

Sociology 3345: Media Ethics & Gender
Southern Methodist University: J-Term 2013
Monday 1/7 – Wednesday 1/16 (no weekend classes) 9am-12pm & 1:00-4pm
SMU-in-Plano Campus

Professor Debra Branch

Phone: (214) 504-8122 (cell)

Email: debranch@smu.edu

Office: Heroy 325 (SMU main campus)

REQUIRED READINGS

In addition to a number of articles on blackboard [listed as "*Blackboard Reading*"], readings for the course will be drawn from 2 required books:

Benshoff, Harry M. and Sean Griffin. 2009. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. 2nd edition. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers. ISBN: 1405170557

Gauntlett, David. 2008. *Media, Gender, & Identity: An Introduction*. Routledge Press. ISBN: 0415396611

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today's popular media tell a vast array of stories about men & women. This course is a Sociological study of gender representations in the contemporary American cinema & its effects on our own gender identities. We'll explore the bro-mance & chic-flick, action heroes & "chicks with dicks", the fairy princess & Prince Charming, pretty boys & mean girls, bros before hos & the "mad Black woman" in American movies. How have the roles of men & women & the meanings of masculinity & femininity in the movies evolved overtime, & what effects have these evolutions had on how we, as a culture, see gender?

On most class days, we will spend the morning period in lecture & discussion, while the afternoon period will consist of watching & systematically analyzing/discussing movies from a Sociological perspective. This is an active, discussion-oriented course, & therefore is largely dependent on students' preparation & motivation for discussion. Course requirements will include: daily discussion questions over the readings, a research paper over a movie of your choice, & one exam.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will gain a Sociological understanding of how the mass media shapes our attitudes, identities, & behavior in regards to gender.
2. Students will be able to evaluate theoretical perspectives of gender & the media, including how gender is socially constructed & maintained within this institution.
3. Students will be able to recognize the intersection of gender with race/ethnicity, class, & sexuality in the media.
4. Students will learn content analysis as a research methodology for the study of the gendered media.
5. Students will be able to apply their knowledge & critically analyze one form of mass media, the American Cinema.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance & Class Participation:

Attendance is required. Attendance is essential because class activities, including but not limited to lecture, videos, & group discussion, will often cover material that is not in the readings & that you will be expected to know for your paper & exam. You are also responsible for any announcements, including changes to the class schedule & content, made during class. This course is a total of 8 class periods, so an absence on even one class day results in missing a substantial portion of the entire J-term. In addition, each class day, you will submit 3-4 discussion questions over the assigned readings for that day.

Disability Accommodations:

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability & to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4; an attachment describes the DASS procedures & relocated office.)

Use of Electronic Equipment during Class:

If I find the use of laptop computers to be a distraction to you, other students, or myself, I reserve the right to ban laptops in my classroom at anytime during the semester. As a discussion oriented class, it is important that students not be hidden behind a sea of computer screens. In addition, student abuse of instant messaging, emailing, & surfing requires this policy. The use of other electronic equipment, such as cell phones, PDA's, & other internet-accessing devices, is strictly prohibited all times during class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements are designed with two goals in mind: (1) to offer an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge & critical analysis of the readings & general themes of the course, as well as to apply those themes & readings to your own lives & the lives of those around you, & (2) to encourage contribution to course content, regular reflection on the readings, & active participation in class.

Reading Assignments:

Readings should be completed *prior to the assigned date*. Reading is essential because some material will be on the exam that I will not always cover in class. In addition, the final paper as well as the daily discussion questions require the incorporation of course reading material. There is a lot of reading in this class. For most readings, a focus on the research question(s), theory, methodology, and main finding(s) should be sufficient.

Attendance & Class Participation (25% of final grade)

Attendance and participation in class discussions are mandatory.

Daily Discussion Questions (20% of final grade):

On each class day you will bring with you to class & submit a series of approximately 3-4 discussion questions over that day's assigned readings. These questions should be a synthesis & critical reflection of the readings (not just a summary) & are designed to prepare you for active participation in class discussions. In these questions, you should analyze the reading material critically, raise & answer questions about the readings, critique the readings (e.g., the theory, the methods, the findings/conclusions), synthesize the readings with other course materials, & raise alternative viewpoints/perspectives.

