



**GENDER & MASS
COMMUNICATION**
JOMC 442/WMST 415
Spring 2013
CA 143, TR 11-12:15

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Friedman
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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore the relationship between gender, race and class and mass media. Topics to be discussed will include: theories of mass communication and the process of studying gender, race and class in media; representations of race, class and gender in media; media's role in covering issues of concern to discrete groups; race, class and gender as it impacts media message production and consumption. Topics will be explored through lectures, class discussions, readings, videos, guest speakers, media examples/analysis and student papers and presentations.

Learning Objectives

- To explore the relationship between gender, race and class and the mass media.
- To acquire the analytical tools useful to understanding media images of gender, race and class.
- To examine the sociocultural forces that contribute to mass mediated constructions of gender, race and class and how these portrayals have changed over time.
- To understand stereotyping, framing and other processes that shape the way audiences perceive gender, race and class in the media.
- To make connections between your personal experience, and your formal and mediated learning.
- To become more critical consumers/creators of media content.
- To examine the role of the media professional in shaping notions of gender, race and class, as well as the effects of those portrayals on the audience, at both the individual and societal levels.
- To examine the role of minority/advocacy media.

Required Reading

- Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, eds., *Gender, Race, and Class in the Media: A Critical Reader*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011)
- Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (University of California Press, 2003)
- Additional readings as assigned by instructor
 - *Note:* You are responsible for any and all material in lectures, videos, class discussions and assigned readings (even if we don't cover the material in the readings in class.) I will not cover in detail all of the material in your assigned

readings; I do expect you to know the material and to be able to use it in our class discussions and to know it for your assignments and exams.

Recommended Text

- If you do not have foundational knowledge in US mass media history, you may find helpful a text such as *Voices of a Nation: A History of Mass Media in the United States*, by Jean Folkerts and Dwight Teeter (Boston: Pearson, 2009). Copies of this textbook are available at the Park Library, Davis Library and Wilson Library.



Attendance Policy

Your focus, when you are in class, should be on the class. Cell phones and other devices should be powered off. Computers should be used in class only for taking notes or viewing material as assigned by the instructor.

You have a vital role to play in the success of this course. Attendance at every class session is expected; roll will be taken. We will spend much of our time together discussing the assigned readings and analyzing media images. Under this arrangement, our sessions will be most productive and interesting if we all participate – and of course, you can't participate if you do not come to class. In addition, to make substantive contributions, you must also come to class prepared -- that means completing assigned readings before you arrive to class.

I understand, however, that some absences are unavoidable. Following custom of other JOMC courses, more than three absences for *any* reason (including illness, university-related activities or other obligations) will result in a one-letter-grade drop in your final grade. More than five absences will result in a two-letter-grade drop in your final grade; more than seven, a three-letter-grade drop in your final grade. If you have more than nine absences, you will earn an F.

Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated. Late arrivals will result in an unexcused absence unless you can provide a compelling reason (after class, of course) why you were late.

Signing the roll sheet for someone else constitutes a violation of the honor code and will result in disciplinary action.

Course requirements and evaluation

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| Participation/Attendance: | 10% |
| Short Writing Assignments: | 15% |
| Midterm Exam: | 25% |
| Research Paper & Presentation: | 25% |
| Final Exam: | 25% |

Participation/Attendance (10% of grade): As stated above, attendance in every class is necessary, but more is needed to demonstrate engagement. Thus, I will evaluate your participation using these criteria: a) Content and understanding: Do you follow the class discussion and build on others' ideas? When you don't understand something, do you ask questions? b) Creativity: Do you generate your own insights and examples and share them with the class? c) Curiosity and interest: Do you bring enthusiasm to the classroom? Do you contribute consistently? Do you share ideas or issues you've come across in outside reading, other coursework, current events, or through personal experience?

Short Writing Assignments (15% of grade): These papers are due as indicated and should demonstrate your ability to apply to a media message(s) the concepts we discuss in class and covered in your reading. Each paper should be 350-500 words (double-spaced, 12-point font, excluding citations). Be sure to include full citations for the sources you use to analyze and to support your points.

Exams (a midterm and a final, each worth 25% of your grade): Both will be a combination of short answer and essay format. Questions will come from course readings, discussions, films and speakers. Each exam is worth 25 percent of your grade, for a total of 50 percent. Responses to essay questions may reflect your opinions, but you must back those opinions up with evidence from class readings and other materials.

Research Paper & Oral Presentation (25% of grade): This paper can be either:

- A critical analysis of media coverage of an event/issue that centers on race, class, or gender. Your focus will not be on the story/issue itself, but on the way it is handled/treated by various types of media;
- A critical analysis of a non-news medium, such as a television series, genre of films, etc., that focuses on/highlights gender, class and/or race (e.g., a television series like "Girls," or "Treme"). Again, your goal would be to critique the content. Does it reflect stereotypes, societal conceptions, etc., about the group in question? Is the portrayal negative, positive, balanced? And so on.
- The final paper should be 8- to 10-pages long (double-spaced, 12-point font, excluding endnotes) and should incorporate at least 6 outside sources (by this I mean authors/material that support your theoretical/conceptual points).
- Each student will make a brief presentation about his/her final paper.
- More information on the final paper/presentation will be provided in class.

