

CCJN 4360: Women & Minorities in the Mass Media Spring 2009/9-10:20 T&Th/Umphrey Lee Room 233

Professor: Camille Kraeplin, Ph.D.

Office: 209 Umphrey Lee

Office hours: 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Monday & Wednesday, or by appointment

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Required texts:

****Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body** (University of California Press, 10th anniversary edition, 2003), by Susan Bordo

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

****The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women** (Anchor Books, 1991), by Naomi Wolf

****Gender, Race & Class in Media: A Text-Reader** (Sage, 2nd edition, 2003), edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (**Note: This was inadvertently ordered late; it should be in within a week or so**)

****Additional handouts** (most will be copied to Blackboard).

Learning objectives:

- To explore the relationship between women and minorities (primarily racial, but also gays, religious minorities and others as time allows) and the mass media.
- To analyze media and media content of all kinds to assess the images of woman and minorities.
- To examine how women and minorities have been portrayed in media in the past, how those portrayals have often reflected the prevailing assumptions and stereotypes about these groups at the time, and how these portrayals have changed over time.
- To understand stereotyping, framing and other processes that shape the way audiences perceive women and minorities in the media.
- To understand the effects of commercial and other pressures on how and when women and minorities appear in mass media content.
- To become more critical, aware consumers/creators of media content.
- To examine the role of the media professional in shaping portrayals of minorities and women, as well as the effects of these portrayals on the audience, at both the individual and societal levels.
- To understand the social and historical role of women & minorities in mainstream media – the roles they have played, the struggles they have faced, etc.
- To examine the role of minority/advocacy media.

Course description: As suggested above, we will explore two primary topics in this class: 1) The way women & minorities have been and are today portrayed in mainstream media, or the predominant images of these groups and what these images say, both about our society and about these groups' place/role in it; and 2) the role of women and minority media practitioners within news organizations – both mainstream and minority/advocacy news organizations – including the special issues and challenges they traditionally have faced.

We will spend most of our classtime discussing the assigned readings and analyzing media images, whether in news stories, fashion ads, or TV sitcoms. Given this arrangement, class meetings will be both most productive and interesting if we all participate. And, of course, you can't participate if you are not here. To make intelligent contributions, you must also come to class prepared. That means completing assigned readings by the date they are due.

In addition, it's important we all work to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. Many of the topics we'll be discussing are complex, challenging and controversial. And the readings reflect a wide range of opinions and perspectives. So it's more than likely that our responses will be mixed as well. That's good. Spirited debate livens things up and fosters learning. But only if each participant approaches those inevitable disagreements with a willingness to listen and thoughtfully consider each opinion expressed. Finally, some of you may find a small number of the readings/films in this course objectionable, especially when we get to the section on pornography. Please let me know if any of the material makes you uncomfortable, and we'll find a way to accommodate you.

Course requirements and evaluation:

Participation/attendance:	10%
Defining & explicating stereotypes paper:	15%
1 st exam:	25%
Media research paper & presentation:	25%
2 nd exam:	25%

Participation/attendance (10% of grade):

Roll will be taken every day. Any student who misses the first day of class **may** be dropped. You could be dropped from the course or receive an "F" for excessive unexcused absences. **For a two-day-a-week course, I consider more than three unexcused absences excessive.**

You are responsible for contacting your teacher within 24 hours of an absence. An absence will be considered unexcused unless you are able to provide documentation of illness or some other good reason why you were not in class.

Even with an excused absence, all class work must be made up promptly. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COME TO ME TO DISCUSS YOUR MAKEUP WORK, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

Please note that the SMU Health Center has changed its policy on giving forms for excused absences. The Health Center's new policy is found at <http://smu.edu/healthcenter/policy/absenceclass.asp>. There is a PDF file in this information that you can download and submit to me for consideration of an excused absence. This form must be filled out fully for me to consider your absence as excused. As in the past, if you consult a physician for an illness and receive specific certification for a recovery time, absences will be excused if I am given a form from the physician's office. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Stroll in late? You will receive an unexcused absence unless you can provide a compelling reason (AFTER CLASS) why you were tardy.

