



ENGLISH 258

# AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE: TABOO SEX AND DESIRE

When *Fifty Shades of Grey* burst onto the popular literary landscape in 2011, public curiosities of alternative sexualities, including kink and BDSM, resurfaced on the forefront of American social consciousness. Yet these taboos and their representation in popular media persisted in American culture long before 2011 in ways that both celebrate and demonize sexual expression that isn't cis, heterosexual, and procreative.

In this course, we will survey a breadth of American and imported popular culture pertaining to taboo sexualities and desires. Together we will investigate how literature, music, television, film, comics/graphic novels, and podcasts manifest a cultural field of sexual and erotic self-discovery, and how depictions of taboo and alternative forms of desire are complicated by American culture and politics. Works and topics under consideration for this course include E.L. James's *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Rihanna's "S&M", the Netflix mini-series *Bonding*, William Friedkin's *Cruising*, queer pulp novels, and the Feminist Sex Wars of the 1980s.

## COURSE DETAILS:

INSTRUCTOR: CODY GREY  
MWF 2:30-3:20PM  
HODGES 321  
CRN# 86541

Still from William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980)