

JRL 465/WS 465
Women and Mass Media

Instructor

Dr. Candace White
330 Communications Building
974-5112
white@utk.edu

Office Hours

Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 and Wednesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00; other times by appointment. Use the sign-up sheet on my door.

Course Description

The course will explore three aspects of women and mass media:

- 1) historical and current status of women in mass communication industries;
- 2) media coverage and portrayal of women;
- 3) media effects on women.

Additionally, as part of the Women's Studies effort to encourage and facilitate research about women, appropriate theories and methods of analysis including cultural criticism, theories of cultivation and social construction of reality, and latent and manifest content analysis will be discussed and employed to complete a research project.

Required Text and Materials

Lont, Cynthia M. (1995). Women and Media: Content/Careers/Criticism. Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Articles on reserve in the library.

Course Format

The course will be taught as a seminar. You are expected to share in the teaching role. Your insights and perspectives will help shape discussions; therefore it is imperative that you keep up with the reading and attend every class meeting.

Please keep in mind that some issues may be personal, political and potentially volatile. Our purpose as learners is to explore. I expect you to be open to expanding your knowledge about all perspectives whether you agree or not. All students will have equal opportunity to respectfully express opinions.

Attendance Policy

Each student will be allowed two excused absences during the semester. You should notify me before class if you are not able to attend. I will drop your final grade one letter for each subsequent absence.

Academic Honesty

Any violation of academic honesty as outlined in Hilltopics will result in an F for the course.

Assignments

- 1) **Critical questions/observations** - To facilitate class discussion, you will turn in three critical questions or observations about the day's readings to help you better understand the readings, and serve as a foundation for your contributions to class discussion. They may be hand written and are due at the beginning of each class meeting. (Keep a copy for yourself.) You will be graded on the quality of your insights.
- 2) **Essay exam** - An essay exam will be given about the tenth week of class. It will cover the readings as well as class discussions. Bring a blue book.
- 3) **Data collection and research paper** - Each student will participate in primary research and turn in a research report which discusses your findings. You will be given detailed guidelines for the project. All topics must be approved by the instructor.
- 4) **Exercises for class and homework** - A few assignments as described on the syllabus and other exercises will be assigned as the course progresses.

Grading

Critical questions	25%
Exam	20%
Data collection & research paper	35%
Class exercises and homework	10%
Class discussion	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Course Schedule

Jan. 11

Introduction to the course

What are mass media? Why study them through a different lens? Critical cultural analysis; critical questions and observations. (First one due Jan. 16)

Jan. 16 & 18

Continuation of previous week's discussion

Feminist theory

Readings

Rivers, "*Bandwagons, Women, and Cultural Mythology*"

Creedon, "*Framing Feminism -- A Feminist Primer for the Mass Media*"

van Zoonen, "*Feminist Perspectives on the Media*"

Jan. 23 & 25

Scholarly approaches to the study of women and mass media: cultivation theory and social construction of reality. How do media images affect socialization?

Readings

Adoni and Mane, "*Media and the Social Construction of Reality*"
Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorelli, "*Growing Up With Television: the Cultivation Perspective*"
McClelland, "*Visual Images and Re-Imaging: A Review of Research in Mass Communication*"

Jan. 30 & Feb. 1

How we study media effects. How media images affect how we think and feel. The triad of producer/audience/advertiser.

Readings

Lont, Ch. 10
Kellner, "*Reading Images Critically*"
Kilbourne, "*Beauty and the Beast of Advertising*"
Harrison and Cantor, "*The Relationship Between Media Consumption and Eating Disorders*"

Film: Still Killing us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women

Assignment

The Consciousness Scale of Sexism attempts to measure sexism in ads by analyzing ad visuals and placing the ad on a five-point continuum:

Level 1: put her down (sex object, dumb blonde, decorative object)

Level 2: keep her in her place (women shown mostly in traditional womanly roles or struggling with roles "beyond them")
(assignment continued on next page)

Level 3: Give her two places (women can have an occupation as long as they are still primarily a wife/mother; the career is something "extra")

Level 4: remind her she is fully equal (women depicted in multiple roles, usually made easier by a product)

Level 5: nonstereotypic (true individual, not judged by sex)
Bring in five ads, one for each level of the continuum.

Feb. 6 & 8

How we study media content. Content analysis: looking at evidence objectively and systematically. Deriving a research question.

Readings

Butler and Paisley, "*How Media Content is Studied*"
Lont, Ch. 11

Feb. 13 & 15

Studies employing content analysis. Designing a study.

