



COMM 4000: Stardom and Celebrity
(CMS Senior Honors Seminar)
Prof. Margaret Schwartz: FCLC
Prof. Jacqueline Reich: FCRH
Thursdays, 5:45-8:30 pm

Description:

What exactly are stars and celebrities, and why do we need to talk about them? In this first CMS honors seminar, we will learn how stardom and celebrity developed, shaped, and altered American culture, film, and media from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will explore these questions through early film stardom history and theory, contemporary cultural criticism and observation, and through case studies of various stars in a variety of fields: cinema, television, music, journalism and digital media. We will examine the phenomenon of microcelebrity and how different types of stardom and celebrity may translate (or not) into other kinds of renown, whether political or cultural. Throughout the course, we will interrogate the star as historical entity and discursive formation—a way of talking about the world—and as cultural commodity traded on the world stage. Media and communication theory, as well as theories of stardom and celebrity, will be engaged in conjunction with the larger cultural dynamics of race, gender, sexuality, youth, politics, and fashion.

The class is open to CMS majors with SENIOR status. It meets once per week on Thursdays from 5:45-8:30 pm on each campus: students will enroll on their home campus but engage directly with students on the other campus. The seminar will be intense and focused, but it will also, we hope, be playful and fun, with guest lectures by specialists in the field, a culminating “mini conference” and a significant research paper. We plan on joint field trips to the New York Public Library for Performing Arts to learn how to do archival research, and field work at the upcoming David Bowie exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum, among other expeditions.

Details:

In order to qualify for the seminar, you must:

- Be a CMS major with a Senior status and a major GPA of 3.5 (COMC, COMM, DTEM, FITV, JOUR). PCS students are encouraged to apply as well.
- Fill out an [online application](#), which includes a short statement (up to 100 words) on why you want to take the course, and include the name of a CMS faculty member to serve as a referee (no letter required).
- Deadline November 1. Students will be notified by November 5 in time for registration, which will be by permission only.

For additional information, please contact the instructors: bmaschwartz@fordham.edu (FCLC) and jreich8@fordham.edu (FCRH).