(s) together with a photocopy for the instructor's records.** (Please understand that this copy is a student's only record of an absence.) In lieu of documentation, absences become unexcused and are counted as such.

Discussion: Each student will write numerous times to the discussion page for the class. There will be clear class prompts, with word counts for you to follow. Discussions are due Tuesdays and Thursdays prior to the start of class. No late posts or make-up posts will be allowed.

Assignments:

Throughout the course, you will have numerous written assignments, including videos and short papers. The assignments must be uploaded on time will NOT be accepted via email, unless specified. This also includes a larger project on gossip, and a reflection paper that addresses your time in the course.

Grade Breakdown:

25% Discussion Posts

25% Assignments

30% Gossip Project

10% Community Service Project

10% Reflection Paper

Grade Scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the school or local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

CLASS DISCUSSION:

Each person will bring their own experiences to this class and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. We will look at a wide array of media and examples of visual culture, some of which might include nudity, intense language, violence, etc. Each person will bring their own experiences to the art and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment must be uploaded on time. For each class day late, the grade will be deducted one letter grade. **Assignments will NOT be accepted past the End Date.**

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be CLASSROOM POLICIES:

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Statement on Student Behavior:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the East Texas A&M University Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

In-Class Guidelines:

- **Prohibited - Cell Phones/Music Players:** Please keep these devices off while class is in session. It is disrespectful to your classmates. No cell phones are allowed during exam sessions. If you need to check the time, consult the clock in the classroom. Repeated use of these devices will result in being asked to leave. If there is an emergency and you need access to your phone, please silence it and alert the professor.
- **Prohibited - Computers and tablets.** Studies have shown that students learn better taking notes by hand. If you need a computer for ADA purposes, please just let the professor know.
- **Remove headphones** during class (unless needed for ADA reasons)
- **Do not sleep** during class. If you do, you will be marked as absent during that class session.
- **Remove sunglasses** during class (unless needed for ADA or health reasons).
- **Avoid disruptive or distracting behavior.** Texting, conversing with other students during class, loud eating, etc. Be kind to your fellow classmates.
- **Do not repeatedly enter or exit the classroom.** Please be on time to class. Not only is disruptive to the class environment, but you could miss important class announcements. This is a short class, so there should be no need to come in and out throughout the class period. Note, repeated tardiness will count with your absences, and could result in a lower grade.

Academic Dishonesty: Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of ChatGPT, Copilot, or any other AI platform or tool to generate ideas, write content, or produce any material is strictly prohibited in this course.

This class is designed to develop your writing skills, and if you are using AI, you are not writing or learning. This is because the use of AI diminishes opportunities to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this AI simply cannot do that learning for us.

Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by generative artificial intelligence does not lend itself to our learning goals and is a breach of ethical engagement and our academic integrity policy. Using AI opens up academic honesty issues, both because it raises the question if the work is "your" work, and also because tools like ChatGPT rely on taking material from uncredited scholars and writers. **If discovered that you have used any type of AI for your work, you will face negative consequences, which will include failing the assignment and potentially failing the course and facing discipline from the university.**

Please be cautious using tools like Grammarly, which can be very helpful with spell check and grammar help but should be avoiding when they generate content.

TURNITIN

East Texas A&M University uses Turnitin software to help students avoid plagiarism and cheating. Turnitin is a 'text-matching' software which is designed to educate students regarding appropriate citation and referencing techniques. Turnitin is also used to provide East Texas A&M University with confidence in the academic integrity of students work. Turnitin does this by comparing a student submission against an archive of Internet documents, Internet data, a repository of previously submitted papers, and subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications. Turnitin then creates an 'Originality Report' which can be viewed by both lecturers and students, which identifies where the text within a student submission has matched another source.

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
 East Texas A&M University, Waters Library, Room 162
 Phone (903) 886-5150, Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu
 Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

EMAIL POLICY:

Email is the preferred form of communication, with a general response time of 24 hours during the week (do not expect replies over the weekend). For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending. Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. You are allotted three absences for this course; plan accordingly and there is no need to contact me about unexcused absences that are incorporated into this allowance. For excused absences, you need to bring in a hard copy of appropriate documentation of your absence.

GRADE POLICY:

If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was addressed incorrectly. After the email is received, we will then set up an appointment to discuss the concern.

