Course description: The phrase "celebrity culture" gets bandied about so often that it's tempting to think of celebrity as a separate, unique culture of its own--one populated by movie stars and their fans, propelled by TMZ and *Us Weekly*, and distinct from other, less frivolous corners of society. But even a cursory survey of variant media uncovers the ubiquity of celebrity even in arenas not traditionally associated with the phenomenon. Celebrity authors populate our bestseller lists, congressmen get tailed by paparazzi, business innovators like Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg have fan clubs, and reality television has turned pawn shop owners, fishermen and chefs into household names.

Celebrity has become so pervasive that it's no longer feasible to discuss a separate celebrity culture; celebrity is a fundamental component of all aspects of culture. In this writing seminar, we will explore the pervasive impact and role of celebrity. We'll take a look at how we, the public, project certain individuals into our national discourse and how those individuals, in turn, shape our consciousness and chart our cultural conversations. We'll examine the long and complicated relationship between celebrity and print, television and online journalism and ask questions about celebrity's impact on our daily choices and the way we understand our world and ourselves. As we ask these questions, we will explore the theoretical perspectives offered in the emerging field of celebrity studies--a highly interdisciplinary school of criticism made up of sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, poets and filmmakers. Through careful analysis and ample research, we will learn to articulate our own positions in this exciting and emerging field of study as we explore various modes of writing and respond to the numerous perspectives offered in our readings.

Course Link: This is a linked course. This means that topics and discussions in this course are specifically designed to intersect with issues raised in your . . . course. This also means that if you choose to drop this course, you must drop . . . as well.

Goals and Objectives:
- An understanding of writing as a process of thinking and rethinking
- An understanding of the difference between revising and editing, and the true ability to do both
- Reasonable fluency in various modes of thinking and writing, such as observing and reporting, analyzing and interpreting, evaluating and arguing
- Increased skill in the critical reading of one's own writing and that of peers and professionals
- Consistency in the control of syntax and grammar
- An understanding of style as stance, voice, diction and syntax that is determined, in part, by the occasion and purpose of writing
- Make connections with other courses in terms of both content and methods of critical inquiry
- Demonstrate a proficiency in methods of research and documentation, including the evaluation of secondary sources, annotation, integration of quotations, and proper citation according to MLA guidelines.

**Note:** We will read and, occasionally, view sensitive material. If you object to or are uncomfortable with depictions of sex, drugs, violence, profanities, and so on, you should drop the course. Your continued enrollment in this section indicates your comfort with and responsibility for reading and viewing these texts. Alternate assignments will not be given.

**Texts:** All course readings, unless otherwise noted in your calendar, are available at english110.qwriting.org/celebrity-culture. We will also be working with the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): owl.english.purdue.edu. **Print out all course readings and bring them to class on the days they are assigned.**

**Grading Information:**
- Participation: 20%
- Responses: 15%
- Paper 1: Analytical Narrative: 15%
- Paper 2: Toulmin Model Argument: 15%
- Paper 3: Comparative Analysis: 15%
- Paper 4: Research Paper: 20%

**Participation:** In this class, participation is crucial. I expect you to come to class on time, prepared—with readings and/or homework complete—and ready to discuss. Attendance in our class will provide you with information that will only exist in the conversations between ourselves and our various texts, and you will be held responsible for this information. Aside from general class participation, daily assignments, workshop participation and in-class writing will count toward your participation grade and can not be made up in the event of absence. Adherence to basic classroom etiquette will also factor into your participation grade: come to class on time, don’t sleep, put your iPod and cell phone away and treat your classmates with respect.

**Writing Requirements:** You will write four major papers this semester, nine short response papers and several in-class writing assignments. Major papers and responses must be typed, double-spaced, titled, with all outside sources cited both parenthetically and in a Works Cited page. Response papers are 1-2 pages in length. Hand-written papers (except in the case of in-class writing) will not be accepted. All papers must conform to MLA format. Specific assignments for all major papers and responses will be given in class.

**Revisions:** You may revise your first and second major papers, after they have been graded, for a higher grade. Details and specific instructions will be provided in class. Late papers can be revised, but late penalties will still apply. Plagiarized papers can not be revised. Response papers can not be revised.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. A student who has plagiarized will automatically fail the paper and possibly the class. The student will also be listed on a departmental record that will be maintained for the duration of the student’s enrollment at the College and reported to the Dean of Students, who may decide to take further action.
See the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity ([http://web.cuny.edu/academics/Info-Central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf](http://web.cuny.edu/academics/Info-Central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf)) for further information.

