

JOUR 481: Race, Gender and Media

Spring 2001

4 to 5:15 p.m. Monday and Wednesday

RSJ 107

Dr. Jennifer Greer

Office: 215 D

Office hours: Monday 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Wednesday 2:30 to 3:45 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday by appointment

E-mail: jdgreer@unr.edu

work phone: 784-4191

Texts and resources

Biagi, S., & Fox-Kernworth, M. (1997). *Facing Difference: Race, Gender, and the Mass Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Dines, G., & Humez, J.M. (Eds.). (1995). *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Optional text, selected readings only)

Course description

This course explores the relationship between the mass media and gender and the mass media and race. The course critically examines the social construction of race and gender and the role of media in perpetuating and challenging those constructs. In particular, the course examines how women and minorities are represented in the media as well as how those groups function as media audiences and creators of media messages.

Prerequisites: JOUR 201; 60 credits; Journalism and overall GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Course objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

Explain how society and media in particular structure images of gender and race.

Understand how stereotyping evolves and is perpetuated by media messages.

Identify patterns in coverage of men, women, and minority groups.

Understand diverse media audiences and how images affect them.

Identify key issues facing women and minorities as media professionals.

Integrate a variety of materials to critically address issues about media, race and gender.

Conduct a research project on the representation of an identified group.

Present results of a research project in both oral and written forms.

Be more critical consumers of media images.

Semester grades

Semester grades will be assigned using the following scale:

- A** Outstanding; always exceeds expectations
- B** Above average; sometimes exceeds expectations
- C** Meets expectations, nothing more

Note: a plus/minus scale will be used

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following elements, each explained in detail below:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Midterm paper | 30 percent |
| Response papers/Homework | 35 percent |
| Participation in class discussion | 10 percent |
| Work on/presentation of project | 10 percent |
| Paper on research project | 15 percent |

Midterm paper (30 percent): Students will write a six- to 12-page paper on a question assigned by the instructor. The paper will require students to pull together readings assigned in the first three units of the course (foundations/representations/audiences) and apply them in discussing an issue. Papers must draw from the required readings, videos and class presentations, citing information in proper academic style. Students also must cite at least **two** of the optional readings in their essays. **Midterm papers are due by 5 p.m. Friday, April 6. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period.**

Midterm papers will be graded on the following criteria:

- Ability to synthesize various readings and apply them to a current issue
- Use and appropriate citation of appropriate readings, videos and class presentations to answer the question
- Accuracy of information presented in readings, video and discussion
- Clarity of argument
- Support for argument
- Organization
- Mechanics (grammar, academic style, spelling)

Response papers/Homework (35 percent): At various times during the semester, students will be asked to reflect on the readings they've been assigned and the class discussions to that date. The instructor will pose a few thought-provoking statements to get students started. Students will choose a statement and respond to it, using readings and class discussions as a foundation for their response. Papers typically will be about three to four pages. The papers will be graded on the same criteria as those for the midterm papers. Other short homework assignments will be made throughout the semester to help students master and retain the subject matter. **Papers are due on 2/14; 3/14 and 4/27 (Friday). Note: Late response papers and other homework will be penalized one letter grade a day.**

Participation in class discussion (10 percent): Class sessions will involve intensive group discussions and analyses of the readings. Thoughtful and enthusiastic participation is expected. We will cover a great deal in each class, so attendance is

essential. If you are going to miss a class, you should tell me as soon as possible **PRIOR** to the class. Being late to class or missing class without notification will lower your participation grade.

To help you participate fully, here are some guidelines on “good” participation:

Familiarity with text assignments including optional readings at times.

Demonstrated ability to understand others’ comments, especially the ability to remember what has already been said.

Demonstrated ability to express oneself in spoken and written English.

Demonstrated ability to synthesize others’ contributions by bringing together what has been said to form a new insight, question, or conclusion.

Regularity in attendance.

Sharing library materials, newspaper and journal articles, current events, etc. relevant to the course.

Cooperation in creating a supportive learning atmosphere.

Demonstrated skill in constructive disagreement.

From The Teaching Professor, August/September 1995, p. 2.

Presentation of/Work on group project (10 percent): During the last half of the semester, students will work in groups of about three to examine media portrayals of a group in depth. The group project will involve monitoring media over a specified period, keeping logs of coverage, and tabulating results. The project is designed to test whether what we’ve read in the class and our assumptions about media coverage are in-line with what is actually being presented in the media. The instructor will work closely with groups to help them clearly target a medium and a group to study and to develop coding schemes. Both the instructor and your peers will assess your individual work on the team project. During the last two weeks of the semester, groups will present the results of their findings to the class and invited faculty members and students. Team presentations will be graded on whether the information presented is accurate, clear and comprehensive as well as the groups’ level of professionalism in orally presenting its findings.

Paper on group project (15 percent): After the oral report, groups will be asked to present their findings in a written report to the instructor. This team paper will require students to integrate readings, class discussion, and information presented in videos with the group’s findings to place the original research in context. The paper should clearly outline the questions the group asked, provide supporting information in the form of previously published studies, outline the method used in the group’s original research, detail the findings and make sense of them in a discussion section. This paper will be about 10 pages long, and all group members should contribute to it. Each team member will receive the same grade for the group paper. A list of criteria for the final papers will be handed out in class near the end of the term. **Late papers will be penalized one letter grade a day.**

Final words

Class mailing list: I’ve created a class mailing list to help facilitate communication among class members. All members of the class should subscribe to the list by Jan. 29. The list address is

jour481@unr.edu. To subscribe, send an e-mail to Majordomo@unr.edu. The e-mail message should contain the single line: subscribe jour481 (no subject line or signature).