Readings

White and Kinnick, "*Portrayal of Women Using Computers in Television Commercials*"
Elasmar, et. al, "*The Portrayal of Women on Prime Time TV Programs Broadcast in the U.S.*"

Assignment

Content analysis of newspaper front pages

Feb. 20 & 22

Women and news coverage

Readings

Lont, Ch. 1, 14, 16

Marzolf, "*Deciding What's 'Women's News'*"

Miller, "*Opportunities Squandered -- Newspapers and Women's News*"

Sanders, "*The Face of the Network News is Male*"

Assignment

Watch a local television newscast this week with an eye for
-who delivers the news; -who is interviewed as an expert, and
-how women are portrayed in news stories.

Write a brief report and summary of your reactions.

Feb. 27 & March 1

Women and Advertising

Readings

Lont, 8, 9, 10

Rakow, "*Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful..*"

Scott, "*Fresh Lipstick - Rethinking Images of Women in Advertising*"

March 6 & 8

Magazines: Selling an audience and the images they convey

Readings

Lont, Ch. 5, 6, 7

March 13 & 15

Women and Television

Readings

Lont, Ch. 13

Faludi, "*Teen Angels and Unwed Witches: The Backlash on TV*"

D'Acci, "*Defining Women: The Case of Cagney and Lacey*"

Lee, "*Subversive Sitcoms: Roseanne as Inspiration for Feminist Resistance*"

Rogers, "*Daze of Our Lives: The Soap Opera As Feminine Text*"

Week of March 19 - Spring Break!

March 27 & 29

A look at women pioneers in mass communication industries

Readings

Lont, Ch. 2, 6, 12, 15

Henry, "*Anonymous in Her Own Name: Public Relations Pioneer Doris E. Fleischman*"

Bowles, "*Women in Newsrooms...*"

April 3 & 5

Careers today

Readings

Hon, Linda, "*Feminism and Public Relations*"

"*A Field Guide for Women in Media Industries*"

April 10 & 12

Data collection and work on research project.

April 17 & 19

Catch-up and essay exam

April 24 & 26

Looking to the future: change and advocacy

Readings

Lont, pp. 373-378

Henry, "*Changing Media History Through Women's History*"

Rakow, "*How to Get There From Here Through Curriculum Reform*"

Final Exam Period - Monday, May 7 - 10:15-12:15

Book Suggestions for Book Review

You may also choose a book not on this list if approved by the instructor.

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan (Dell, 1984, 20th anniversary edition)

Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women by Susan Faludi (Crown, 1991)

The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women by Naomi Wolf (Doubleday, 1992)

Personal History by Katharine Graham (Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)

Women War Correspondents in World War II by Lilya Wagner (Greenwood, 1989)

A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Pages by Kay Mills (Columbia University Press, 1990)

Fighting for Air: In the Trenches with Television News by Liz Trotter (Simon & Schuster, 1991)

The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men, and *The New York Times* by Nan Robertson (Random House, 1992)

Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes by Helen Benedict (Oxford, 1992)

Final Project Guidelines

Assignment: You are to conduct a content analysis focusing on some aspect of women in the mass media. This requires three basic stages:

- 1) identifying in advance what you want to look for and the process you will use to go about your research;
 - 2) gathering your data by attending to the medium you select; and
 - 3) analyzing and discussing your results in a written paper.
- Specific guidelines are described below.

Step 1: Plan your research

Think of the media channel or topic that interests you. Here is a list of ideas to get you thinking.

Newspapers

- specific sections
- photography

Magazines

- women's
- ethnic
- sex-oriented
- teen

Radio

- news
- talk radio
- music programming

Internet

Television

- tv news
- tabloid news
- soap operas
- children's programs
- game shows
- prime time dramas
- sitcoms
- specific networks

MTV

BET

PBS

Video Games

Film

- slasher films
- women's films
- comedies
- Disney films

Advertising

- for a product category (perfume, tobacco)
- in certain media (tv, magazines)

Popular Fiction

- romance

- thrillers

Step 2: Formulate a research question or questions. This establishes the focus of your research. Be as specific as possible; some examples follow.

- *Are messages in liquor advertisements different in women's magazines than in men's magazines?*

- *Do visual representations of Latina women on Spanish language television reflect traditional or non-traditional gender roles?*

- *Are models in magazines designed for women over forty, age-appropriate?*

- *How are women portrayed in the 10 best selling video games?*

- *How are women represented in local television news?*

- *How do images of sexuality differ in music videos by female artists v. male artists?*

Step 3: Define the media population and sample to be studied, in terms of topic area and time period. For example:

- TV commercials broadcast in prime time on CBS from April 1 - April 15
- Advertisements in GQ and Vogue from January through April
- Top 10 selling videos according to Toy Retailers Association
- Content on the front page of the Knoxville News Sentinel from April 1 - April 15

At the time your topic is approved, we will discuss the minimum I would expect you to analyze.