Presentation of research paper findings (20% of final grade):

A short presentation of the major findings of your research paper.

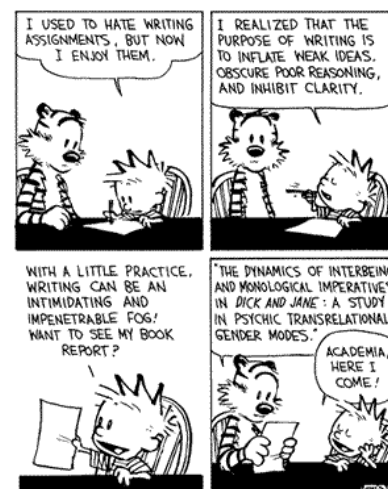
Final Research Paper (35% of final grade):

Your final research paper will consist of a *10-15 page content analysis* of a movie or a movie genre of your choice (one we have not covered in class). The goal of this paper is to apply your sociological perspective on the gendered media. **You should analyze 1-4 movies, and the movie(s) may not be any that were comprehensively analyzed in class.**

You ***MUST*** substantially incorporate class readings, lecture, concepts, theories, & discussion. *Always* keep paper & electronic copies of any paper you turn in to me.

Some Ideas for Research Paper:

- 1) Compare an independent (or foreign) version vs. Hollywood version of the same movie (e.g., Girl with the Dragon Tattoo).



- 2) Analyze a genre not highlighted in this course for representations of gender (and/or race, ethnicity, sexuality).
- 3) Analyze how a particular gendered "role" is portrayed in the American Cinema, for example, mother, father, wife, husband, victim, etc.
- 4) Analyze how a particular "role" (e.g., hero, villain, parent) is portrayed for women vs. men.
- 5) Analyze the intersection of race/ethnicity (or sexuality) and gender, for example, how black women vs. white women are portrayed, how black women vs. black men are portrayed, how white men vs. hispanic men are portrayed, how hispanic women vs. black women are portrayed, or how lesbians vs. gay men are portrayed, etc.
- 6) Compare 2 movies, one from the past (1990s or before) vs the present (post-2000): 2 movies from the same genre, 2 movies depicting the same "role" such as wife, an "original" vs. a "remake", etc.
- 7) Analyze the use of gender/race/ethnic/sexual stereotypes in a movie of your choice.

For the paper you must:

- 1) Write in essay format with an introduction paragraph, a body of the paper comprised of multiple paragraphs, & conclusion paragraph.
- 2) If you discuss published *non-class* material (either direct quotations or paraphrasing), you must cite it within the text & include a bibliography/reference page.
- 3) Spell check & proofread papers. Watch your grammar. Use a sensible font size (11-12), sensible line spacing (one & a half spaced or double spaced), & sensible margins (1"). Please proofread your paper, because I count spelling & grammatical errors in my grading.
- 4) Upload paper to SafeAssign on Blackboard by the due date/time.
- 5) Grading Criteria:
 - a) Content: How much effort did you put into the paper? Did you think deeply, critically, & seriously about the issues in the paper? ***Did you substantially incorporate class readings, lecture, discussion, etc... where appropriate?***
 - b) Organization: Did you follow the guidelines/instructions? How is your formatting (e.g., font, spacing, paragraph format)?
 - c) Clarity: Are your ideas expressed clearly & concisely? How is your grammar & spelling?

Grading:

CALCULATION OF FINAL GRADE:

	Points	Percent
Attendance & class participation	100	25
Daily discussion questions	80	20
Research paper	140	35
Presentation	80	20
Total	400	100%

Grade	Total Points	% of Points
A	= 376-400	94% +
A-	= 360-375	90-93%
B+	= 348-359	87-89%
B	= 336-347	84-86%
B-	= 320-335	80-83%
C+	= 308-319	77-79%
C	= 296-307	74-76%
C-	= 280-295	70-73%
D	= 240-279	60-69%
F	< 239	< 60%

ACADEMIC HONESTY & THE HONOR CODE

All SMU students are under the jurisdiction of the Honor Code. Students are required to issue a warning to, or to report to the Honor Council, any student suspected of violating the Honor Code, & to inform the course

instructor of a violation. Suspected violations may be handled privately by an instructor, or they may be referred to the Honor Council. Suspected violations reported to the Council will be investigated and, if evidence warrants, a hearing will be held. Students convicted of academic dishonesty may appeal their cases to the University Judicial Council.

