

WOX GRANT SUMMARY REPORT

for

“Expressions of Gender: A Pilot Film Series about Understanding Media Representations of Gender through Intersectional and Interdisciplinary Dialogue”

during the 2014-2015 academic year

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Kristen Renzi, Assistant Professor, English
Dr. Wendy Maxian, Associate Professor, Communication Arts
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

During Fall 2014, Drs. Kristen Renzi and Wendy Maxian organized the screening of eight films for students, faculty, and community members that dealt with expressions of gender; our theme, “Under/Over 21,” targeted different age ranges during which gender expressions were looked at in particular during these different phases in life. We had individual professors introduce and help to contextualize individual screenings. The following schedule is what we presented:

Childhood: *Wadjda* (2012), presented by Dr. Kristen Renzi (English)
High School: *Easy A* (2010), presented by Dr. Niamh O’Leary (English)
College: *The Bro Code* (2009), presented by Taj Smith (Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion) and Dr. Wendy Maxian (Communications)
Work: *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002), presented by Kate Lawson (Title IX coordinator)
Marriage: *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967), presented by Dr. Jennifer McFarlane-Harris (English)
Parenthood: *No Woman, No Cry* (2010),
Middle Age: *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* (1995), presented by Dr. Steve Yandell (English)
Retirement: *Calendar Girls* (2003), presented by Dr. Trudelle Thomas (English)

The grant originally proposed running the film series during only Fall 2014; however, with unexpected, lower costs for film rental and purchase, we had a budget surplus. With permission from Anne Ernst, we the remaining funds to run a second film series.

In Spring 2015, we also presented eight films under the theme of “Rebels,” showcasing stories about people who bucked gender norms. These films included:

Southern Comfort (2001)
Dreamgirls (2006)
Lars and the Real Girl (2007)
Miss Representation (2011)
Bend it Like Beckham (2002)
A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)
Marwencol (2010)

CHALLENGES

Overall, we were very proud of the diversity of films we were able to show and the level of complex discussions we were able to have, post-film, led by ourselves and our colleagues. We had (and continue to have) substantial support from the English department faculty for our endeavors, and we have attempted (but have struggled some) to involve faculty from other departments, either as discussants for the films or as folks who might encourage their students to attend our programming.

Another area we have encountered some difficulty in is drumming up audiences for a diverse array of films. Students are very likely, for instance, to attend films that they are comfortable with generically (like *Calendar Girl*) or ones they’ve seen previously (like *Easy A*), but it is harder to get students to attend foreign language, art house, or documentary films. We have tried to address this through more comprehensive advertising on our Facebook page (with descriptions of the contents of the films to help put students at ease) and to try to coordinate our films with other campus initiatives/programs (like the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and Sexual Assault Awareness Month). In general, our events themselves are very successful for the

students and faculty who do attend; we need, however, to continue to work to attract audiences who might not be initially inclined to attend through demonstrating the appeal, and use value, that attendance might have to them.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The primary outcome is an increase in discourse, fostered primarily by students, about gender identity in the Xavier community. The majority of screening attendees were students, with current and past faculty members occasionally joining. The post-film conversations were always driven by students' comments, questions and concerns.

The purpose of the film series was to approach gender identity from an egalitarian perspective. Films were chosen to reinforce that non-male gender identities are as deep, meaningful and valid as the hyper-male perspective that tends to pervade modern cinema. Drs. Renzi and Maxian modeled how to engage with gender identity and tough social questions posed by gender inequality. They are hopeful that the respect, care, and openness they conveyed through film selection and post-film discussions has contributed similar characteristics to the Xavier community's understanding of gender identity and issues. The Xavier library has also acquired several of the presented films.

In addition, the success of the WOX grant-sponsored, pilot film series allowed "Expressions of Gender" to continue. Because of WOX's support, Drs. Renzi and Maxian secured funding for the 2015-2016 series from the Gender and Diversity Studies Program. Fall 2015's theme was "Films Directed by Women" and spring 2016 explored "Law and Gender and Order." Plans are underway for series during the 2016-2017 academic year.

BUDGET DISBURSEMENTS

Expenses included film rental and purchase, printing costs of promotional posters, and snacks for film screenings.

Original grant award: \$2472.00

FALL 2014 EXPENSES

Film rental and purchase	\$1275.96
Printing costs	\$35.00
Snacks for film screenings	≈\$100.69
Fall 2014 subtotal	\$1,411.65

SPRING 2015 EXPENSES

Film rental and purchase	\$60.81
Printing costs	\$41.40
Snacks for film screenings	\$48.18
Spring 2015 subtotal	\$150.13

<i>TOTAL EXPENSES</i>	<i>\$1561.78</i>
<i>BUDGET SURPLUS</i>	<i>\$910.22</i>
<i>SNACKS TOTAL</i>	<i>\$148.87</i>
<i>SNACKS (as % of Total Expenses)</i>	<i>9.53%</i>