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROGRAMS NEEDED

At a minimum, you must have access to and be able to use Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, the university provides access here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/facultystaffservices/academictechnology/documents/Office-365-Students.pdf>

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

Aug 26 – Introduction

READ: Diedrich Diedrichsen, “At the Heart of Pop Music is No Object, but an Impulse to Connect,” in *Aesthetics of Pop Music*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2023,

Aug 28 – Beginnings

READ: Melissa Ames and Sarah Burcon, “Becoming a Girl: Pop Culture’s First Stage of Gender Training,” in *How Pop Culture Shapes the Stages of a Woman’s Life*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

LISTEN: “Taylor Swift and the Unbearable Whiteness of Girlhood” episode of podcast *Code Switch*, January 31, 2024,

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2024/01/31/1197954664/taylor-swift-and-the-era-of-girl>

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “Tim McGraw” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 16-19.

WEEK TWO: JUST FOR YOU/ME/TAYLOR SWIFT

1 FILM: *Just for You*, 2011

Sept 2 – Parasocialism

READ and WATCH: Angela Haupt, “In Defense of Parasocial Relationships,” *Time.com*, July 13, 2023, <https://time.com/6294226/parasocial-relationships-benefits/>

READ: Pia Ceres, “Quoting Taylor Swift Lyrics is an Actual Linguistic Thing,” *Wired*, February 3, 2023. <https://www.wired.com/story/taylor-swift-lyrics-senate-linguistics-fanilect/>

READ: Sam Corbin, “Modern Swifties Have Transcended the Joke,” *New York Times*, January 1, 2024.

Sept 4 – Girlhood

READ: Adriane Brown, “‘She isn’t whoring herself out like a lot of other girls we see’: Identification and “Authentic” American Girlhood on Taylor Swift Fan Forums,” *Networking Knowledge* 5, no. 1 (February 2012).

READ: Nate Sloan and Charlie Harding, “A Star’s Melodic Signature,” in *Switched on Pop: How Popular Music Works and Why it Matters*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020.

WEEK THREE: FEARLESS

2 FILM: *Journey to Fearless*, 2010 (Youtube)

Sept 9 – The Gaze

READ: Lauren Michele Jackson, “The Invention of the Male Gaze,” *The New Yorker*, July 14, 2023. (see also for reference: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 1975).

READ: Kevin Evers, “The Vision” and “Chasing that Fame,” in *There’s Nothing Like This*, Boston: MA, Harvard Business Review Press, 2025: 1-57

Sept 11 – The Fantasy of a Love Story

READ: Ariane M. Balizet, “Just Say Yes: Shakespeare, Sex, and Girl Culture,” *Women’s Studies* 44, no. 6 (2015): 815-841.

READ: Rachel Feder and Tiffany Tatreau, “Fearless” in *Taylor Swift By the Book: The Literature behind the Lyrics from Fairy Tales to Tortured Poets*, Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2024, 64-84.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “Love Story” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 30-34.

WEEK FOUR: SPEAK NOW

3 FILM: *Speak Now Tour*, 2011 (Youtube)

Sept 16 – Purity Culture

READ: Jessica Valenti, “Tainted Love” in *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women*, Seal Press, 2009.

READ: Mariah Yates and Michael J. Urick, “Sparks Fly” and “Enchanted” in *Swift Leadership: a Taylor-Made Approach to Influence and Decision Making*, Leeds, UK: Emerald Publishing, 27-45.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “Innocent” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 48-52.

Sept 18 – Appropriation

WATCH: Danielle Bainbridge, “What is Cultural Appropriation?” *PBS Origins*, January 8, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQgF1f557YY>.

READ: Tyler Bickford, “The Whiteness of Tween Innocence,” in *Tween Pop: Children’s Music and Public Culture*, Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2020.

WEEK FIVE: RED

4 FILM: *The Red Tour*, 2013

Sept 23 – Red/Rage

READ: “Introduction” and “Dress Up Your Anger” from Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018.

READ: Rachel Feder and Tiffany Tatreau, “Red” in *Taylor Swift By the Book: The Literature behind the Lyrics from Fairy Tales to Tortured Poets*, Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2024, 64-84.

Sept 25 – All Too Well

READ: Lindsay Zoladz. “Taylor Swift’s ‘All Too Well’ and the Weaponization of Memory; Critic’s Notebook”. *The New York*, November 19, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/15/arts/music/taylor-swift-all-too-well.html>.

READ: Alyssa Barna, “Revision, Extension, and Repetition: Analyzing Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version) (From the Vault),” in *Taylor Swift: The Star, The Songs, the Fans* edited by Christa Anne Bentley, Kate Galloway, and Paula Clare Harper, New York: Routledge, 2025: 177-189.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “All Too Well” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 58-63.

WEEK SIX: 1989 AND THEN SOME

5 FILM: *1989 Tour*, 2015

Sept 30 – #MeToo

READ: Mekita Rivas, “Taylor Swift’s Sexual Assault Case: The DJ, The Groping, & The \$1 Lawsuit,” *Refinery29*, January 31, 2020.