Students with excessive unexcused absences/tardies will automatically lose points off the attendance/participation portion of their grade. To earn a high grade for participation/attendance, however, you must also take part in class. That includes participating in class discussion. It includes the occasional short response papers to readings and other assignments I may occasionally ask you to complete. Students will also help lead class discussion at least once during the semester, which will count toward their participation grade. In short, your focus should be ON CLASS MATERIAL AND DISCUSSION DURING CLASSTIME. You may bring in food, as long as you do not distract me or fellow classmates. But you are expected to turn off cell phones and pagers before you come to class.

Extracurricular Activities – Students participating in officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activities will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to make those arrangements in as timely a manner as possible.

For Religious Reasons – Religiously observant students who will be absent on holidays must notify the instructor (me) in writing. The same rules apply as for those missing for extracurricular activities: Course work must be made up in a timely manner.

Defining & Explicating Stereotypes paper (15% of grade): This paper will be due early in the semester. You will be asked to: A) tell me what a stereotype is, according to a range of experts in the field; B) explain why they appear in media content; and C) discuss their effects on/implications for media consumers. You should refer to at least five sources and include a source list with your paper. The paper should be 500 to 750 words (2 to 3 pages, double-spaced).

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, films and speakers – in short, anything we spend time on in class. Each exam is worth 25 percent of your grade, for a total of 50 percent. Those of you who've taken some of my other classes know what I'm looking for in the essay portions: I want to hear your opinions, but you must back those opinions up with evidence from class readings and other materials.

Media research papers & oral presentations (25% of grade): The goal of this project should be either A) to examine how women/minorities overcame some professional obstacle (for instance, how did women make their way into the all-boys club that was elite national media through much of the early 20th century?); or B) to determine how a certain group is portrayed in a specific medium (for instance, how are racial minorities portrayed on local newcasts, or how are gays presented in TV dramas and sitcoms?). For students who select the former, most of their research will be SECONDARY. That is, they may wish to read biographies and histories that examine the topic. But they should also attempt to complete at least one original interview with a journalist/communicator who could help answer the question being addressed. For those who select the latter topic, much of their research will be ORIGINAL. In other words, they will need to spend time analyzing portrayals in news content or on TV show/movies or perhaps in advertisements. Again, the content each student analyses will depend on the question he/she chooses to explore.

The form/structure each paper will take will vary based on the topic and approach selected. However, it should be at least 15 pages long, including bibliography. Papers should follow either MLA or APA (American Psychological Association) style for notation and bibliography/source style. Either is fine – but consistency is critical.

Students will have various research paper-related assignments due throughout the semester, each of which will contribute to the overall paper grade. The paper itself will be due toward the end of the semester. Students will also present findings to the class in a short oral presentation during the last few weeks of class.

Final course grades will be assigned along the following guidelines:

93-100=A	73-76=C
90-93=A-	70-72=C-
87-89=B+	67-69=D+
83-86=B	63-66=D
80-82=B-	60-62=D-
77-79=C+	Below 60=F

Academic integrity: Students are expected to abide by the standards of academic integrity set forth in the SMU Honor Code. The relevant section of the Code, taken from the Preamble of the Honor Council's Constitution, is as follows:

Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are fundamental to the processes of learning and of evaluating academic performance, and maintaining them is the responsibility of all members of an educational institution. The inculcation of personal standards of honesty and integrity is a goal of education in all the disciplines of the University.

Students must share the responsibility for creating and maintaining an atmosphere of honesty and integrity. Students should be aware that personal experience in completing assigned work is essential to learning. Permitting others to prepare their work, using published or unpublished summaries as a substitute for studying required materials, or giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in the preparation of work to be submitted are directly contrary to the honest process of learning. Students who are aware that others in a course are cheating or otherwise acting dishonestly have the responsibility to inform the professor and/or bring an accusation to the Honor Council.

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 your instructor as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact Rebecca Marin, coordinator of services for students with disabilities (214-768-4563; rmarin@mail.smu.edu).

