

Race, gender and media: A methods approach

JOUR 4250 / JOUR 5210

Spring 2009, 6:30 p.m. Thursdays, Universities Center, Dallas

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Description This course teaches students how to study patterns of media portrayals. Students also learn the history of these patterns and ways they become interwoven in media structures, then indoctrinated to journalists and other media workers. Students will employ research methods to scrutinize media texts through qualitative and quantitative content analysis, social and oral history, semiotics, and theme analyses. We will discuss race and gender as well as representations and coverage of sexualities and sexual orientation, economic class and people with disabilities. Discussion is a major component to this class. You are encouraged to discuss, debate and dissect the topics we study in a civil and intellectual manner.

Texts *Sex in consumer culture: The erotic content of media and marketing*, Reichert & Lambiase (editors), 2006, Erlbaum (paperback; cheaper at Amazon.com, even with shipping)
Course packet with articles, available at the UNT book store
Course blog: JOUR4250blog.blogspot.com
Your own blog
DVDs, Web sites, online video

Supplemental Texts (not required)

Impact of mass media: Current issues, Hiebert (editor), 1999, Longman paperback
The Columbia reader on lesbians and gay men in media, society, and politics, Gross & Woods (editors), 1999, Columbia University
American on film: Representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies, Benschhoff and Griffin, 2003, Wiley-Blackwell (paperback)
Queer images: A history of gay and lesbian film in America (Genre and beyond), Benschhoff, 2005, Rowman & Littlefield (paperback)
Race, class, and gender in the United States, Rothenberg, 1998, St. Martin's Press (paperback)
Facing difference: Race, gender, and mass media, Biagi and Kern-Foxworth, 1997, Pine Forge Press (paperback)
Media matters: Race and gender in U.S. politics, Fiske, 1996, University of Minnesota (paperback)
Reel to real: Race, sex, and class at the movies, hooks, 1996, Routledge (paperback)
A Latina in the land of Hollywood and other essays on media culture, Valdivia, 2001, University of Arizona Press
Off-white Hollywood: American culture and ethnic female stardom, Negra, 2001, Routledge
Sex in advertising: Perspectives on the erotic appeal, Reichert and Lambiase, 2003, Erlbaum (paperback)
Women in Mass Communication, Third Edition, Creedon and Cramer, 2007, Sage.

Race/Gender/Media: Considering diversity across audiences, content and producers, Lind, 2004, Allyn & Bacon.

Course goals This course will help students:

- Trace the structures of news media and mass media forms that create or enforce stereotypes of gender, race, sexualities, or disabilities.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they will work.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes they serve.

Attendance You are expected to be present for every class and lab, unless otherwise instructed. If you have legitimate reasons for not attending (illness, disaster, death), contact the professor beforehand (by phone or e-mail) and present a note from a physician or other official at class. If you have a religious holiday, please let the professor know beforehand. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day.

Disabilities The Journalism Department, in cooperation with the Office of Disability Accommodation, complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request before the 12th class day.

Cell phone policy Cell phones should NEVER be used in class, including text messaging. You may be asked to leave class for using a cell phone.

Honesty and Conduct

When you submit work for this class, it is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety, and that this work has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course. Plagiarism, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable.

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It's a firing offense in the professional world. In this department, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism (depending on the importance of the assignment): a grade of "F" on a minor assignment; a request that the student drop the class; withdrawal of the student from the class, initiated by the professor; an "F" in the course; a referral to the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities; a notation on the student's transcript; and suspension or expulsion from the university. A combination of these penalties may also be used.

Assignments and tests

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| Mini-project | 20% |
| Concepts/methods test | 20% |
| Blogging and participation | 20% |
| Final research project | 40% |

Grading of these assignments will be focused on analysis based on prior classroom discussion and assigned reading, on thorough research, and on the skillful use of language (including grammar, mechanics, spelling). Assignments are due on the assigned date. Professional standards will be modeled and upheld for presentations and written assignments. **Graduate students should see me for further class assignments.**

Blogging

Part of your grade will depend on a blog you will create to reflect on the topics we discuss in class. You are expected to blog your thoughts on your personal blog after every class. You will need to e-mail me the address to this blog by the second week of class (by Thursday Sept. 3). I will check your blog periodically throughout the semester. You will receive a blog grade at midterm and final. The grade will be based upon your analysis, facts, evidence and self-reflection, no matter what your opinion is. You are free to agree or disagree with what is presented in class; the position you take will not affect your grade but the quality of your analysis will. You can set up a blog for this class at one of two places: www.blogspot.com and www.wordpress.com. There is a class blog, www.jour4250blog.blogspot.com, which contains general class information, assignments, syllabus and test reviews.

Syllabus

This is a tentative outline that may change throughout the semester. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with changes in this syllabus and the assignments therein. Each class contains quite a bit of material since we meet only once a week. All readings listed for a class must be completed before that class.

PART 1: NEWS MEDIA IMAGES AND WORDS

Week 1, Aug. 27: Course introduction; deadlines; conversation guidelines; blogging instructions; show-and-tell parameters. Overview of mass media theories and research methods.

Video: "Race and Local TV News."

Information on CONTENT ANALYSIS.

Finding research in the UNT electronic library. Databases that may be helpful to you in this class: Academic Search Complete, Access World News, Ad*Access, ArticleFirst, Communication and Mass Media Complete, EBSCO Host, Godey's Lady's book (for historical mini-project), JSTOR, Lexis-Nexis Academic, PapersFirst via FirstSearch, Proquest Online, Sage Journals Online.