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/01/9328556/taylor-swift-david-mueller-sexual-assault-groping-case>

READ: Rachel Loney-Howes, “The Politics of the Personal: The Evolution of Anti-Rape Activism From Second-Wave Feminism to #MeToo,” in *#MeToo and the Politics of Social Change* edited by Bianca Fileborn and Rachel Loney-Howes, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Oct 2 – Reinvention

READ: Kevin Evers, “The Reinvention” in *There’s Nothing Like This*, Boston: MA, Harvard Business Review Press, 2025: 123-156.

READ: Shaun Cullen, “What It Means to Shake It Off: Taylor Swift, Race, and Citizenship, in *The Literary Taylor Swift: Songwriting and Intertextuality*, edited by Betsy Winakur Tontiplaphol and Anastasia Klimchynskaya, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024: 139-150.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “Blank Space” and “Clean” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 70-77.

Oct 3 - Superfan Assignment Due

WEEK SEVEN: REPUTATION

6 FILM: *Reputation Concert*, 2018

Oct 7 – Mansplaining

WATCH: “The Science of Mansplaining!” *Upworthy*, March 10, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7GUjKv9qSI>.

READ: Rob Sheffield, “The Villain Era,” in *Heartbreak is the National Anthem: How Taylor Swift Reinvented Pop Music*, New York: Deyst, 2024. 116-127.

READ: Shaun Cullen, “The Innocent and the Runaway: Kanye West, Taylor Swift, and the Cultural Politics of Racial Melodrama,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 28, no. 1 (March 2016): 33-50.

Oct 9 – Rumors

READ: Phoebe E. Hughes, “The “delicate” Balance of *reputation*,” in *Cranking Up Taylor Swift: Her Musical Journey in 11 Songs*, Lanham, MD: Backbeat Books, 2025: 65-76.

READ: Kiera Allen, “When Divas Rise from the Dead: Taylor Swift, Uncanniness and Capitalism,” *The Morningside Review*, 15. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/TMR/article/view/3450>

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “...Ready for It” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 88-91.

WEEK EIGHT: BIG REPUTATION

7 FILM: *Homecoming, A Film* by Beyoncé, 2019 (Netflix)

Oct 14 – Authenticity

READ: Nyah Hoskins, “Beyoncé’s ‘Homecoming’ is a Milestone for Representation,” *14East*, April 26, 2019, <http://fourteeneastmag.com/index.php/2019/04/26/beyonces-homecoming-is-a-milestone-for-representation/>

LISTEN: “Beyoncé Bonus: Fearlessly Herself,” *Making Beyoncé* Podcast, Jill Hopkins and Joe DeCeault, March 6, 2020, <https://www.wbez.org/making-beyonce>

Oct 16 – Re-Records

READ: Rob Sheffield, “How Taylor Won,” *Rolling Stone*, May 20, 2025, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/how-taylor-swift-won-commentary-1235351833/>

READ: Jocelyn R. Neal, ““That’s Why You Have to Stream the Re-Records”: Copyright, Messaging, and Fan Engagement in Taylor Swift’s Re-Recording Project in *Taylor Swift: The Star, The Songs, the Fans* edited by Christa Anne Bentley, Kate Galloway, and Paula Clare Harper, New York: Routledge, 2025: 82-94.

WEEK NINE: LOVER

8 FILM: *City of Lover*, 2020

Oct 21 – Allyship

READ: Anna Marks, “Look What We Made Taylor Swift Do,” *The New York Times*, January 4, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/opinion/taylor-swift-queer.html>.

READ: Phoebe E. Hughes, ““You Need to Calm Down” and Political Taylor,” in *Cranking Up Taylor Swift: Her Musical Journey in 11 Songs*, Lanham, MD: Backbeat Books, 2025: 77-90.

Oct 23 – Gender/Sexuality

READ: Laurel Wamsley, “A Guide to Gender Identity Terms,” *NPR*, June 2, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/02/996319297/gender-identity-pronouns-expression-guide-lgbtq>

READ: Judith Butler, “Contemporary Attacks on Gender in the United States: Censorship and Rights-Stripping,” in *Who’s Afraid of Gender?*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2024.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “Archer” and “Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 102-101.

WEEK TEN: Miss Americana

9 FILM: *Miss Americana*, 2020 (Netflix)

Oct 28 – TBA

Oct 30 – Crafting a Story

READ: John McGrath (2023) “The Return to Craft: Taylor Swift, Nostalgia, and Covid-19,” *Popular Music and Society* 46, no. 1 (2023): 70-84.

READ: Kate Galloway, “The Mediated Natures of Taylor Swift in *folklore* and *evermore*,” in *Taylor Swift: The Star, The Songs, the Fans* edited by Christa Anne Bentley, Kate Galloway, and Paula Clare Harper, New York: Routledge, 2025: 177-189.

