

2016

Sociology of Mass Media Syllabus

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SOCI 373: SOCIOLOGY OF MASS MEDIA
SPRING 2016
MWF 11:30-12:20
Avery Hall 119

Dr. Brandon Bosch

Oldfather 722

Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00, Tuesday 1:00-3:00, Wednesday 9:00-10:30

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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 <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> (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

(1) Gail Dines and Jean Humez (2015). *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*. 4th Edition. Readings from this book are labeled *GRC* in the syllabus.

(2) Ms. Marvel (2014). #1 (\$0.99 for digital copy).

http://marvel.com/comics/issue/49089/ms_marvel_2014_1

(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

Participation	15%
Media Journal (2)	20%
Media Analysis Paper	20%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	25%

(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
1/13	W	<i>MEDIA LITERACY</i> <i>OT:</i> Hobbs (1998). The Seven Great Debates in the Media Literacy Movement. <i>Journal of Communication</i> , 48 , 16-32.
1/15	F	<i>MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY</i> <i>GRC:</i> Moore. Resisting, Reiterating, and Dancing Through (210-219).
1/18	M	MLK DAY—NO CLASS
1/20	W	<i>GRC:</i> Booth. Queering <i>Queer Eye</i> (409-418).
1/22	F	<i>GRC:</i> Kessler. Showtime Thinks, Therefore I Am (600-609).
1/25	M	<i>GRC:</i> Murray. Branding ‘Real’ Social Change in Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty (285-296).
1/27	W	<i>OT:</i> Sarkeesian (2010). Toy Ads and Learning Gender. <i>Feminist Frequency</i> . https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZn_lJoN6PI
1/29	F	<i>GRC:</i> Fairclough. Nothing Less Than Perfect: Female Celebrity, Ageing and Hyperscrutiny in the Gossip Industry (297-305).
2/1	M	<i>GRC:</i> Cuklanz and Moorti. Television’s ‘New’ Feminism: Prime-Time Representations of Women and Victimization (175-186).
2/3	W	<i>OT:</i> Lizardi (2010). “Re-Imagining” Hegemony and Misogyny in the Contemporary Slasher Remake. <i>Journal of Popular Film and Television</i> , 38 , 113-121.
2/5	F	<i>GRC:</i> Petersen. That Teenage Feeling: <i>Twilight</i> , Fantasy, and Feminist Readers (342-353). ONLINE MEDIA JOURNAL # 1 DUE BY 10:00 AM
2/8	M	<i>OT:</i> Katz. Advertising and the construction of violent white masculinity (p. 261-269)
2/10	W	<i>GRC:</i> Katz. Big Talkers: Rush Limbaugh, Conservative Talk Radio and the Defiant Reassertion of White Male Authority (157-162).
2/12	F	<i>OT:</i> Gillam and Wooden (2008). Post-Princess Models of Gender: The New Man in Disney/Pixar. <i>Journal of Popular Film and Television</i> , 36 , 2-8.

MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

- 2/16 M GRC: Hall. The Whites of Their Eyes (104-107).
GRC: McKay and Johnson. Pornographic Eroticism and Sexual Grotesquerie in Representations of African American Sportswomen (118-127).
- 2/17 W GRC: Smith. Critiquing Reality-Based Televisual Black Fatherhood (524-535).
- 2/29 F OT: McIlwain and Caliendo (2013). Mitt Romney's Racist Appeals. *American Behavioral Scientist*, **4**, 1-12.
- 2/22 M GRC: Drew. Pretending to be "Post-Racial" (167-174).
- 2/24 W GRC: Wang. A Shot at Half-Exposure: Asian Americans in Reality TV Shows (536-544)
- 2/26 F GRC: Lopez. Fan activists and the Politics of Race in the *Last Airbender* (637-648).
- 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*
- 3/11 W OT: Bennett (2005) Four Biases (36-70). *News: The Politics of Illusion*.
OT: Brent Cunningham (2003). Re-thinking Objectivity. *Columbia Journalism Review*.
http://www.cjr.org/feature/rethinking_objectivity.php
- 3/13 F OT: Lawrence (1996). Accidents, Icons, and Indexing: The Dynamics of News Coverage of Police use of Force. *Political Communication*, **13**, 437-454.
- 3/16 M OT: Powell (2011). Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11. *Communication Studies*, **62**, 90-112.
ONLINE MEDIA ESSAY DUE BY 10:00 AM
- MEDIA REGULATION, NORMS & ROUTINES*
- 3/18 W OT: Platts (Under Review). "[Zombies] Couldn't Be Done on Network": Producing AMC's *The Walking Dead*.
- 3/20 F OT: Suderman (July 19, 2013). "Save the Movie!" *Slate*.

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

OT: Ebert (1999) L-M (92-99). *The Bigger Little Book of Hollywood Cliches*.

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).

4/1 W OT: Colhoun (April 16, 2015). BuzzFeed's Censorship Problem. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

http://www.cjr.org/analysis/buzzfeed_censorship_problem.php

OT: Belson (September, 1, 2015). Sony Altered "Concussion" Film to Prevent N.F.L. Protests, Emails Show. *New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/sports/football/makers-of-sonys-concussion-film-tried-to-avoid-angering-nfl-emails-show.html>

4/3 F GRC: Hardy. Mapping Commercial Intertextuality (327-336).

4/6 M GRC: Ouellette. Take Responsibility for Yourself': Judge Judy and the Neoliberal Citizen (545-55).

4/8 W GRC: Palmer. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition: An American Fairy Tale (51-57).

CULTURE & IDEOLOGY IN FILM

4/10 F OT: Gianos (1998). Movies and the Great Depression (p. 75-103).

GRC: Lee and Moscovitz. The 'Rich Bitch' (143-156).

4/ 13 M OT: Wright. (2001). Questioning Authority (226-253). *Comic Book Nation*.

4/ 15 W OT: Giglio (2005). Picturing Vietnam on Film (201-220). *Here's Looking at You*.

4/17 F OT: Prince (2009). No End in Sight (281-309). *Firestorm*.

4/20 M OT: Douthat (April, 2008). The Return of the Paranoid Style. *The Atlantic*.
http://www.jmhinternational.com/news/news/selectednews/files/2008/04/20080401_Atlantic_TheReturnOfTheParanoidStyle.pdf

OT: Dargis (May 2, 2013). Bang, Boom. *New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/03/movies/iron-man-3-with-robert-downey-jr.html>

MEDIA EFFECTS AND AUDIENCES

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|------|---|---|
| 4/22 | W | <i>GRC:</i> Radway. Women Read the Romance (58-68). |
| 4/23 | F | <i>GRC:</i> Butsch. Reconsidering Resistance and Incorporation (87-98). |
| 4/27 | M | WORK ON EXAM ESSAY |
| 4/29 | F | HARD COPY OF EXAM II DUE BY NOON |