Step 4: Define your unit(s) of analysis. Construct specific rules and categories for what you will count. Constructing meaningful categories is the most difficult part of content analysis. Think carefully and do a "test-run" of your categories to see if they will work. For example,

If you are looking for portrayal of women in traditional/non-traditional roles, you must determine what constitutes such roles.

If you are looking for female-bashing in the show "Men Behaving Badly," you must determine what constitutes bashing - units of analysis might be verbal "put down," physical violence, female characters placed in demeaning situations, etc.

Step 5: Develop a standardized observation sheet. Create a checklist to allow you to classify your data.

******* - GET APPROVAL BEFORE PROCEEDING TO STEP 6 - *******

Step 6: Conduct your research. Save your observation sheets to turn in with your final report.

Step 7: Write your research report. Use the following outline.

- I. Introduction
- II. Background of your medium
- III. Rational for your research idea
- IV. Research questions
- V. Explanation of your methodology including population and unit(s) of analysis
- VI. Findings
 - report statistics and numbers
 - cite noteworthy examples
 - note limitations or shortcomings of your research
- VII. Summary/Conclusion
 - Appendix (observation sheets)
 - Bibliography

Articles on Reserve

"A Field Guide for Women in Media Industries," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring 1993, pp. 81-98.

Butler, Matilda and William Paisley (1980). "How Content is Studied," In Women and the Mass Media: Sourcebook for Research and Action. New York: Human Sciences Press, pp. 59-67.

Creedon, Pamela J. (1993). "Framing Feminism - A Feminist Primer for the Mass Media," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring, pp. 69-80.

Faludi, Susan (1991). "Teen Angels and Unwed Witches: The Backlash on TV," In Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women. New York: Crown.

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli (1994). "Growing Up with Television: The Cultivation Perspective," In Media Effects and Advances in Theory and Research, Bryant and Zillman, pp. 17-41.

Harrison, Kristen and Joanne Cantor (1997). "The Relationship Between Media Consumption and Eating Disorders," Journal of Communication, 47:1, pp.40-67.

Henry, Susan (1993). "Changing Media History Through Women's History," In Women in Mass Communication, Pamela J. Creedon, ed. Sage, pp. 341-362.

Hon, Linda (1995). "Feminism and Public Relations," The Public Relations Strategist, 1:2, pp. 20-25.

Lee, J. (1995). "Subversive Sitcoms: Roseanne as Inspiration for Feminist Resistance," In Gender, Race and Class in Media, Dines and Humez, Eds. pp. 469-475.

Marzolf, Marion Tuttle (1993). "Deciding What's 'Women's News'," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring, pp. 33-47.

McClelland, John R. (1993). "Visual Images and Re-Imaging: A Review of Research in Mass Communication," In Women in Mass Communication, Pamela J. Creedon, ed. Sage, pp. 220-234.

Miller, Susan (1993). "Opportunity Squandered - Newspapers and

Women's News," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring, pp. 167-182.

Rakow, Lana F. (1992). "Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful: Feminist Resistance to Advertising's Irresistible Meanings," Southern Communication Journal, 57:2, pp. 132-142.

Rakow, Lana F. (1993). "A Bridge to the Future: How to Get There From Here Through Curriculum Reform," In Women in Mass Communication, Pamela J. Creedon, ed. Sage, pp. 363-374.

Rivers, Caryl (1993). "Bandwagons, Women and Cultural Mythology," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring, pp. 1-17.

Rogers, D. (1995). "Daze of Our Lives: The Soap Opera as Feminine Text," In Gender, Race and Class in Media, Dines and Humez, Eds. pp. 325-331.

Sanders, Marlene (1993). "The Face of the Network News is Male," In Women in Mass Communication, Pamela J. Creedon, ed. Sage, pp. 167-171.

Scott, Linda M. (1993). "Fresh Lipstick - Rethinking Images of Women in Advertising," In Media Studies Journal: Women Without Apology, New York: Columbia University, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Winter/Spring, pp. 141-156.

van Zoonen, Liesbet (1991). "Feminist Perspectives on the Media," In Mass Media and Society, James Curran & Michael Gurevitch, eds. New York: Edward Arnold, pp. 33-54.