

WST 399, Spring 2026

Fantasy Worlds: Gender, Race, and Class in American Mass Culture

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Tu/Th 2:00-3:20



(Screenshot from *Foxy Brown*, 1974)

From *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970-1977), a 1970s TV show about an independent modern young woman, to the 2017 horror film about race relations in the U.S., *Get Out*, the media has been a primary means of both enacting and understanding gender, sexual, and racial distinctions in the U.S. In this course, we will approach television (from its network beginnings to its digital present) and cinema as fantasy machines for imagined, idealized, and stigmatized ways of being in the U.S. from the mid twentieth century to the present day. Through a variety of TV shows and films we will analyze how the mass media has shaped racial, sexual, and gendered forms of belonging and difference in the U.S. from the era of “socially relevant” television in the 1970s to the present day. This course will also introduce the student to key texts in feminist and queer media criticism and film theory, as well as theories of mass and popular culture.