



Undergraduate Research Symposium **May 17, 2019 Mary Gates Hall**

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 1

Commons East, Easel 82

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Feminism is for Every Body: The Propagation of Problematic Feminism in The Handmaid’s Tale Series

Christina Givens, Junior, Communication , Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Calif St University San Marcos

McNair Scholar

Mentor: Michelle Holling, Communication Department, California State University San Marcos

This is a rhetorical analysis of Hulu’s televised adaptation of the 1985 Margaret Atwood novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* as an episodic rhetorical act. This analysis merges feminist and ideological criticism to analyze the show’s twenty-three episodes and explores how the series is influenced by the veneration of feminist tropes within our current cultural milieu and how it influences social and political mobilization from its empirical audience. Within a context of historical gendered oppression, I analyze how *The Handmaid’s Tale* series furthers hegemonic ideologies regarding gendered behavior and reproduction by representing cisgender, heteronormative, nuclear families. I also examine how the repression inherent in each trope leads to the championing of biological essentialism from the show’s viewers. Finally, I examine how the series denotes personal agency as it relates to biological motherhood and any disruption to the state of biological motherhood as immoral, thus reasserting rhetoric inherent in modern, restrictive reproductive public policies. Drawing from scholarly sources and popular media such as news articles and protest images, this paper deconstructs the show’s narrative which positions reproductive tyranny at its center. This paper examines the cultural perspective on reproduction while contributing to the understanding of reproductive oppression in the United States; broadening the choice/anti-choice conversation to include other examples of gendered oppression, such as forced sterilizations and maternal mortality.

A Loveless Generation?

Olivia Bakken, Sophomore, Communication , Shoreline Community College

Mentor: Brooke Zimmers, Communication Studies, Shoreline Community College

With the introduction of new social technology to society, there has been a clear paradigm shift in the way in which we are initiating, maintaining, and facilitating relationships. Technology has no doubt made it easier for people to communicate but has also diminished the need for interpersonal skills. I use multiple interdisciplinary lenses including: communication studies, gender studies, and a generational lens for this systematic literature review. With my findings, I have been able to conclude that people are indeed getting too comfortable hiding behind technology and using it as a mechanism to avoid in-person confrontation and emotional discomfort. A growing phenomenon that is rising in spite of this is ‘ghosting’, in which one party blocks or deletes a person virtually from their life to break off any means of modern communication. Dating apps such as Tinder encourage this sort of behavior and are accelerating the rise of a hookup culture with little means of a true connection. There are a number of generational and gender differences in how people are approaching technology and intimacy in a digital age. My research delves into what exactly is going on with millennials and modern-day dating and aims to dissect the behaviors in order to further understand the driving force behind the hookup culture.

POSTER SESSION 3

Commons East, Easel 81

2:30 PM to 4:00 PM