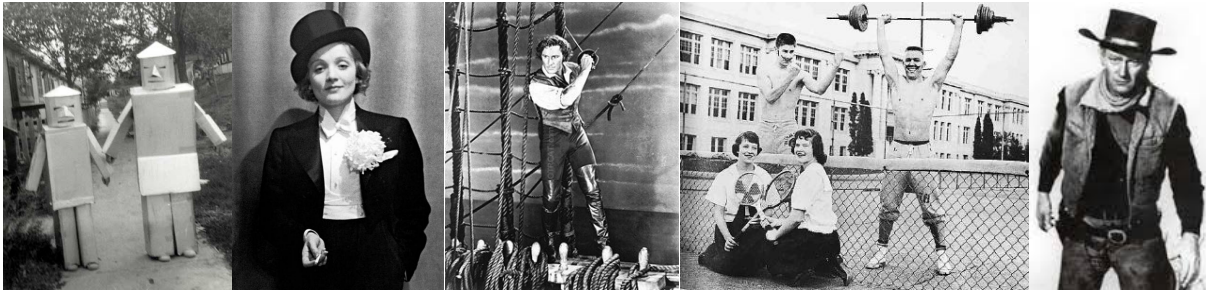


Role Play Autobiography

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This class will take up the ways we “present the self in everyday life” (to borrow Erving Goffman’s phrase) that reveal, challenge, and complicate norms about fashion, costume, and the roles we play. In particular, we will look at the pop cultural treatment of subcultures of fashion, cosplay, drag, and live-action role-playing games to think about how “dressing up” intersects with race, gender, class, ability, space, and time. How might dressing up help us theorize bodies, identities, performativities to critique and queer norms, ideals, and other ideologies?

Goal and Outcomes

The old adage says, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” And in this class, we will explore and analyze how we present our selves and our identities, how an image is seen and understood, and ultimately what meanings this presentation and performativity can convey, evoke, or cover up. This first assignment asks you to write a short autobiography detailing and defining one way or one role that you play in your life. Using a photo of yourself as inspiration, the essay asks you to analyze what does photo tell us about you, what it does not tell us, what assumptions can be made, and why the pictured role is important to consider.

Find any photograph of yourself taking on a particular role. If you do not have ready access to a self-photo, you can use your university ID. Using the photo as a jumping off point, write a **2-page autobiography** of yourself and that role. Considering the following questions:

- What is in the photo? Or what is the photo about? What role is being highlighted?
- What does photo tell us about you? The role you are playing? What doesn’t it tell us?
- Why was the photo taken? Who took the photo? Who is the photo for?
- Most importantly, what will you select to tell us? Why?

Remember that this is an autobiography, which means you are telling your audience and me something about yourself, your life, who you are, what you do, and what is important to you. Think of this essays as a kind of personal statement like the sort you would write to apply for university or for a job or a grant. Keep in mind that you only have two pages, about 600-700 words, to convey something of yourself. Use the photo as a way to focus your autobiography.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: Semi-formal, semi-academic paper, appropriate title for your paper
Use 12-point Times Roman, 1” margins, standard double-spacing, proper heading and name block, page numbers, and single-sided printing, neatly stapled together
MLA citations and bibliography, if necessary
Attach a copy of photo

Due: Thursday, April 7, at the start of class