

**SPEECH COMMUNICATION 496
RACE AND THE MASS MEDIA**

Spring 2008

Tu & Th 11:00 am - 12:20 pm

130 Lincoln Hall

Professor

Professor T. Dixon, Ph.D.

125 Lincoln Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00 pm and by appointment

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Course Description

This course presents an overview of racial stereotypes in the mass media and the effects of stereotypical imagery on viewers. We will discuss the structural and social origins of stereotypic media from multiple perspectives. However, the majority of the course will focus on published scholarship that systematically assesses the content and effects of racial representations from a social scientific perspective. Much of the course will focus on the portrayal of African Americans. Intersections between race, ethnicity, class, and gender will also be explored.

Required Texts

The readings will be available electronically both through our class web site on Illinois Compass and through the library's electronic reserves.

Course Requirements

The course is designed around class meetings (two per week) and readings (one course pack/electronic reader). There are three non-cumulative exams involving multiple-choice questions and short answers. In addition, students are expected to attend class regularly, and they are required to write one paper, 6-8 pages for undergraduates and 10-12 pages in length for graduates.

Course Policies

Paper assignments are due on the designated date at the beginning of class. **As soon as class ends, a paper not turned in is considered late. Late papers will be marked down 5 points per day.** (If left in the professor's box after the deadline, papers are marked down based upon the day that the professor receives the paper). **Do not slide your paper underneath the Professor's door as it may get lost!** All exams are to be taken on the designated exam dates. No make-up exams are allowed except in the case of **an extreme emergency**. In the rare event that an emergency arises, it is the student's responsibility to: (1) inform the instructor prior to the scheduled due date or exam time, and (2) provide the instructor with *written documentation* of the emergency (e.g., medical note from a certified physician). *Examples of events that do not qualify as emergencies include: transportation problems, conflict with work schedule, important family vacation, or computer problems.* Reading assignments should be completed before class on the day assigned. If you are a student with a disability and would like to discuss special academic accommodations, please contact the instructor during his office hours or via email at the beginning of the semester.

Course Grading

Students can earn a total of 500 points in this class. Please note that no points are awarded for pleading you “do not test well” or that you “really need” a higher grade. The points are distributed as follows:

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Final Paper	100 points
Class Participation:	100 points
Includes Attendance	50 points
Includes Response Papers	50 points

Course grades are based on the following percentages out to two decimal places:

A+	97.00%	C+	76.00%
A	93.00%	C	73.00%
A-	90.00%	C-	70.00%
B+	86.00%	D+	66.00%
B	83.00%	D	63.00%
B-	80.00%	D-	60.00%

Course grades are curved in the following manner. Each student is given a “grade boost” on each assignment equal to the difference between the highest score achieved by an undergraduate on the assignment and a perfect score on that assignment. For example, if the highest point total achieved by an undergraduate on Exam 1 is 90 out of 100, each student in the class would receive a “grade boost” of 10 points. Following this grade adjustment, **percentages, points, and grades are not rounded up any further.**

Exams

The exams typically consist of 30-35 multiple choice questions (worth 60-70 points) and 6-10 short answer style questions (worth 30-40 points). The exams are **NOT** cumulative. The last exam is given on the last day of class.

Attendance, Class Participation, and Response Paragraphs

Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to sign a daily roll sheet that will stand as the official record of attendance. Students who do not sign the roll sheet will not be able to appeal their attendance grades. **Whether or not you miss class for a legitimate or illegitimate reason, students will be held responsible for material presented in class.** The instructor encourages students to collaborate honestly and work together to catch up on any missed material. **THE PROFESSOR DOES NOT PROVIDE HIS COMPLETE LECTURE NOTES TO STUDENTS WHO MISS CLASS – REGARDLESS OF THE REASON FOR THE ABSENCE.** Missing any class may adversely affect your participation grade. Missing more than 6 classes is grounds for failure of the course.

Attendance (undergraduate and graduate students). This is a discussion based course. Class discussion is strongly encouraged and all relevant questions and comments, time permitting, are welcome. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings and give their perspective regarding the topics covered in lecture on a daily basis. Students should be prepared to contribute their own ideas, raise issues, and ask informed questions. **Students are expected to complete the readings before class and actively participate in class discussion. This class will not work if you do not read and share your observations.** Your participation grade will be partly based on your attendance. Students will receive two points for each class attended. **Students who are late or who leave early will have their attendance points deducted.**

