

COMM 3357: Diversity and Mass Media
SPRING 2016 – @ HUM 312
Monday/Wednesday 11:00 p.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Dr. Hazel J. Cole (<http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty.html>)

Office Hours: MW 8:30-9:30 and 12:30-1:30 p.m.

TR 10:00-12:30

Humanities 152 and/or by appointment

Contact: 678-839-4937 or email me via CourseDen preferably

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines some of the relationships between the media in the U. S. and the **social constructions of race and gender**. Four related concerns are at the heart of many of these relationships: 1) media **representations** of race and gender, 2) **audience interpretations** of media portrayals, 3) **critical analyses** of media culture and media content, and 4) what to do about these concerns: **media literacy, activism, and advocacy**. Students will also be introduced to some basic tools and techniques for evaluating, analyzing, and understanding these relationships as they are communicated through mass media.

Course topics include (but are not limited to):

- Race and gender as social constructions
- Media stereotypes in television and film
- Representations of masculinity and femininity
- Sexual Orientation in the Media
- Feminist Media Studies
- Music Videos
- Advertising & Beauty
- Hip-Hop Culture

Classes will consist of:

- Lectures
- Video presentations
- Small and large group discussions
- Group and individual projects
- Presentations by students

Course Objectives/Outcomes:

- Learn to critically examine media representations and their role in shaping, reinforcing, or challenging our concepts of race and gender.
- Acquire analytical skills to explore race and gender issues in media organizations and understand diverse audiences' responses to media representations.
- Become familiar with selected approaches used to study media, gender, and race.
- Develop the ability to speak and write honestly and sensitively about race and gender.

- Enhance oral and written communication skills; develop analytical thinking and critical reading proficiencies.
- Develop a greater appreciation of the media's cultural influence and ultimately, become more media literate.

REQUIRED READING MATERIAL

Textbook: Lind, R. A. (2010). *Race/Gender/Media: Considering diversity across audiences, content, and producers*. (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Other readings/video content as assigned and posted on CourseDen (D2L).

COMPUTING AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Students are required to maintain an active computer account for electronic mail and other computing services. Most course materials will be available via the Internet on CourseDen (D2L). Technical assistance for students is available at the UWG|Online Helpdesk, accessible via email at online@westga.edu, and by telephone at 678-839-6248 (M-F 8-5pm). Regularly accessing and reading electronically distributed course information is important for success in the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

GROUND RULES

Active and meaningful class participation is essential to making this course a successful and rewarding experience. So is respect for the opinions of others. The topics addressed in this course may be sensitive. There should be a calm and rational exchange of ideas and views even though we may strongly disagree. This course is designed to take you outside your comfort zone and will do so many times. It will also offer constructive ways to deal with and overcome your discomfort. Please, keep an open mind, always.

Helpful tips:

- Listen to each other with respect. Do not interrupt.
- Use "I" statements: Speak your own truth. Express only your own thoughts, reactions, feelings, and experiences, not those of others.
- Do not debate someone else's experience. If someone says _____ happened to him or her, do not argue with someone's personal experience.

This course includes the following requirements:

1. **Attend class on a consistent basis:** Attendance will be taken every class meeting.
2. **Participate in class discussions:** Although this class is comprised of a fairly large number of students, it will include open class discussions and group presentations. Thus, you are expected to attend and participate in these discussions.
3. **Complete the assigned readings** for the week they are assigned (listed) on the Weekly Schedule. Do not get behind in the readings as the pace and structure of the course

make it difficult to "catch up." You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding of the readings in class discussions and online quizzes. Further, many of the lecture-discussions will supplement (not repeat) the assigned readings and thus presume that you already have read the material. **In short, you must read for this class!**

- I enjoy teaching this course and place a high value on listening to students' opinions on race and gender issues regardless of what these opinions might be. One goal in this course should be to expand your ideas and think openly and critically about the subject matter.
- In this course we will occasionally discuss sensitive material. We must all respect ourselves as well as one another in these discussions. This does not mean that we will always agree with one another and in that event it is OK to agree to disagree. That is what education is all about.
- In this discussion-based course on the social construction of race and gender, students learn from each other and hopefully learn to understand and appreciate different perspectives. Learning is a collaborative and social experience and therefore you owe it to your classmates to come and make your contribution to their learning.
- Since many of the race and gender issues we will discuss in class may affect you personally, I hope that you are prepared to be challenged and to challenge the readings. I do not personally endorse each and every reading I have assigned. Remember that the views you read are those of the authors' and they do not necessarily reflect my own views. If you do not want to express some opinions in class, I invite you to come to my office to talk with me one-on-one.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation/Attendance (10 points)

Final Group Project: Diversity in Advertising/Branding Comparative Analysis: (100 points)

You will write a 5-6 page analysis of two advertisements for the same product in a mainstream publication AND an ethnic publication. More details will be handed out in class. Please do not use make-up ads, unless you are able to demonstrate specifically a distinct difference in product/model/target audience and messaging. Otherwise, make-up ads are off limits. Hint: you probably don't want to use make up ads. To make the paper cohesive, it is imperative that you work together. Each group will give a 10-15-minute in-class presentation on its findings and conclusions. A handout will be provided to describe the assignment in detail.