Grades for this course will be determined as follows:

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| A = 95 or above | B+ = 89-91 | C+ = 79-81 | D+ = 69-71 |
| A- = 92-94 | B = 85-88 | C = 75-78 | D = 60-68 |
| | B- = 82-84 | C- = 72-74 | F = 59 and below |

Note: For an understanding of what the various grades mean, see the UNC Faculty Council's statement [here](#).

Special needs: If you have any disability or other special situation that may make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

Grading Policies for Written Assignments

The primary purpose of every written assignment should be to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the concepts conveyed in class. As you must realize, there is a connection between good writing and clear thinking. Therefore, points will be deducted from written assignments if your presentation is unclear and/or ineffective. Likewise, you will lose points for poor grammar or poor spelling.



All written assignments will be graded based on the following considerations:

- *CONTENT*
 - Does the paper have a clear thesis statement, or explanation of the issue/problem to be addressed?
 - Does the paper provide sufficient background about the issue?
 - Does the paper demonstrate an understanding of the concepts introduced in class and in readings?
 - If you are taking a position, is that position clearly stated?
 - Is the argument you are advancing well-reasoned and supported with evidence (that is properly cited!)?
 - Do you address any possible objections or problems with your position, and how well do you respond to/counter these objections/problems?
- *MECHANICS*
 - Does the paper use sound grammar?
 - Proper punctuation?
 - Clear phrasing?
 - Is the paper well organized; that is, does each paragraph flow logically into the next to build a persuasive argument or to clarify and elaborate on an issue?

How to earn an “F” on a written project: Miss a deadline. Misquote or misrepresent someone. Rewrite or submit a paper that was produced for another class. Fabricate. Plagiarize.



Honor Code

Students must adhere to the letter and spirit of the [university honor system](#). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated – this includes plagiarism, cheating or any false means of obtaining a grade – and may result in failure of the course, and suspension or expulsion from the university. If I suspect academic dishonesty, I have a duty to report it to the School’s Associate Dean, the Student Attorney General, or the judicial programs officer in the Dean of Students’ office for further action. To learn how to avoid plagiarism, go to the university’s honor system [plagiarism](#) site or The Writing Center’s [plagiarism](#) site.

Sakai

UNC-CH's [Sakai](#) site is the primary way I'll communicate with you outside the classroom. That means you are responsible for checking the site regularly for course updates, announcements, documents, and such. Correspondence sent from Sakai (and from Connect Carolina) is routed to your UNC e-mail address, so be sure to check that regularly, too. When I send a note to the class, I will include our course number in the subject line. When you send a note to me, please be sure to put your name in the subject line so that I will not overlook your message.

A Note on Civility

The classroom is a particular environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that we maintain respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, for the professionalism of the instructor, and for the general goals of academic freedom. The course content reflects a range of perspectives and I anticipate our responses will vary, as well. I expect you to approach the inevitable disagreements with a willingness to listen and thoughtfully consider differing opinions. I encourage you to express yourself with reason, clarity and compassion. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.



PROPOSED WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Readings listed below are from the following texts: *Unbearable Weight* (UW), by Susan Bordo, and *Gender, Race & Class in Media* (GRCM), edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez. Other reading assignments are indicated by their availability on Sakai or the Web.

Note: Opportunities for additional guest speakers may necessitate slight changes in the schedule. Advance notice will be given when possible.

| Week/Dates | Content | Reading |
|------------|---|--|
| 1/Jan 10 | Course introduction | Syllabus |
| 2/Jan 15 | Concepts and approaches | Kellner "Cultural Studies..." (chap 1 <i>GRCM</i>); Lull, "Hegemony" (chap 4 <i>GRCM</i>); Tuchman, "Women's Depiction..." (Sakai) |
| Jan 17 | Why media ownership matters | Winseck, "The State of..." (chap 2 <i>GRCM</i>); Artz, "Monarchs, Monsters..." (chap 42 in <i>GRCM</i>); Global Media Monitoring Project, "Executive Summary" vii-xi, www.whomakesthenews.org/images/stories/restricted/global/global_en.pdf *DUE: Media ownership essay |
| 3/Jan 22 | Representations of Gender, Race and Class Video: "Miss Representation" | Chapters 8, 10, 12, 13, <i>GRCM</i> |