Response paragraphs (undergraduate and graduate students). A second part of your participation grade will be based on **short (no more than a paragraph or half-page at the most)** response papers due at the beginning of each class. As you may recall from grammar school, at the minimum a paragraph consists of at least 3 sentences. The paragraphs **must** be typed in a 12-point font, double-spaced, with one inch margins all the way around. All students **must use a separate cover page** that includes: (1) your first and last name, (2) course title/number, (3) generic assignment description (e.g., “Response paper – Topic or theme”), and (4) date. This cover page **MUST** be **stapled** to the paragraph. **There should be no further references to the student’s identity throughout the assignment. Failure to follow this protocol will lead to a zero on the assignment.** All response paragraphs should include a brief summary **AND** address two or more of the following questions: 1) What are the implications of the conclusions reached by the authors?, 2) What are the flaws with the studies?, 3) Are you convinced?, 4) What else would you like to know before you became convinced?, 5) What questions occur to you as you read? These paragraphs are designed to interrogate the readings and provoke discussion among class members. If you will not be in class you can email them **PRIOR TO** class, not after. These paragraphs will form the second half of your participation grade. Students will receive two points for each completed response paragraph. **Late response paragraphs will be marked down 1 point per day.** Students who enroll in the class after

the first class session will have one grace class period with which to make-up prior response papers.

Abstracts (graduate students only). In addition to the response paragraphs, graduate students are also expected to bring a one-page, typed abstract (see abstracting handout) of an outside study that compliments the day's assigned reading. They should attach this summary to a copy of the article. Graduate students may email PDF versions of the article and/or their abstracts before class if they wish.

Tardiness and Etiquette

Please be on time. Attendance will be taken daily in the form of a sign-in sheet. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet. At the end of the semester I will not accept "I was there but I forgot to sign the attendance sheet." It is required that each student show up for each class on time and remain until the end of the class. When you arrive late, you may miss valuable information and disrupt the class. **If you are tardy and/or leave early three times, I will count this as one full absence. For the record a tardiness penalty will be assessed if a student arrives after the attendance sheet has already been distributed. Early dismissal is leaving anytime before the professor dismisses the class.**

This class shall maintain professional language use. Sexism, ageism, racism, homophobia, disrespect toward religion or any other affiliation will not be tolerated. It is important that this class becomes a comfortable place for everyone. Let us strive to use language that is inclusive of all people. Please keep a level of respect and decorum. This includes not talking or reading materials during class lecture or presentations. All **two-way pagers** and **cellular phones** must be **turned off** during class at ALL times. Feel free to bring soda, coffee, or water to class, but please do not eat during class.

Presentation of All Coursework

All assignments **MUST** be typed in 12-point fonts, double spaced with 1 inch margins. **I do not accept handwritten assignments.** Please note campus printers are not always available at the last minute. My best advice: Everything takes longer than you think it will. Plan accordingly. All work for this class must be properly labeled. Every assignment must have a **separate** cover page that includes: (1) your first and last name, (2) course title/number, (3) generic assignment description (e.g., "Response paper - Topic"), and (4) date. No other references should be made to the student's identity throughout the rest of the paper. In addition, all of your pages should be numbered with the exception of your title page. **All of your work must be stapled, not paper-clipped. Failure to follow this protocol will lead to a zero on whatever assignment you seek to turn in.**

Writing tips. Remember that grammar and structure always matter. You should always read over your own paper aloud to catch errors. In addition, consider reading over your own paper aloud backwards as well. Finally, have a friend read your paper or go to the Writer's Workshop to get more help. I often find run-on sentences in work that is turned in. Recall that in most cases, more than three lines is a run-on sentence. Do your best to purge your papers of these. In addition, do not use any contractions or informal language in your papers. You should always try to use third person when writing your prose. Finally, a paragraph should run no longer than a half page.

Office Hours & Consultations

I am happy to meet with students during my office hours. I prefer face to face communication with all students during office hours, and I strongly encourage my students to attend office hours in order to deal with any issues regarding their performance in class. If you are unable to meet with me during my regular office hours, then you may make an appointment. Please do not wait until the night before an assignment is due to realize that you are not quite certain of what is expected. I can also be reached by email, but I do not always respond immediately. **I do my best to answer all of my emails within a 24 hour period.**

Web Site

Students are required to check the web site for this course accessible via Illinois Compass on a regular basis for important announcements as well as to gain access to review materials and study aids. These study aids include a “partial” class notes packet. The professor will proceed in class under the assumption that students have downloaded the partial notes. **Students who choose not to use the partial notes are responsible for keeping up in class with students who do download the notes.** Most importantly, students must contact the cites help desk with any technical difficulties they have using Illinois Compass or the course E-reserves at <http://www.cites.uiuc.edu/help/> or (217) 244-7000. **Keep in mind that students are responsible for completing all assignments on time regardless of any technical difficulties accessing course materials online.** My advice is to download and print everything in advance before you need it.

Extra Credit

Students may receive up to 8 points of extra credit for participation in qualified research projects (1 point for every half hour). However, there is no guarantee that such extra credit projects will be conducted. After a study is completed, participation points will be posted on the web. The instructor will only give credit to those students identified by the researcher as having completed the study. In addition, students may also receive extra credit by undertaking one of two eligible extra credit activities. Each of these papers is worth 2 points.

