

Race, Gender and Mass Media

Comm. 5810

Fall Semester 2008

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate course is an examination of current and historical portrayals of ethnic minorities, men and women in media news, entertainment and advertising; discussion of research into the influence of these portrayals on audience attitudes.

This course is structured as an interactive course that emphasizes discussion. Also, there will be several video presentations in order for clear and broad understanding of mass mediated issues. Please note that the course readings will employ critical media studies and cultural studies perspectives.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course will be to enlighten students regarding the treatment of people of color, women, men and other minority groups in mass media. As a survey of the field, it will provide selected readings, videos, discussions and research that will be chosen to reflect the impact of mass media on society and individuals. Additionally, this course will seek to bring forth the following:

1. To develop a greater appreciation of the media's cultural influence.
2. To enhance understanding of, and sensitivity to the various ways race and gender impact both content and audience interpretations of media content.
3. To acquire an understanding of the range of scholarship on media, race and gender.
4. To introduce some of the critical theories and approaches used in the study of media, culture and gender.
5. To understand how race and gender representations are shaped by power – hierarchies in social structure and economic inequities.
6. To enhance analytical thinking, critical reading, writing and other communication skills.
7. To become a more informed and critical media consumer.

COMPUTING AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Students are required to maintain an active computer account for electronic mail and other computing services. In addition, a class discussion list will be used to disseminate and discuss course material. Students also are encouraged to use the class listserv for “electronic class discussions.” Please use the “Dropbox “ in D2L to submit papers. If you experience difficulty with your computer or with D2L, contact the APSU's multimedia center for assistance @ 931-221-6625.

TEXTBOOK:

Gender, Race and Class in Media by Gail Dines & Jean M. Humez (2nd Ed.)

VIDEO MATERIALS

All videos not available by digital format with internet access for this class will be placed on reserve in the Woodard Library in the **Reserve holdings**. Other videos dealing the topic of discussion maybe found at Blockbuster© or at any other local video/DVD rental store. A list of possible videos will be listed in the syllabus to add to your understanding and discussion of the subject matter

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to contribute regularly to the course by both participating in, and on occasions, leading class discussions. The principal mode of operation will be discussion of current contemporary issues, assigned readings, video material and other possible articles based on the assumption that all participants are familiar with them.

One purpose of the course is to introduce students to some of the issues that frame considerations of race, gender and the media in the United States. Another purpose is to expose students to some of the literature that has emerged from the study of race, gender and the mass media. Of course, some topics will be more interesting, fascinating, and more important to your understanding of and participation of both media culture in general, academically, and professionally. As a result, this course covers a wide range of topics you might find more interesting than others.

Most of the course material is fairly easy to read and comprehend. However, there will a few articles that may prove to be difficult earlier on. Be mindful your task is not to master every detail of all the essays and videos, please feel free to bring the questions to the class for discussion for clearer understanding. You are expected to keep up with the class discussions, although we will not give equal coverage to every assigned reading and video.

DISABILITY ISSUES

Any student who has a condition that may affect his/her academic performance is encourage to make an appointment with me or coordinator of Disability Issues, who located in Clement 121, telephone 221-6230, to discuss the matter.

GRADING

Final grades will be based on the quality of written critical essays, discussion questions and video analyses. Specifically, you are expected to:

1. Complete assigned readings for the weeks they are assigned (listed) on the syllabus. Do not get behind in the readings as the pace and structure of the course makes it difficult to “keep up.”
2. Critical written essays- (a critical analysis) of the assigned readings for each week. This essay is designed to enhance your appreciation of the complex relationships between race, gender and media. Each student is expected to write a minimum of four full typed double-spaced pages for each critical essay. Please use Times New Roman font with 12-point size. All work must be neatly typed (DS), proofread and use APA style. Presentation style, spelling, readability, quality of writing, grammar, etc (as well as content) will be evaluated. This essay should not just be summaries of the assigned readings but must involve critical thinking and interpretation on your part. Employ the theoretical framework, readings and class discussions as a foundation for your response.
3. Complete two video essays that analyze the listed videos shown and/or reserve holdings. Each written summaries must be a minimum two doubled-spaced typed pages.

The instructor reserves the right to add to/alter the assignments, their respective due dates, and/or their percentage values.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Video Analysis#1	(50 points each)	50 pts.
Video Analysis#2	(50 points each)	50 pts.
Critical Written Essays(4)	(100 points each)	400 pts.
Discussion questions (4)	(25 points each)	<u>100 pts.</u>

Total Points Earned

600 points

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES: As a policy, no incomplete grades will be assigned in this course, unless under extreme circumstances.

POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Normally, assignments not submitted by the established deadline (date/time) will not be accepted and a “0” score will be recorded for the assignment. In the case of documented evidence of illness, personal tragedy, prior submitted institutional excuse, solely at the discretion of the instructor. Make-up or late work may be allowed and penalized 10%. Any case of plagiarism or cheating will result in automatic failure of the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 & 2: (8/25 –9/5)

- Reading: Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture, D/H, p. 9
- Reading: The New Media Giants: Changing Industry Structure, D/H, p. 21
- Reading: Hegemony, D/H, p. 63
- Additional Reading: The social psychology of stereotypes: implications for media audiences – Gorham
- Additional Reading: Savages, Swine, and Buffoons: Hollywood stereotypes of the Japanese, Germans and Italians during WWII
- Discussion Question #1 Due: 9/2/08
- Critical Written Analysis Paper#1 Due: 9/4/08

WEEK 3 & 4: (9/5 – 9/18)

- Video #1: Native American -Part 5 series (reserve) or other local or rental video regarding Native American imagery or depiction such “**Dances with Wolves**” or any early day Western featuring Native-American struggle such as “Apache”, etc.. (preferably).
- Additional Reading: The Last Indian War, 1890-91- A Study of Newspaper Jingoism
- Additional Reading: Arguing over images: Native American mascots and race
- Reading: Ling Woo in Historical Context: The New Face of Asian American Stereotypes on Television, D/H, p. 656
- Video Analysis #1 Due: 9/16/08
- Discussion Question #2 Due: 9/16/08
- Critical Written Analysis Paper #2 Due: 9/18/08

WEEK 5 & 6; (9/19 –10/2)

- Reading: Advertising and People of Color, D&H, p.283
- Reading: The Fox Network and the Revolution of Black Television, D&H, p. 586
- Reading: Whose Am I/ The identity and Image of Women in Hip Hop, D&H, p. 136
- Additional Reading: Race, Hierarchy and Hyenaphobia in the Lion King, Rockler
- Discussion Question #3 Due: 9/30/08
- Critical Written Analysis Paper #3 Due: 10/02/08

Week 7 & 8 (10/3 – 10/14)

- Reading: Gender and Hegemony in Fashion Magazines: Women's Interpretations of Fashion Photographs, D&H, p. 314
- Reading: Sex, Lies and Advertising, D&H, p. 223
- Reading: Image Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture, D&H, p. 249
- Reading: "The More You Subtract, the More You Add," D&H, p. 258
- In Spite of Women: Esquire Magazine and the Construction of the Male Consumer, D&H, p. 230
- Reading: Ralph, Fred, Archie and Homer: Why Television keeps Re-creating the White Male Working-Class Buffoon, D&H, p. 575
- Discussion Question #4 Due: 10/14/08
- Critical Written Analysis Paper #4 Due: 10/15/08
- Video Analysis #2 - "Crash" Due: 10/17/08

