

# **JOUR 481/681: Race, Gender and Media**

Spring 2003

11 a.m. to 12:15, Monday, Wednesday

RSJ 101

## **Dr. Jennifer Greer**

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**Office hours:** 10 to noon Tuesday

Office phone: 784-4191

1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday

*also by appointment any day*

## **Texts and resources**

No required text. However, reading is required for every class period. Assigned readings are on reserve.

## **Course description**

This course explores the relationship between the mass media and gender and the mass media and race. The course critically examines the social construction of race and gender and the role of media in perpetuating and challenging those constructs. In particular, the course examines how women and minorities are represented in the media as well as how those groups function as media audiences and creators of media messages.

*Prerequisites: JOUR 201; 60 credits; Journalism and overall GPA of 2.5 or higher.*

## **Course objectives**

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Explain how society and media in particular structure images of gender and race.
- Understand how stereotyping evolves and is perpetuated by media messages.
- Identify patterns in coverage of men, women, and minority groups.
- Understand diverse media audiences and how images affect them.
- Identify key issues facing women and minorities as media professionals.
- Integrate a variety of materials to critically address issues about media, race and gender.
- Conduct a research project on the representation of an identified group.
- Present results of a research project in both oral and written forms.
- Be critical consumers of media images.

## **Semester grades**

Semester grades will be assigned using the following scale:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>A</b> | Outstanding; always exceeds expectations      |
| <b>B</b> | Above average; sometimes exceeds expectations |
| <b>C</b> | Meets expectations                            |
| <b>D</b> | Fails to meet expectations                    |

*Note: a plus/minus scale will be used*

## **Grading**

Your grade will be based on the following elements, each explained in detail below:

<b>Participation in class discussion</b>	<b>10 percent</b>
<b>Short papers/Homework</b>	<b>35 percent</b>
<b>Midterm paper</b>	<b>30 percent</b>
<b>Work on/presentation of project</b>	<b>10 percent</b>
<b>Paper on research project</b>	<b>15 percent</b>

**Participation in class discussion (10 percent):** Class sessions will involve intensive group discussions and analyses of the readings. Thoughtful and enthusiastic participation is expected. We will cover a great deal in each class, so attendance is essential. If you are going to miss a class, you should tell me as soon as possible **PRIOR** to the class. **Being late to class or missing class without notification will lower your participation grade.**

To help you participate fully, here are some guidelines on “good” participation:

- Familiarity with text assignments including optional readings at times.
- Demonstrated ability to understand others’ comments, especially the ability to remember what has already been said.
- Demonstrated ability to express oneself in spoken and written English.
- Demonstrated ability to synthesize others’ contributions by bringing together what has been said to form a new insight, question, or conclusion.
- Regularity in attendance.
- Sharing materials library materials, newspaper and journal articles (current events, etc.) relevant to the course.
- Cooperation in creating a supportive learning atmosphere.
- Demonstrated skill in constructive disagreement.

From *The Teaching Professor*, August/September 1995, p. 2.

**Short papers/Other homework (35 percent):** Several times during the semester, students will be asked to reflect on the readings they’ve been assigned, the videos they’ve viewed and the class discussions to date. The instructor will pose a question or a thought-provoking statement for students to respond to. Students will chose a statement and respond to it, using readings, videos and class discussions as a foundation for their response. Papers should be no more than three pages, double spaced. The papers will be graded on the same criteria as the midterm papers (*see below*). Other short homework assignments will be made throughout the semester to help students master and retain the subject matter. **Dates the papers are due are indicated in the course schedule below.** **Note: Late response papers and other homework will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period, starting the time the homework is collected.**

**Midterm paper (30 percent):** Students will write an 8- to 12-page paper on a question or questions assigned by the instructor. The paper will require students to pull together readings assigned through the first two thirds of the course and apply them in discussing an issue. Papers must draw from the required readings, videos and class presentations, citing information in proper academic style. **Midterm papers are due at the start of class on XXX. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period.**

Midterm papers will be graded on the following criteria:

- Ability to synthesize various readings and apply them to a current issue
- Use and appropriate citation of appropriate readings, videos and class presentations to answer the question
- Accuracy of information presented in readings, video and discussion
- Clarity of argument
- Support for argument
- Organization
- Mechanics (grammar, academic style, spelling)

**Presentation of/Work on group project (10 percent):** Throughout the semester, students will work in groups of three to four to examine media portrayals in depth. The group project will involve monitoring one type of media over a specified period, keeping logs of coverage, and tabulating results. The project is designed to test whether what we've read in the class and our assumptions about media coverage are in-line with what is actually being presented in the media. The instructor will work closely with groups to help them clearly target a medium and a group to study and to develop coding schemes. Both the instructor and your peers will assess your individual work on the team project. At the end of the semester, groups will present the results of their findings to the class and invited faculty members and students. Team presentations will be graded on whether the information presented is accurate, clear and comprehensive as well as the groups' level of professionalism in orally presenting its findings.