Week 2, Sept. 3: Images of women and minorities in news and sports. To prepare for this class, please read/skim:

1. Lambiase, "The problem with 'all-American girls': Coverage of slayings brings out best, then worst, of victims," IN COURSE PACKET.
2. Owens, "Network News: The Role of Race in Source Selection and Story Topic," IN COURSE PACKET.
3. Chapter 6 in textbook, "From Sideline to Centerfold: The Sexual Commodification of Female Sportscasters."

DVD: "Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete."

DUE: blog address. E-mail it to me at everbach@unt.edu.

Instructions on mini-study discussed.

Week 3, Sept. 10: Symbolic annihilation and "The Other."

DVD "Women and Media: Women's Representation in the Media."

Information on CASE STUDIES; PARTICIPANT/OBSERVER; ETHNOGRAPHY; IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS.

To prepare for this class, please read/skim:

1. Vanity Fair article, "Who is Wall Street's Queen B.?" IN COURSE PACKET.

2. Everbach, "The culture of a women-led newspaper: An ethnographic study of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune," IN COURSE PACKET.
3. Byerly, "Situating 'the Other': Women, Racial and Sexual Minorities in the Media" from Creedon, *Women in Mass Communication*, IN COURSE PACKET.

Week 4, Sept. 17: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS. ORAL HISTORY.

To prepare for class, please read:

1. Malcolm Gladwell, "Listening with Your Eyes: The Lessons of Blink." IN COURSE PACKET.
2. Everbach, "Breaking Baseball Barriers: The 1953-54 Negro League and Expansion of Women's Roles," IN COURSE PACKET.

Video, "The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords."

Week 5, Sept. 24: *DUE: Mini-study.***** Be prepared to discuss yours in class. You will receive credit for presenting your project to others.

Instructions on how to prepare for the test.

PART 2, POPULAR CULTURE: Advertising, music, video games, the Web

Week 6, Oct. 1: Introduction to advertising culture and stereotyping by race, gender, age. The male gaze.

To prepare for this class, please read Chapters 12 (pornographic gaze) and 8 (television commercials and teens) from textbook.

DVDs: "Killing Us Softly," and "Merchants of Cool."

You Tube videos.

Week 7, Oct. 8: *Concepts/methods TEST.*****

Alcohol, violence, gender and race in advertising. To prepare for this class, please read Chapters 10 (beer ads) and 16 (prime-time commercials) from textbook.

Week 8, Oct. 15: Gay vague and lesbian chic advertising.

To prepare for this class, please read Chapter 18 (homoerotic advertising) from textbook.

DVD: "Further off the Straight and Narrow"

Week 9, Oct. 22: Absence from advertising: Native Americans, people with disabilities, the elderly and the poor. Male stereotypes.

Final research assignment information. Midterm blog grades.

DVD: "Tough Guise"

Week 10, Oct. 29: Images in video games and music videos; THEME ANALYSIS.

To prepare for this class, please read chapters 3 (sex in music video) and 4 (gender and sexuality in video games) from textbook.

DVDs: "Dreamworlds III"

PART 3: TELEVISION AND FILM

Week 11, Nov. 5: Spike Lee films and breaking stereotypes in Hollywood.

To prepare for this class, please read John Fiske's "Codes of Television." IN COURSE PACKET.

SEMIOTICS, THEME ANALYSIS.

DVD: "Bamboozled."

Week 12, Nov. 12: Disney princesses; Latino/Latina images in film.

DVD: "Mickey Mouse Monopoly."

To prepare for this class, please read Chapter 2 (sex in movie trailers).

Week 13, Nov. 19: Latino/Latina images in film.

To prepare for this class, please read Chapter 7 (Spanish-language programming).

DVD: "The Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in Hollywood."

THANKSGIVING; NO CLASS NOV. 26

Week 14, Dec. 3: Presentations of final projects. You will receive credit for presenting yours (or what you have found so far).

Week 15: Dec. 10, Finals Week, no class, projects due. You will receive instructions on how to turn in your final project.

Mini-project assignments due Sept. 24 (choose one):

1. Find an old news magazine or newspaper that would have been available to one of your elder family members or friends at a designated place and time. Read the front page of the newspaper (or 3-4 long stories from the magazine) to discern patterns of depictions of people. Are stereotypes included, either overtly or more subtly? How did you identify these? Why do you think these depictions are used? Are there patterns of these depictions within that main page (or 3-4 stories)? What about photos, headlines, cutlines, bylines, story placement (and table of contents, if magazine)? Who are the sources quoted in stories: official or non-official; male or female; described by appearance or described by title? What do these elements reveal about representations in that era? Visit with your elder family member or friend to discuss your findings, your assumptions and conclusions, and see whether these match his or her own perceptions of that era's news media coverage. You'll write a three- to four-page, double-spaced report of your own findings (mini-content analysis), incorporating the comments from your family member or friend (oral history). Attach charts and a sample of what you analyzed.
2. Complete a content analysis, using the tools of qualitative and quantitative studies. For example, choose a Web site, magazine, TV news or newspaper, and then create a body of texts to study, such as first-page or homepage stories, obituaries, sports articles, several days of reporting from the same source about a particular event, photos used in entertainment coverage, or video/TV coverage. You'll write a three- to four-page, double-spaced report of your own findings (mini-content analysis), including numbers along with descriptive analysis that helps you find patterns or themes. Attach charts or graphs of the numbers you counted or themes you found and a sample of what you analyzed.