COURSE SCHEDULE

(any changes will be discussed in class)

Most readings listed below are from the following texts: *Unbearable Weight* (UW), by Susan Bordo; *Backlash*, by Susan Faludi; *The Beauty Myth* (BM), by Naomi Wolf; and *Gender, Race & Class in Media* (GRCM), edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez. Other reading assignments are either posted on Blackboard (under “Course Documents”) or will be class handouts. **Note: I am currently arranging for a number of speakers to visit our class. I will alert you as those plans are finalized.**

	Topic:	Homework:
<u>Week 1</u>		
1/20	Course introduction	Go home & watch inauguration
1/22	African-Americans & the media – be ready to discuss inauguration coverage	Articles (3) from <i>New York Times</i> , <i>Washington Post</i> & <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (on Blackboard/Course Documents)
<u>Week 2</u>		
1/27	More African-Americans & the media	“Two Tales of One City: How Cultural Perspective Influenced the Framing of a Pre-Civil Rights Story in Dallas” & “Rekindling the Fire: The Compromise that Initiated the Formal Integration of Daily Newspaper Newsrooms” (both on Blackboard/Course Documents)
1/29	No Class – Follows Monday Class Schedule	
<u>Week 3</u>		
2/3	Intersectionality; Understanding interplay of multiple identities	“Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender & Class in Organization Studies” (article on Blackboard/Course Documents)
2/5	More on Intersectionality	Stereotypes and the Single Woman: <i>Friends & Sex & the City</i> vs. <i>Living Single & Girlfriends</i> #7 & #13 in GRCM

Week 4

2/10 MISSED CLASS

2/12 **Speaker:** Anna Gonzalez Please be familiar with the site Ms.
CBS11TV.com Gonzalez (an SMU grad) helps produce.
Web Producer Come with questions.
Defining & Explicating Stereotypes paper due

Week 5

2/17 More on Intersectionality Stereotypes and the Single Woman: *Friends & Sex
& the City* vs. *Living Single & Girlfriends*
“Sex & the City”

2/19 Representations of Introduction-Chapter 3 in *Backlash*
Women in the Media

Week 6

2/24 **Topic for Research Paper due (yes, you can switch)**
More Representations Chapters 4, 9-11 in *Backlash*
of Women in the Media

2/26 Gays as a Market #21 & 22 in GRCM
Analysis of Commercial Closet
Website

Week 7

3/3 **Source List (initial 3-5) for Research Paper due**
Speaker: Tammye Nash, Be familiar with Ms. Nash’s publication
Editor of *The Dallas Voice* and come with questions!

3/5 Gays in Cultural Content #10, #56 & #57
Analysis of popular gay-themed TV shows

Week 8

3/9-13 SPRING BREAK!!!

Week 9

- 3/17 Ethnic issues: Immigration stories No. 1 & 2 (on Blackboard/
News coverage of Course Documents); also find a story about
Immigration immigration to bring to class (21 copies)
Study for Midterm
- 3/19 **Midterm**

Week 10

- 3/24 **Speaker:** Sharon Grigsby, Please be familiar with Ms. Grigsby's work
editorial writer at *The and come prepared with questions.*
Dallas Morning News
- 3/26 Film TBA

Week 11

- 3/31 **Outline of Research Paper due**
Cultural Conceptions: Beauty Pages 9-57 in *The Beauty Myth* (BM)
- 4/2 More Cultural Conceptions: Beauty Pages 58-85 in BM
Film: *Killing Us Softly III*

Week 12

- 4/7 Cultural Conceptions: "Whose Body is This?" (p. 45) & "Hunger as
The "Thin Ideal" Ideology" (p. 99) in *Unbearable Weight* (UB)
Film: *The Human Barbie* (news report)
- 4/9 More Cultural Conceptions: "Material Girl" (p. 245) & "Postmodern Subjects"
The "Thin Ideal" (p. 277)

Week 13

- 4/14 **Draft of Research Paper due**
Cultural Conceptions: #34 & 37 in *GRCM*
Gendered Violence Film: *Tough Guise*
- 4/16 Cultural Conceptions: #39&40 in *GRCM*

Pornography &
Sexual Content

Film: News report on pornography

Week 14

4/21 Catch-up day

4/23 **Research Paper due**
Research Paper reports

Week 15

4/28 **Research Paper reports**

4/30 **Research Paper reports**

Exam No. 2 on the day scheduled for final exam (to be announced later).

Student Bio - CCJN 4360

Full Name: _____

Prefer to be called: _____ Student Number: _____

Phone number where you can most easily be reached (include area code):

Email address: _____

Hometown: _____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

Rank (First Year/senior, etc.): _____

Extracurricular activities at SMU: _____

What is your career goal? _____

Why did you take this class? _____

What do you hope to get out of this class? _____

Tell me anything I need to know about you that might affect your performance in class (i.e. learning disability, health, work, etc.): _____