REVIEW: Elly McCausland, “seven,” “this is me trying,” “tolerate it,” and “marjorie” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 130-137, 148-153, and 166-170.

Oct 31 - Contemporary Fiction and the Cultural Icon of Taylor Swift Project Due

WEEK ELEVEN: ACTING AND CELEBRITY

10 FILM: TS as Actress (Viewer's Choice): *The Giver*, 2014 (Max, elsewhere); *Cats*, 2019 (Netflix), *Amsterdam*, 2022 (Rent)

Nov 4 – No Class

Nov 6 – No Class

Gossip Assignment due 11/10:

READ: Skylar Elizabeth, "How Social Media Became the New Tabloid Magazine," *L'Officiel*, August 29, 2022, <https://www.lofficielusa.com/politics-culture/how-social-media-became-the-new-tabloid-magazine>

READ: Erin A. Meyers, "Women, Gossip, and Celebrity Online: Celebrity Gossip Blogs and Feminized Popular Culture" in *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn*, edited by Elana Levine, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 2015.

LISTEN: *Normal Gossip* podcast – listener's choice! Choose an episode of the podcast that most appeals to you.

WEEK TWELVE: FOLKMORE/EVERLORE

11 FILM: *Folklore: The Long Pond Sessions*, 2020 (Disney+)

Nov 11 – Witches

WATCH: *The Crucible*, directed by Nicholas Hytner, 1996.

READ: Rynne Kap, "'No one likes a mad woman': The Crazy Ex-Girlfriend Trope and/as Feminist Resistance in Taylor Swift's Music and Mythology," in *The Literary Taylor Swift: Songwriting and Intertextuality*, edited by Betsy Winakur Tontiplaphol and Anastasia Klimchynskaya, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024: 105-116.

Nov 13 – Who is the Villain Now?

READ: Selection from *John Proctor is the Villain*

WEEK THIRTEEN: MIDNIGHTS

12 FILM: *The Eras Tour*, 2023 (Disney+)

Nov 18 – The Anti-Hero

WATCH: “What is an Antihero – And Why Are They So Compelling?”*StudioBinder*, June 12, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il75W7M4Puw>**READ:** Agnès Baehni, “It’s Me, Hi! I’m the Problem It’s Me”: Taylor Swift and Self-Blame,” in *Taylor Swift and Philosophy*, edited by Catherine M. Robb and Georgie Mills, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2025: 81-87.

Nov 20 – Dreams/Surrealism

WATCH: The Art Assignment, “The Case for Surrealism,” PBS Digital Studios, 2017,https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtPBOwE0Qn0&ab_channel=TheArtAssignment**READ:** Rachel Feder and Tiffany Tatreau, “Midnights” in *Taylor Swift By the Book: The Literature behind the Lyrics from Fairy Tales to Tortured Poets*, Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2024, 186-207.**REVIEW:** Elly McCausland, “You’re on Your Own, Kid” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 176-179.

WEEK FOURTEEN: TORTURED POETS

13 FILM: TBA

Nov 25 – No class in person

Taydaughters

READ: Sam Lansky, “Person of the Year: Taylor Swift,” *Time*, December 6, 2023**READ:** Spencer Kornhaber, “The ‘Espresso’ Theory of Gender Relations,” *The Atlantic*, June 21, 2024.**READ:** Kasey Symons, “Taylor Was Here”: Swifties in Sports Fandom and Diverse Fans Reclaiming Space in the Stands,” in *Taylor Swift: Culture, Capital, and Critique*, edited by Hannah McCann, Eloise Faichney, Rebecca Trelease, and Emma Whatman, New York: Routledge, 2025: 34-45.

Nov 27 – No Class (Thanksgiving)

WEEK FIFTEEN: TORTURED POETS CONTINUED

Dec 1 – Community Service Project Due

Dec 2 – Work Work Work

READ: Caroline Mimbs Nyce, “The Algorithmic Radicalization of Taylor Swift,” *The Atlantic*, May 18, 2024.**READ:** Anne Helen Peterson, “Taylor Swift Likes to Work,” *Culture Study*, October 8, 2023.**REVIEW:** Elly McCausland, “lomi,” “The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived,” “The Black Dog,” and “The Prophecy,” from *Stars around My Scars: The Annotated Poetry of Taylor Swift*, Kansas City, MO: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2025: 202-215, and 224-228.**Greatest Hits Song Choice Due****Dec 4 – Greatest Hits Project Due**

WEEK SIXTEEN: CLASS WRAP-UP

Dec 9 – no class/final in person**Book Review Due****Reflection Paper Due**