

Dressing Up as Critical Play Final Project

wgs 199 / spring 2016 / university of oregon / chang



Think back to the questions asked at the beginning of the quarter: What does it mean to dress up? We dress up to go to work, to go on a date, to work out, to impress, but what about dressing up to play? How do practices like fashion, cosplay, drag, and live-action role-playing games to think about how “dressing up” intersects with race, gender, class, ability, space, and time. And how might dressing up help us theorize bodies, identities, performativities to critique and queer norms, ideals, and other ideologies? We have read a wide range of texts, explored different subcultures of style, and engaged in critical play ourselves.

Mix and Mash

For this assignment, we will borrow and use the “mash-up” and the “mix” from the domains of computers, media, and music in order to imagine and produce a unique kind of writing project. The “mash-up” is the combining, blending, and layering of different texts, sources, even genres to produce a ‘new’ text (sampling, heavy metal mashed with pop, *Harry Potter* and *The Sound of Music*). The “mix” is the selecting and arranging of texts to produce a collection, usually organized around some theme or feature or narrative (80s mixes, dance mixes, road trip mixes). The best mixes and mashes have a central idea, argument, or goal in mind.

Your final project is both a mix and a mash: You will 1) identify a critical question, claim, or concept that will frame and organize your project, focusing a practice or artifact of “dressing up as critical play”; 2) your claim should demonstrate your engagement with the readings, theories, and ideas raised by the course, 3) you will develop a paper (preferably multimodal or multimedia) or project (which also includes writing) that explores, illuminates, represents, and analyzes your organizing claim, 4) an academic bibliography with at least five additional recent, relevant, and useful sources (not counting our texts). Your final project might take the form of (not an end-all-be-all list):

- a more traditional 5-6 page research paper that includes multimodal examples or evidence (e.g. drawings, images, verse)
- a research paper “remediated” into a shareable Power Point or Prezi presentation that includes multimodal examples or evidence
- an analysis and demonstration of “dressing up” via a user’s guide, research poster, comic, even “how to” video, which includes a researched and analytical “artist’s statement” or “project statement”
- a media artifact, such as a short film, animation, recording, web page, digital game, which includes a researched and analytical “artist’s statement” or “project statement”

The most successful projects will have a clear frame and specific organizing analytic, will use different kinds of support and evidence, and will demonstrate media studies principles, methodologies, materials, and concerns. Overall, be creative, take intellectual risks, and have fun.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 5-6 pages, academic paper OR the equivalent project
Papers should follow MLA manuscript conventions, citation and bibliographic format, use 12-point Times Roman, 1” margins, double-spacing, proper heading and name block, page numbers, and single-sided printing, neatly stapled together
Projects should be neat, complete, preferably easily transported or digitally shared, include academic inquiry, analysis, and writing (of at least 1000 words)
Papers or projects should have complete bibliographies

Due: Monday, June 6, _____, to 322 Hendricks