7:00pm-7:30pm

**Strong is the New Skinny? A Feminist Criticism of Instagram Fitspiration**

Felicia Williams  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Suzanne E. Lindsey

With over 300 million users, Instagram has become a platform for cultural identification. In 2014, Instagram claimed one out of every five minutes spent on a mobile device. Sharing internet memes and Pinterest pins have created space for online communities to engage in “fitspiration” or “fitspo.” Although these common hashtags and themes are meant to inspire women to exercise and eat healthier, they actually sexualize and denigrate women. Buzz words and campaigns such as “Strong is the New Skinny” are used by casual bloggers, fitness enthusiasts, and companies to push an unattainable ideal of female bodily perfection. These images are often of thin women in full make-up, minimal clothing, and oiled six-pack abs with a challenging message such as “Don’t stop until you’re proud.”

The viral movement Fitspiration is not helping women become healthier - it is objectifying their bodies, damaging their psyches, and perpetuating a consumerist culture. While these grassroots memes and mantras attempt to motivate and inspire, they actually denigrate and marginalize. Fitspiration affirms that a woman’s value only lies in her physical appearance. These sexualized images and implicit messages are reiterating exactly what traditional media has been criticized for doing.

7:30pm-8:00pm

**Reaffirming Remembrance: Tracing the Zionist Rhetorical Vision Through Holocaust Commemoration**

John Thomas Faircloth  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Suzanne E. Lindsey

The Holocaust has a haunting place in the history of the Jewish people. The forces of Nazism slaughtered millions of the sons of Jacob. This catastrophe was a black culmination of a series of events that had instigated the modern Zionist movement. The mistreatment of the Jews led them to seek a return from the exile of the Diaspora–a return to the land of their fathers in Palestine. The State of Israel, the result of decades of Zionist resettlement efforts in Palestine, declared independence soon after the Holocaust. Even with this triumph, however, the Jews of Israel still struggled after they achieved statehood–the Israelis experienced endless conflict with their Arab neighbors.
How did all of these events impact the way the Israeli public viewed themselves? What did it mean to be a Zionist Jew in Palestine? How did the Zionists in Palestine view the Jews still in exile in the Diaspora? How did the Israeli national experience cause those views to change? A rhetorical analysis can answer those questions. By using elements of Ernest Bormann’s Fantasy Theme Analysis to study Israeli Holocaust commemoration, one can track the changes in the rhetorical vision of what it meant to be a Zionist Jew in Palestine. Studying such texts teaches us the importance of national and personal commemoration: the importance of how reaffirming our memories reaffirms who we are.

8:00pm-8:30pm
The Amish Gossip Too: Societal Norms and Values in Ethridge, TN
Ansley McAlister
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mary S. Vaughn

This research examined the norms, identity, and values of the Amish community in Ethridge, TN. Observational and interview exploration into this particular sect in Ethridge revealed a high context and highly collectivistic culture, emphasizing family rituals and societal patterns. The evident, nonverbal signs in physicality, dress, and religious customs yielded understanding in more latent, formal hierarchy and social cohesion.

The accommodating natures in which the Amish interacted intertwined well with familial values and reverent gatherings as well as their growth in gender identity. Communication of self to the outside world embodied their tolerance and willingness in teaching others and reaching out to various communities, never compromising their own integrity and poise.

8:30pm-9:00pm
Communicating Environmental and Health Issues of the Dairy Industry in the Belmont Community
Joanna Sorrell with Philip Cliffton, Makenzie Morgan, and Cole Gibson
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jimmy T. Davis

Communicating about the environment and people’s health is a very tricky business, especially today when we are all bombarded with information at all hours of the day and night. Using research conducted by the Frameworks Institute about how Americans communicate about the environment, a new kind of presentation was created that would be effective and appealing to Belmont’s community. As a response to the unique audience and situation at Belmont the presentation bridged the gap between accurate scientific fact and public perception, while adding just a little bit of flare. The subject of the presentation was the dairy industry and its effects on
the human body and the environment. Milk is often considered a healthy option and a major food group in the human diet. However this type of thinking is a result of government industry propaganda and the human species is not meant to consume cow’s milk because it has the ability to make us very sick.