Application Extra Credit Assignment: These are short reflection papers in which you attempt to think about a concept or set of concepts from the class that we have discussed. You then apply the concept to something you have seen in the media. The paper must explain the concept and explain how what you have seen applies to the concept. It should be no longer than a few pages. I would invite you to bring in a videotape and share what you find with the class, although this is NOT required in order to receive the points. As usual, the assignment should adhere to the requirements of the course including the use of a cover/title page, and utilization of appropriate grammar. This assignment **MUST** differ from your final paper topic. **The last day to turn in this assignment is April 22.**

Article Summary Extra Credit: You can also write additional discussion papers based on peer reviewed journal articles that relate to any topic discussed in class including priming, racial stereotypes, gender stereotypes, homophobia, framing, cultivation, or agenda setting. The paper must follow the format of your response paragraphs described above. The article chosen for this assignment **MUST** come from a peer reviewed journal.

You must attach a copy of the first page of your article to this paper. If you do not know whether the article you wish to use is peer-reviewed, please check with a librarian. **The last day to turn in this assignment is April 22.**

Academic Integrity

It is the responsibility of the *student* to make her/himself aware of the standards of academic integrity. Students are encouraged to inform themselves of the University of Illinois' "Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students, Rule 33, On Academic Integrity" which can be found at:

http://www.uiuc.edu/admin_manual/code/rule_33.html. This document describes and gives examples of violations of academic integrity. Students are held to these regulations regardless of whether they have read them. Plagiarized material submitted in this course will be penalized based on the rules and regulations outlined in the student code. Generally, when you submit work in this course, you are indicating that it is YOUR work. Copying another's work wholesale is cheating and is only one kind of plagiarism. For example, plagiarism can be simply drawing on another's ideas without giving proper credit. For this course, credit should be given in the form described in the **5th Edition of the American Psychological Association's Manual of Style**.

Grading Appeals

Students **must** submit all grading appeals in writing, and they must follow all of the rules in the current guidelines precisely or their grade appeal cannot be processed. Appeals are typically more successful if they are made within one week of receiving the grade being contested.

Exams: Students are required to first review their exam performance in office hours with the professor. If students continue to feel that there is a flaw with their grade, they can then submit their concerns to the professor in writing.

Papers: Students must first review their paper feedback for at least 24 hours after receiving their graded papers. Following this review, if students still feel they have a grievance, they may then discuss their paper with the professor. If the students continue to feel that the grade is flawed, they may submit a re-grade to the professor. A re-grade requires a submission of three things: 1) An explanation of why the paper should be re-graded (please include your name and email address), 2) A copy of the original paper, and 3) A new clean copy of the paper. The professor reviews all re-grade requests and grades can either go up or down. Whichever grade is attached to the paper after this re-evaluation is final.

***Deadline:* All appeals (exams and papers) must be submitted (along with student's email address) no later than 5 p.m. the day after the third exam. No appeals will be heard or reviewed after this time.**

SPEECH COMMUNICATION 496
Spring, 2008
SCHEDULE & READINGS – MAJOR Due dates in bold

Tu 1/15 Introduction to the Course

Th 1/17 No class

Do the media really contribute to our notions of race? Is there still a race problem?

In this introductory section, we explore critics and scholars who identify race as a continuing issue in America and the media as culprits in effecting race relations.

Tu 1/22 Videoscreening of *Ethnic Notions* (Race as woven into American culture)
Reading: Jhally, S., & Lewis, J. (1992). *Enlightened racism: The Cosby Show, audiences, and the American Dream*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (Chapter 6, pp. 93-111 & Chapter 7, pp. 113-129).

Th 1/24 Theme: *Whiteness and racism: Does stereotyping persist?*
Reading: Lipsitz, G. (1998). *The possessive investment in whiteness: How white people profit from identity politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (Chapter 1, pp. 1-23).

Laying a Theoretical Foundation – Stereotypes: How do we know them when we see them?

In this section, we overview social psychological theories that may help us understand the content and effects of stereotypes in the mass media.

Tu 1/29 Theme: *What do we know about media and race?*
Reading: Harris, R. J. (1999). *A cognitive psychology of mass communication: Third edition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (Chapter 3, pp. 41-70).

Th 1/31 Theme: *Why Schema theory?*
Reading: Wicks, R. H. (1992). Schema theory and measurement in mass communication research: Theoretical and methodological issues in news information processing. In S. A. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication yearbook* (Vol. 15, pp. 115-145). Newbury Park: Sage.

Entertainment Television and Stereotypes: Content 1

In this section, we attempt to provide an overview of work that has focused on entertainment images of people of color

Tu 2/5 Theme: *The inevitability of stereotypes*
Reading: Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 56, 5-18.