Academic dishonesty may be defined broadly as a student's misrepresentation of his/her academic work, or of the circumstances under which the work was done. This includes plagiarism in papers, projects, take-home exams, or other assignments in which the student represents the resulting work as being his or her own. It also includes cheating on exams, unauthorized access to test materials, & aiding another student to cheat or participate in an act of academic dishonesty. Failure to prevent cheating by another individual may be considered as participation in the dishonest act.

Possible sanctions given by the Honor Council for academic dishonesty include: a notation of "Honor Violation" for the course, which will remain on a student's official transcript for three years after graduation, deferred suspension for one calendar year, indefinite suspension, or even expulsion from the University.

FINAL NOTES

It is each student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the course requirements & evaluation procedures outlined here, & to keep track of various assignments & activities that are required. This syllabus is an integral part of the course materials, & students should refer to it regularly to be sure that they are up-to-date with reading & other requirements.

I want this class to be enlightening, educational, & fun for you! In order to achieve these ends, each of you in the class must feel both engaged & secure enough to be able to question what you read, see, & hear (inside & outside class) & state your opinion on sometimes controversial matters. With that in mind, I want to make it clear that while I want to promote such open discussions, it must be conducted with utmost respect for your classmates & me.

COURSE OUTLINE

Dates & content are tentative & subject to change. It is unlikely that we will be able to rigidly adhere to it. Nevertheless, it will give you some idea about what topics we plan to cover & the order in which we will be covering them. Any changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for finding out about announcements made in class as well as obtaining copies of any class handouts & notes. Readings should be completed prior to the assigned date. In other words, readings are due (should be completed) by the date listed.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Readings</u>
<i>The Gendered Media: Sociology, Media Theory, & the Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, Age, & Sexuality</i>		
M 1/7	Introduction to the Sociology of gender & the media (Sociology and gender in media theories)	Gauntlett chs 1-2 & 5-7 Benshoff pp. 213-216 & chs 1-2 <i>Blackboard Reading 1:</i> Lind; Gamson
T 1/8	Researching the gendered media: Content Analysis	<i>Blackboard Reading 2:</i> Berg & Lune; Rudy; Zhang; Downs; Ryan
W 1/9	Representations of gender in the media: past vs. present	Gauntlett chs 3-4 Benshoff chs 10-13
TH 1/10	Femininities & Masculinities in the Movies: Intersections of race, ethnicity, age, & sexuality	Benshoff pp 45-49 & chs 3, 4, 7 <i>Blackboard Reading 3:</i> Eschholz; Lauzen; Stanley; Halberstam; Carillo-Rowe; Ashcraft

Date Topic

Required Readings

Genre Case Studies

F 1/11 Heroes & Heroines: Bond, Chicks with Dicks, & Tough Guys

Blackboard Reading 4: Farhi; Jenkins; Neuendorf; Geller; King; Gilpatric; Meyer

M 1/14 Fairy Tales: The Disney Empire, the Princess, the Prince, & the Villain

Blackboard Reading 5: England; Smith; Popielinski; Towbin; Setoodeh; Orenstein

T 1/15 Horror, Slasher, & Thriller Movies: Eroticized & Sexualized Violence

Blackboard Reading 6: Welsh; Emmers-Sommer; Welsh; Keisner; Oliver

Why Does it Matter?

W 1/16 Consequences of the Gendered Media on Identity

Gauntlett chs 10 & 12

Research Presentations

Paper Due by 5pm uploaded to SafeAssign

Blackboard Reading 7: Tragos; Zurbriggen; Huesmann; Grabe; Behm-Morawitz; Mulac; Brown-Givens