**Paper on group project (15 percent):** Groups also will present their findings in a written report to the instructor. This team paper will require students to integrate readings, class discussion, and information presented in videos with the group's findings to place the original research in context. The paper should clearly outline the questions the group asked, provide supporting information in the form of previously published studies, outline the method used in the group's original research, detail the findings and make sense of them in a discussion section. This paper will be about 10 pages long, and all group members should contribute to it. Each team member will receive the same grade for the group paper. A list of criteria for the final papers will be handed out in class near the end of the term. **Group project papers are due XXXX. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period.**

## Final words

**Class mailing list:** I've created a class mailing list to help facilitate communication among class members. To post to the list, simply send a message to [jour481@unr.edu](mailto:jour481@unr.edu). Messages to this address will be immediately sent to me and to all members of the class.

**Work load:** This is both reading- and writing-intensive and requires a significant amount of time outside scheduled class meetings. The group project in particular will require students to devote many hours outside of class time. Therefore, students are strongly advised to set aside time daily to deal with the workload of the class.

**Deadlines:** Missed deadlines are not tolerated in journalism and will not be tolerated in this class. Missing a deadline will result in a penalty of one letter grade per 24-hour period the paper is late. For example, a paper due on Wednesday and turned in Friday could earn no higher than a C. The penalty starts as soon as I collect papers, so you are advised to be in class on time on the days papers are due. In rare instances, for example when a student produces a documented medical-related absence, exceptions to this policy will be considered but are not guaranteed. Students are advised to schedule their time wisely. Printer or computer problems at the last minute are not adequate reasons for exceptions to the strict deadline policy in this class.

**Professionalism:** As a senior-level class, I expect students to conduct themselves as they would in the workplaces they're preparing to enter. You should arrive on time, turn in work on time, be prepared for class and be attentive to class discussions. All homework, unless specified by the instructor, should be neatly typed, with the student's name and the date at the top. As in any journalism class, grammar and spelling errors will result in a deduction.

**A reminder: Academic dishonesty:** "Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade or giving an F in the course. For details, see the UNR Catalog.

**Plagiarism:** No plagiarism will be tolerated. Plagiarism includes deliberate as well as inadvertent failure to properly attribute: a) material taken directly from a printed or human source (including work done by other students); b) paraphrasing of a source; c) use of the same or very similar organization of source material; d) any submission that contains the thoughts or work of others. Copying a substantial portion of material without acknowledgment is plagiarism and a violation of copyright law. If you use someone else's words, use quotation marks. If you rely on a source's general ideas, wording, logic or organizational scheme, you must clearly attribute it, even if you do not directly quote the source. If you find the perfect quote, cite the author, publication and date in your work. You also must properly attribute the author, publication and date when quoting a human source you have not personally interviewed. Plagiarism applies to printed sources, electronic/digital sources such as CD Rom, and materials obtained through the Internet. Students who plagiarize will receive an automatic F in this course and will be reported to the Dean.

## Semester Schedule: Spring 2003

*Subject to change: Necessary adjustments will be announced in class and posted to the class listserv. Readings listed are to be read by the start of class on the date indicated.*

### **Unit one: Foundations**

- Wednesday 1/22      Introduction to the course  
In class: Stereotypes and where they come from; review of syllabus; What is our definition of diversity?
- Monday 1/27      The social construction of race and gender  
**Reading due today:**
- Wilson and Gutierrez Ch. 2.
  - Ford: Debunk the Myths (pp. 71-75).
  - Rosenblum & Travis: Who is Black? (written by F. James Davis, pp. 34-42);
- Wednesday 1/29      The social construction of race and gender (cont.)  
**Reading due today:**
- Wood: Theoretical Approaches to Gender Development (pp. 38-62).
  - Cyrus: Time Warp in a Toy Store (written by Ellen J. Reifler, pp. 65-67).
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### **Unit two: Representations**

#### The News Media

- Monday 2/3      Coverage of women  
**Reading due today:**
- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Slipping from the Scene (written by M. Junior Bridge, pp. 102-112).
  - Wood: Bias in News Coverage (294-298).
- Wednesday 2/5      Racial issues  
**Reading due today:**
- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: When Should You Quote Minority Sources? (written by Valeria Basheda, pp. 138-140).
  - University of Missouri: Introduction (pp. 1-20)
- Monday 2/10      Coverage of African-Americans  
**Reading due today:**
- Entman & Rojecki: The Meaning of Blackness in Network News (pp. 60-77). Violence, Stereotypes and African Americans in the News (pp. 78-93).
  - Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Racial Stereotyping and the Media (written by M. L. Stein, pp. 125-128).