Th 2/7 Theme: *A typology for understanding entertainment images*
Reading : Gray, H. (1995). *Watching race: Television and the struggle for "Blackness"*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 5, pp. 70-92)

Entertainment Television and Stereotypes: Content 2

In this section, we attempt to provide an overview of work that has focused on entertainment images of people of color

Tu 2/12 Theme: *Reality and Fantasy – Part I*
Reading: Oliver, M. B. (1994). Portrayals of crime, race, and aggression in "reality-based" police shows: A content analysis. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 38(2), 179-192.

Th 2/14 Theme: *Reality and Fantasy – Part II*
Reading: Mastro, D. E., & Greenberg, B. S. (2000). The portrayal of racial minorities on prime time television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44(4), 690-703.

Tu 2/19 EXAM REVIEW/WRAP-UP

Th 2/21 EXAM 1

Entertainment Television and Stereotypes: Effects

In this section, we attempt to provide an overview of work that has focused on the effects of entertainment images of people of color on viewers

- Tu 2/26 Theme: *The Effects of Situation Comedy Segregation*
Reading: Ford, T. E. (1997). Effects of stereotypical television portrayals of African-Americans on person perception. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60(3), 266-275.
- Th 2/28 Theme: *Culpability and Responsibility*
Reading: Power, J. G., Murphy, S. T., & Coover, G. (1996). Priming prejudice: How stereotypes and counter-stereotypes influence attribution of responsibility and credibility among ingroups and outgroups. *Human Communication Research*, 23, 36-58.

News Imagery and People of Color

This section of the course explores the content and effects of television news depictions of racial stereotypes, particularly those dealing with criminality..

- Tu 3/4 **Final Paper Review I**
Theme: *The criminal disposition of Blacks*
Reading: Dixon, T. L., & Linz, D. (2000). Overrepresentation and underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as lawbreakers on television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 131-154.
- Th 3/6 **Final Paper Review II**
Theme: *The disappearance of Latinos and Native Americans*
Reading: Heider, D. (2000). *White news: Why local news programs don't cover people of color*. NJ: Erlbaum. (Chapter 2, pp. 32-52).
- Tu 3/11 **PAPER DUE**
Theme: *Fear of crime, Blacks*
Reading: Gilliam, F., & Iyengar, S. (2000). Prime suspects: The influence of local television news on the viewing public. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), 560-573.
- Th 3/13 Theme: *He was a Black guy...*
Reading: Oliver, M. B. (1999). Caucasian viewers' memory of Black and White criminal suspects in the news. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 46-60.

Tu 3/18 SPRING BREAK

Th 3/20 SPRING BREAK

Tu 3/25 EXAM REVIEW/WRAP-UP

Th 3/27 EXAM 2

Political Decision-Making

This section focuses on the ways in which politics are effected by the racialization of media depictions.

Tu 4/1 Theme: *Political Issues and Race*
Reading: Gilens, M. (1999). *Why Americans hate welfare: Race, media and the politics of antipoverty policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 5, pp. 102-132).

Th 4/3 Theme: *Political Campaigns, Race, and responsibility*
Reading: Valentino, N. (1999). Crime news and the priming of racial attitudes during evaluations of the president. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 63, 293-320.

Race, Musical Expression, Ethnic Identity and Racialized Realities

This section focuses on the relationship between musical expression, racism, and cultural identity.

Tu 4/8 Theme: *Rap Music As Cultural Expression*
Reading: Dixon, T. L., & Linz, D. (1997). Obscenity law and sexually explicit rap music: Understanding the effects of sex, attitudes, and beliefs. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 25(3), 217-241.

Th 4/10 Theme: *Rap is Unfairly Stereotyped*
Reading: Fried, C. B. (1996). Bad rap for rap: Bias in reactions to music lyrics. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 26, 2135-2146.

Tu 4/15 Theme: *Rap is destructive to Blacks*
Reading: Johnson, J. D., Jackson, L. A., & Gatto, L. (1995). Violent attitudes and deferred academic aspirations: Deleterious effects of exposure to rap music. *Basic & Applied Social Psychology*, 16(1-2), 27-41.

Counter-stereotyping and Improving Race Relations

In this final section of the course we attempt to discuss how media might be used to break down racial barriers and improve race relations.

- Th 4/17 Theme: *Why can't we just get along?*
Reading: Entman, R. M., & Rojecki, A. (2000). *The black image in the white mind: Media and race in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 2, pp. 16-45).
- Tu 4/22 Theme: *Hit them hard*
Reading: Greenberg, B. S. (1988). Some uncommon television images and the drench hypothesis. *Applied Social Psychology Annual: Special Issue: Television as a social issue*, 8, 88-102.
- Th 4/24 **EXAM REVIEW/WRAP-UP**
- Tu 4/29 **EXAM 3**