Workload: This is both reading- and writing-intensive and requires a significant amount of time outside scheduled class meetings. The group project in particular will require students to devote many hours outside of class time. Therefore, students are strongly advised to set aside time daily to deal with the workload of the class.

Deadlines: Missed deadlines are not tolerated in journalism and will not be tolerated in this class. Missing a deadline will result in a penalty of one letter grade per 24-hour period the paper is late. For example, a paper due on Wednesday and turned in Friday afternoon could earn no higher than a C. The penalty starts as soon as I collect papers, so you are advised to be in class on time on the days papers are due. In rare instances, for example when a student produces a documented medical-related absence, exceptions to this policy will be considered.

Professionalism: As a senior-level class, I expect students to conduct themselves as they would in the workplaces they're preparing to enter. You should arrive on time, turn in work on time, be prepared for class and be attentive to class discussions. All homework, unless specified by the instructor, should be neatly typed, with the student's name and the date at the top. As in any journalism class, grammar and spelling errors will result in a deduction in the assignment grade.

A reminder: Academic dishonesty: "Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade or giving an F in the course. For details, see the UNR Catalog.

Plagiarism: No plagiarism will be tolerated. Plagiarism includes deliberate as well as inadvertent failure to properly attribute: a) material taken directly from a printed or human source (including work done by other students); b) paraphrasing of a source; c) use of the same or very similar organization of source material; d) any submission that contains the thoughts or work of others. Copying a substantial portion of material without acknowledgment is plagiarism and a violation of copyright law. If you use someone else's words, use quotation marks. If you rely on a source's general ideas, wording, logic or organizational scheme, you must clearly attribute it, even if you do not directly quote the source. If you find the perfect quote, cite the author, publication and date in your work. You also must properly attribute the author, publication and date when quoting a human source you have not personally interviewed. Plagiarism applies to printed sources, electronic/digital sources such as CD Rom, and materials obtained through the Internet. Students who plagiarize will receive an automatic F in this course and will be reported to the Dean.

Semester Schedule: Spring 2000

*Subject to change: Necessary adjustments will be announced in class and posted to the class listserv.
Readings listed are to be read by the start of class on the date indicated. Optional readings are in parentheses.*

Unit one: Foundations

Week 1

- Monday 1/22 Introduction to the course
- Wednesday 1/24 The social construction of race and gender
Reading due today: Syllabus, Wilson and Gutierrez Ch. 2, pp. 33-44 only;. (D&H Ch. 1)

Week 2

- Monday 1/29 The social construction of race and gender (cont.)
Reading due today: B&K-F 2.1, 2.5; (D&H Ch. 2, 3)

Unit two: Representations

The News Media

- Wednesday 1/31 Coverage of women
B&K-F 3.4, 3.8

Week 3

- Monday 2/5 Racial issues
B&K-F 3.6, 3.9; (B&K-F 6.1)
- Wednesday 2/7 Coverage of African-Americans
B&K-F 3.1, 3.2, 1.4

Week 4

- Monday 2/12 Other groups
B&K-F 3.7, 1.3, 3.3; (B&K-F 2.4)
- Wednesday 2/14 Alternative voices
3.5, 4.4, 4.5
- Response paper No. 1 due*

Week 5

- Monday 2/19 President's Day, No class

Advertising

Wednesday 2/21 Portrayals of women
B&K-F 5.8, 5.9; D&H 16; (D&H 10)

Week 6

Monday 2/26 Other gender issues
B&K-F 4.7, 5.5; (D&H 18)

Wednesday 2/28 Portrayals of race
B&K-F 5.4; D&H 13

Week 7

Monday 3/5 Portrayals of race (cont.)
B&K-F 5.1, 5.7; D&H 12

The Entertainment Media

Wednesday 3/7 Gender issues
B&K-F 6.7, 6.2; (D&H 21, 52)

Week 8

Monday 3/12 Racial issues.
B&K-F 1.1, 1.2, 6.5; (D&H 48, 49)

Wednesday 3/14 Racial issues (cont.)
B&K-F 1.5, 1.6, 5.6

Response paper No. 2 due

March 19 – 23, Spring Break

Unit three: Audiences

Week 9

Monday 3/26 Understanding diverse audiences
B&K-F 5.2, 5.3, 6.6

Wednesday 3/28 Audiences and the Internet
B&K-F 6.4, 6.8, 6.10
Midterm exam handed out today

Week 10

Monday 4/2 Effects on audiences/Graduate student presentations
Wilson and Gutierrez remainder of Ch. 2
(D&H 22, 34, pp. 547-557)

Wednesday 4/4 No class. Work on midterms

Midterms due in at 5 p.m. Friday, 4/6

Week 11

Monday 4/9 Group project workshop
Divide into groups and choose topic

Unit four: The workplace

Who's producing the images?

Wednesday 4/11 Women working in the media
B&K-F 1.7, 4.1, 4.9

Group project proposals due

Week 12

Monday 4/16 Women (cont.)
B&K-F 4.6, 4.8

Wednesday 4/18 Minorities working in the media
B&K-F 4.2, 4.10

Week 13

Monday 4/23 Minorities (cont.)
B&K-F 4.3, 6.3

Wednesday 4/25 Views from the field: A roundtable of media professionals

Response paper No. 3 due at 5 p.m. Friday, 4/27

Unit five: Student projects**Week 14**

Monday 4/30 Group work on research projects

Wednesday 5/2 Group work on research projects

Week 15 Presentations

Monday 5/7 Presentation of group projects (groups 1-4)

Monday 5/14 Presentation of group projects (groups 5-8)

Note: This session is from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., the final exam time for the class.

Group papers due in at the start of this session.