Wednesday 2/12      Other groups

***Reading due today:***

- Ford: Identify the Issues (pp. 32-37).; KRON-TV (pp. 85-87).
- Resignation letter to The Los Angeles Times.
- Mansfield-Richardson: Census Data & “East Coast” Lens sections (pp. 19-23).
- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Only in Glimpses (written by Carolyn Martindale, pp. 89-95).

Monday 2/17            President’s Day, No class

Wednesday 2/19      Final word on news coverage

***Reading due today:***

- Wilson & Gutierrez: Public Relations (pp. 139-149).  
*Response paper No. 1 due*

## **The Entertainment Media**

Monday 2/24            Racial issues.

***Reading due today:***

- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Don’t Blink (written by National Council of La Raza, pp. 29-32).
- Dines & Humez: Television’s Realist Portrayal of African-American Women and the Case of L.A. Law (written by Jane Rhodes, pp. 424-429)

Wednesday 2/26      Racial issues (cont.)

***Reading due today:***

- Entman & Rojecki: Race at the Movies (pp. 182-204).

Monday 3/3            Gender issues

***Reading due today:***

- Wood: Gendered Media (pp. 279-294 – stop at “Bias in the News”).
- Gamble: Gender and the Mass Media (pp. 350-377).
- Gross: Sexual Minorities and the Media (pp. 12-20).
- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: We’re Gonna Make It After All (written by Lisa Schwarzbaum, pp. 38-42).

## Advertising

Wednesday 3/5 Portrayals of women

***Reading due today:***

- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: The Beauty Machine (written by Jeff Yang and Angelo Ragaza, pp. 11-15). Imperfect Picture (written by Fara Warner, pp. 223-224).

Monday 3/10 Other gender issues

***Reading due today:***

- Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Gay Economy Lures Dollars of Major Advertisers (written by Brett Chase, pp. 179-181); Stonwalled (written by Tom Weisend, pp. 214-216);
- Dines & Humez: Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity (written by Jackson Katz, pp. 133-141).

*Response paper No. 2 due*

Wednesday 3/12 Portrayals of race

***Reading due today:***

- Entman & Rojecki: Advertising Whiteness (pp. 162-181).

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### March 17 – 21, Spring Break

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Monday 3/24 Portrayals of race (cont.)

***Reading due today:***

- Dines & Humez: Different Children, Different Dreams (written by Ellen Seiter, pp. 99-108).

### **Unit three: Audiences**

Wednesday 3/26 Understanding diverse audiences

***Reading due today:***

- Coleman: Black Audiences, Past and Present (written by Catherine Squires, pp. 45-76).

*Midterm exam handed out today*

Monday 3/31 Diverse audiences

***Reading due today:***

- Rodriguez: History of the Hispanic Audience (pp. 25-45).
- Mansfield-Richardson: Asian Americans' use of the Media (pp. 23-26).

- Wednesday 4/2      Effects of portrayals on audiences  
No reading due
- Monday 4/7          Group project workshop  
Divide into groups and choose topic  
*Midterms due*

### **Unit four: The workplace**

#### **Who's producing the images?**

- Wednesday 4/9      Women working in the media  
***Reading due:***
- Reading due: Biagi & Kern-Foxworth: Outing Sexual Harassment (written by Kim Walsh-Childers, Jean Chance, & Kristin Herzog, pp. 172-178).
- Monday 4/14          Gender issues (cont.)  
***Reading due:***
- Aarons and Murphy: Overview (pp. 10-28).  
*Group project proposals due*
- Wednesday 4/16      Minorities working in the media
- Cottle: The Paradox of African American Journalists (written by Clint C. Wilson II, pp. 85-99).
- Monday 4/21          Minority media workers (cont.)
- Mansfield-Richardson: Asian Americans in the Media Workforce (pp. 27-39).
- Wednesday 4/23      Views from the field: A roundtable of media professionals  
*Response paper No. 3 due.*

### **Unit five: Student projects**

- Monday 4/28          Group work on research projects
- Wednesday 4/30      Group work on research projects
- Monday 5/5            Presentation of group projects (groups 1-4)
- Monday 5/12          Presentation of group projects (groups 5-8)  
*Note: This session is from 9:45 to 11:45 a.m., the final exam time for the class. **Group papers due in at the start of this session.***