2016

Sociology of Mass Media Syllabus

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This class will focus on mass media representations of gender, race, class, and politics, as well as the cultural, legal, economic, and institutional factors influencing the production of media texts. We will also discuss the ways in which media audiences (not just media scholars) make sense of media texts.

Types of media to be discussed include advertisements, film (including romantic comedies, drama, horror, action, and war films), news media, comic books, video games, “reality” television, and sitcoms. Due to time constraints, popular music, novels, and “new” media will receive relatively less attention.

Much of the class will focus on classic theories and media texts. Many of the examples discussed in class will likely be things that you have not seen (e.g., *It Happened One Night*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Halloween*, *Apocalypse Now*, *When Harry Met Sally*). This is done to expose you to media texts (and historical contexts) that you might be unaware of, and give you the opportunity to compare them with the media that you consume today.

The learning objectives and the means for assessing them for this class are as follows:

**Goal 1**
Have students become more aware of the media content that they regularly consume.

**Assessment 1**
The two online journals require students to document the types of media content that they consume and link them to the readings and lecture.

**Goal 2**
Have students learn how to analyze representations of race, class, and gender in mass media.

**Assessment 2**
The media analysis paper has students analyze representations of race, class, and gender in the film *Million Dollar Baby* (2004).

**Goal 3**
Students will have a mastery of core concepts from lecture and readings.

**Assessment 3**
Class discussion, an in-class multiple choice and short essay exam, and a take-home essay exam.
REQUIRED TEXTS


(3) *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). You must watch this film for your media analysis paper. You do not necessarily need to buy the film (brand new copies are available for only $4.00 on Amazon), since you can use Netflix or interlibrary loans.

(4) There will also be a number of readings posted on Blackboard. These online texts are labeled “OT” in the syllabus.

ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Journal (2)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Analysis Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>25%</td>
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(1) **Participation**
To receive a C or higher in your participation grade you must make substantive comments or questions in class.

(2) **Media Journal**
The media journal can be done for any week before the due date. The media journal must include four different media texts. After a brief description of the media text (2-3 sentences), you must explicitly link what you saw with something discussed in class (another 2-3 sentences). These entries must be on at least two different days and must not all be on the same topic, television show, or genre.

(3) **The Media Analysis Paper**
You will write a 4-6 page paper that critically analyses the ways in which race, class, and gender are represented in the film *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). The paper must make explicit references to specific concepts discussed in class, and justify these claims by describing relevant scenes (and the approximate times in which they take place in the film).

(4) **Exam I**
This will be an in-class exam with a combination of multiple choice and short essay.

5) **Exam II**
This will be a take-home essay exam in which you will need to cite lecture and reading materials to make an argument.
1/11 M INTRODUCTION

MEDIA LITERACY


MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY


1/18 M MLK DAY—NO CLASS


1/22 F GRC: Kessler. Showtime Thinks, Therefore I Am (600-609).


ONLINE MEDIA JOURNAL # 1 DUE BY 10:00 AM

2/8 M OT: Katz. Advertising and the construction of violent white masculinity (p. 261-269)


MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

2/16 M  GRC: Hall. The Whites of Their Eyes (104-107).


2/22 M  GRC: Drew. Pretending to be “Post-Racial” (167-174).


3/2 M    Ms. Marvel (2014). #1 ($0.99) for digital copy).
http://marvel.com/comics/issue/49089/ms_marvel_2014_1

3/4 W    EXAM # 1

3/6 F    MYSTERY MOVIE DAY

3/9 M    MYSTERY MOVIE DAY
ONLINE MEDIA JOURNAL # 2 DUE BY 10:00 AM

NEWS MEDIA


ONLINE MEDIA ESSAY DUE BY 10:00 AM

MEDIA REGULATION, NORMS & ROUTINES


http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2013/07/hollywood_and_blake_snyder_s_screenwriting_book_save_the_cat.html


**SPRING VACATION**

3/21 M NO CLASS
3/23 W NO CLASS
3/25 F NO CLASS

**POLITICAL ECONOMY & CONSUMER CULTURE**

3/30 M GRC: Foster and McChesney. The Internet’s Unholy Marriage to Capitalism (43-50).


**CULTURE & IDEOLOGY IN FILM**


GRC: Lee and Moscowitz. The ‘Rich Bitch’ (143-156).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WORK ON EXAM ESSAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HARD COPY OF EXAM II DUE BY NOON</td>
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