



Presented by the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education (CCIE)
in the Faculty of Education

High Anxiety?

An exploration of the pedagogy of difference and the body in popular Hollywood film

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In this presentation I aim to explore the seemingly self-aware and ironic, even postmodern, construction of the imagery of the *heroic body* in popular Hollywood film. This oft repeated imagery arguably reinforces a series of retrograde notions of gender, race, and sexuality. However, I will also highlight how much of this imagery also reflects a deep cultural anxiety concerning the dissolution of dominant hierarchies of identity and difference. Or in other terms popular films seems to be the site of an attempt to stabilize dominant identities and are not a celebration of difference. Examples are drawn primarily from recent 'blockbuster' films: *The Fantastic Four*, *The Incredibles* and *Batman Begins*. My concern is to draw attention to the visual economies and cultural logics that appear to underpin and organize the making and animating of filmic bodies. Or in other terms, I aim to explore the *pedagogy of difference and embodiment* in popular film. As well, I will draw attention to the ways in which the imagery and symbolism of the *sporting body* seem to be central to the intelligibility of the 'heroic' body in popular Hollywood film.

www.ccie.educ.ubc.ca/

**August 5, 2008
noon to 2 pm
Neville Scarfe 310
2125 Main Mall
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My main research and teaching interests are concerned with social (in)equality as they are produced and transgressed

in people's experience of sport and popular culture. I teach graduate and undergraduate courses on Social Theory; The Body and Identity; Race, Racism and Sport and The Body, Sport and Representation. I teach students in 'Sport Sciences' whose main interests are not cultural studies or sociology. My doctoral thesis was a critical ethnography entitled *Ultimate Masculinities: An Ethnography of Power and Social Difference in Sport* (OISE/University of Toronto 1998). I continue to research the development of new and 'alternative' sport forms, like Parkour and Extreme Ironing. I have written and continue to do research on the significance of mainstream films use of the imagery of the *sporting body*. ('I Know Kung Fu' The Sporting Body in Film). In Eileen Kennedy and Andrew Thornton (eds.) *Leisure, Media and Visual Culture: Representations and Contestations*.) And I've recently published research with Eileen Kennedy and Helen Pussard (in *World Leisure Journal*, Vol 48: 3, 2006) that illustrates how the *London 2012* bid process was itself a sport spectacle that worked to negate criticism and obscure contradictions in the rhetoric and promotion of the host city campaign.

Light refreshments will be provided.