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| Jan 24 | Video: "Miss Representation" | Gerhard, "Sex and the City" (chap 9 <i>GRCM</i>); "It's Different for 'Girls'" (http://nymag.com/arts/tv/features/girls-lena-dunham-2012-4/index1.html) *DUE: Media Diaries |
| 4/Jan 29 | News Media: Whose News, Who's News? | Mellinger, "Rekindling the Fire..." (Sakai); Mangun, "Should She or Shouldn't She..." (Sakai); "Women with a Deadline" (first five screens only, http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/womenwithdeadlines/wwd2.htm) |
| Jan 31 | News Media: Panel Discussion | Everbach, "In Newsrooms and Stories..." (Sakai); Rivas-Rodriguez, "Coverage of Latinos..." (Sakai) *DUE: News #1 Story Analysis |
| 5/Feb 5 | Media and Politics | Carlin, "Have You Come a Long Way..." (Sakai); Kaye, "Gender or Race" (http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/01/21/blackwomen.voters/index.html); Waxman, "Four Ways Woman Won..." (http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/11/07/4-ways-women-won-the-election/) |
| Feb 7 | Creating Consumer Culture | Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood" (Sakai); Ramsey, "Selling Social Status..." (Sakai) *DUE: News Story #2 analysis |
| 6/Feb 12 | Advertising & Consumer Culture Video: "Killing Us Softly 4" | Chapters 22, 23, 27 in <i>GRCM</i> |
| Feb 14 | Data, Demographics and New Market Niches | Chapters 24, 28, 29 in <i>GRCM</i> ; Chaet "The Tween Machine" (http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/tween-machine-141357); AdRespect website (www.adrespect.org) *DUE: Ad analysis |
| 7/Feb 19 | Representing Sexualities | Chapters 30-34 in <i>GRCM</i> |
| Feb 21 | Alternative Voices | Chapters 35-38 in <i>GRCM</i> ; Streitmatter, "Vice Versa" (Sakai) *DUE: Research Paper Topic |
| 8/Feb 26 | <i>Reality TV?</i> | Chapters 50-53 in <i>GRCM</i> |
| Feb 28 | Mass Media & Self-Help | Chapters 54-56 in <i>GRCM</i> *DUE: Self-help essay |
| 9/March 5 | Interactive Media | Chapter 45, 47, 49, 61 in <i>GRCM</i> |
| March 7 | Exam | * MIDTERM EXAM * |



**SPRING BREAK BEGINS
5 PM FRIDAY, MARCH 8**

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**CLASSES RESUME
8 AM MONDAY, MARCH 18**

| Week/Dates | Content | Reading |
|---|---|--|
| 10/March 19 | Media Activism | Chapters 64, 65 in <i>GRCM</i> ; Carver, "Everyday Women..." (Sakai); Morgan, "Behind the Headlines" (http://www.womensmediacenter.com/feature/entry/behind-the-headlines-sharing-the-spotlight-with-david-petraeus) |
| March 21 | Guest: Rachel Seidman | "Who Needs Feminism" project, http://whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com/ ; "Everything You Always Wanted to Know" (http://bitchmagazine.org/article/everything-about-feminism) * DUE: Essay, "Who needs feminist media?" |
| 11/March 26 | Movies: Testing the Bechdel Test | Scott, "Hollywood's Year of Heroine Worship" (Sakai); Morawitz, "Mean Girls" (Sakai) |
| March 28 | Media, masculinity and violence | Nylund, "When in Rome" (chap 20 in <i>GRCM</i>); Kimmel & Leek, "The Unbearable Whiteness..." (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-kimmel/the-unbearable-whiteness-2_b_2350931.html); Rosenberg, "How to Change Pop Culture's..." (http://thinkprogress.org/alyssa/2013/01/02/1385971/pop-culture-violence/) *DUE: Movie analysis |
| 12/April 2 *April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month at UNC | Gender in the Slasher Film Warning: Some of the film clips we'll watch feature graphic violence. Please see the instructor before class if you are uncomfortable with this content. | Cuklanz & Moorti, "Television's 'New' Feminism" (chap 14 in <i>GRCM</i>); Meyers, "African American Women..." (Sakai); Culp-Ressler, "Violence Against Women Act Debacle" (http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/01/violence-against-women-act-debacle-why-congress-should-be-more-diverse/266784/) |
| April 4 | Photojournalism: Women on the Front Lines | Webb, "An American Journalist..." (Sakai); Ricchiaridi, "Getting the Picture" (Sakai); Schwanbeck, "Shooting TV News..." (Sakai) |
| 13/April 9 *Trafficking | Cultural Conceptions of Beauty | "Whose Body is This?" (<i>UW</i> , 45-69); "Hunger as Ideology" (<i>UW</i> , 99-138) |

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| Awareness Week | Cultural Conceptions of Beauty, cont. | “Material Girl” (<i>UW</i> , 245-275); “Postmodern Subjects” (<i>UW</i> , 277-300) |
| April 11 | | |
| 14/April 16 | Constructions of Gender in Popular Music | Azikwe, “More Than Baby Mamas” (chap 16 in <i>GRCM</i>); Parsons, “The Changing Role of Women...” (Sakai); Lafrance, “Gender and the Billboard Top 40...” (Sakai) |
| April 18 | Research Paper Reports | *DUE: Final Research Papers |
| 15/April 23 | Research Paper Reports | |
| April 25 | Review for Final Exam | |



FINAL EXAM
Saturday, May 4
12 p.m.