**Writing Center:** Located in Kiely Hall 229, tutors there are trained to help you revise your writing at various stages. If you believe you need additional help with your writing, or if I ask you to set up a regular meeting with a tutor, you should make an appointment at least one week prior to when an assignment is due. You can also get online help by visiting their website at [http://qcpages.qc.edu/qcwsw](http://qcpages.qc.edu/qcwsw).

**Special Assistance:** If you have a learning, sensory, or physical reason for special accommodation in this class, contact the Office of Special Services in 171 Kiely Hall at 718-997-5870 and please inform me.

**Calendar:** This calendar is subject to change. You are responsible for keeping up with the changes. Reading assignments are listed for the day they are due.

**Week 1: Summary and description**
8/30 Introductions. In-class reading: Excerpts from celebrity blogs. Diagnostic essay.
9/1 Hinerman, ""I'll Be Here with You": Fans, Fantasy and the Figure of Elvis." **Response due:** Describe your own moment of fandom, including the fantasies that propel it.

**Week 2: Voice, tone and audience**
9/8 Stever, "Fan Behavior and Lifespan Development: Explaining Para-social and Social Attachment to Celebrities." **Response due:** Analyze the motivation behind your fandom, using any theories from class readings thus far.

**Week 3: Analysis and evaluation**
9/13 Film: *Misery.*
9/15 Film: *Misery.*

**Week 4: Narrative strategies, revision**
9/20 Draft of Paper 1 due. Workshop: Structure, audience considerations, careful description, analysis
9/22 **Paper 1 due.** In-class reading from various magazines. Discussion of Paper 2.

**Week 5: Argument (Toulmin model, Aristotelian triangle, logical structures and fallacies)**
9/27 Kissling, "I Don't Have a Great Body, But I Play One on TV: The Celebrity Guide to Fitness and Weight Loss in the United States." **Response due:** Identify the six Toulmin components in this essay, as well as moments of *ethos, pathos* and *logos.* Provide at least three direct quotations as you demonstrate these components.
9/29 Holiday. No class.

**Week 6: Argument (cont'd)**
10/4 Classes follow a Friday schedule. No class.
10/6 Harris, "Celebrity Bodies"; Excerpts from blogs skinnygossip.com, theskinnywebsite.com, skinnyvscurvy.com--TBA. **Response due:** Isolate one
argument in any of the blog entries, and post an online rebuttal to it. Print the article and your response and bring to class.

Week 7: Source integration, MLA format
10/11 Rahman, “David Beckham as a Historical Moment in the Representation of Masculinity.”
10/13 Stout and Frame, "Body Image Disorder in Adolescent Males." Response due: Why do we hear so much less about men, body image and the media, than we do about women and these issues? Include at least three direct quotations from class readings to back your ideas.

Week 8: Revision
10/18 Draft of Essay 2 due. Workshop: Toulmin components, Aristotelian triangle components, logical fallacies, source integration, MLA format

Week 9: Comparative analysis
10/25 Excerpts of celebrity coverage in various types of media--TBA. Response due: Compare/contrast aim, tone and audience in any two of the assigned articles.
10/27 Marshall, "Intimately Intertwined in the Most Public Way: Celebrity and Journalism."

Weeks 10: Introductions and conclusions, transitional relationships
11/1 Turner, "Celebrity, the Tabloid, and the Democratic Public Sphere." Response due: Is there a difference between journalism and tabloid journalism? Include direct quotes from each type of journalism to back your assertion.
11/3 Williamson, "Female Celebrities and the Media."

Week 11: Revision
11/8 Draft of Paper 3 due. Workshop: Comparative analysis, structure, introduction and conclusion, transitions, effective title

Week 12: Library research methods
11/17 Class meets in library.

Week 13: Evaluating and incorporating sources
11/22 Classes follow a Thursday schedule. Mitchell, "The Rhetoric of Celebrity Cookbooks." Response due: Short annotated bibliography from sources gathered at library, including one journal article, one book, one periodical.
11/24 Holiday. No class.

Week 14: Synthesis, concise and descriptive language
11/29 Introductory section of research paper due. Workshop.
12/1 Draft of Paper 4 due. Workshop: Structure, concise language, source integration, balance

Week 15: Close editing
12/6 Individual conferences
12/8 Individual conferences

12/13 Paper 4 due.