Soundtrack Assignment: Since we cover entertainment and diversity in music, you will prepare a 3-4page paper on songs that make up the soundtrack of your life. You will present 10 minutes in class on your selections and why you chose those to represent you. **(100 points).**

Exams (2 @ 100 points ea.)

Students will complete one exam that may include multiple choice, T/F, short answer and fill in the blank questions. Dates are noted on course schedule. A study guide will be provided.

Make-up Work

There will be NO make-up of exams or assignments, unless there is documented evidence of an emergency or circumstance, which has been approved by the professor. Make up exams must be completed with a week and it is the student's responsibility to set up the make-up exam. This is constituted on an individual basis.

Late assignment policy

Assignments are due at the beginning of class. "Late" means that you do not have your work to turn in at the time it is collected in class. If you miss turning in an assignment on time, you will receive 10 points off, even if it is turned in on the same day. Hint: If you forgot your work in your car, in your room, etc., is still considered late and points are taken off.

If your work is turned in the next day or any day after, you will receive an additional 10 points off for every day it is late. (For example, if your work is due on Tuesday and you turn it in on Wednesday, subtract 20 points).

Grading Criteria

Student assignments are evaluated on the basis of: (1) content, (2) clarity of expression, (3) extent of research, (4) analysis of material, (5) professional appearance materials and (6) quality of writing. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. **Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is documented evidence (surgery, funeral of family member, doctor's excuse, etc.).** Exams and quizzes will cover material from the textbook, lectures, and any material covered in class.

You earn your grade. Grades are evaluations of your performance on the assignments in this course. If your grade is a one point below, you will be not rounded to the next highest grade. For example, 357 points is considered a B.

Exams (2)	=	200 points
Participation (Attendance)	=	10 points
Don't Judge paper		100 points
Soundtrack assignment/Music		90 points

Total		400 points
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Grading Scale

A = 400-358 (90-100%)

B = 357-318 (80-89%)

C = 278-317 (70-79%)

D = 277-238 (60-69)

F = below 238 (below 60%)

FINAL GRADES will be entered in CourseDen by the university's deadline.

The professor will show a variety of media examples presented for critical analysis in the course. This is your opportunity to learn about mass media and mass communications. Your participation allows for stimulating discussions based on your own experiences as consumers, analysts and/or creator-contributors of the various media we'll be studying. Your participation is key to both your success as a student (now and beyond) and the success of the class as a whole. Many of the examples presented in class may appear on the exams. It will be very difficult to successfully pass this course without attending it.

I want you to also ask questions of me, and to engage your peers in discussions about the material and our roles as members in a media-saturated society. Bottom line: Learning is a reciprocal process.

The professor makes every effort to teach toward the exams given in the class. Furthermore this class is designed for student engagement and discussion of the course content. This will be a very interesting learning experience if you take the class seriously.

COURSE POLICIES

University Policies

The following link contains the common language for ADA, the email policy, the credit hour policy, and the Honor Code. You are responsible for reading and understanding the policies set forth in the link.

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Classroom Etiquette

Exercising personal freedom is an appealing part of college life. In order to create an atmosphere where individual expression and social interchange are both respected, please observe the following: (1) address each other with respect; (2) contribute to discussions, don't dominate them; (3) stay focused on the topic being discussed.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university rules. **The University of West Georgia Student conduct Code defines academic dishonesty as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating or allowing academic dishonesty in any academic exercise.** Basically, if you are caught cheating, borrowing information without proper citation, plagiarizing in any way, you will FAIL this course and you may be subject to expulsion from the university as well as face whatever disciplinary sanction(s) the university policy states.

Equal Opportunity Statement

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or

otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

Affirmative Action Statement

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

Cell Phones and Laptops

Please keep your cell phones and other devices on “silent” AND put them away while in class. This cuts down on distractions from ring tones, messages and texting in class. If you’re seen violating this policy, you may be asked to leave the class. You can use your laptop to take notes in class. However, if you are caught surfing the web (which is distracting to your classmates) you will not have the privilege to use your laptop again in class.

MY ROLE

...goes beyond presenting course material and expectations of you to comprehend. I will endeavor to help guide you in understanding mass media, concepts, and provide examples and context, and to facilitate and direct in-class discussion.

Contacting Me

I look forward to learning more about you and what you would like to get out of this course. Anytime you need to get in touch with me, please call me at the office 678-839-4937, chat with me online, or send me an email via D2L (preferred). **Please do NOT use my westga account unless I specifically ask you to do so.** I look forward to working with you this semester.

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COM 3357 TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

(syllabus may be changed as necessary through the semester)

Note: Other topics and readings are subject to change, especially to accommodate current events and guest speaker schedules. Additional readings and assignments may be added as we go.

Criteria for All Writing Assignments: Proper grammar and spelling are expected. APA Style will be the standard for papers for citing print and electronic sources used in research. Sloppy work will automatically receive 10 points off in addition to other errors. Please use Times New Roman 12 point, double spaced, and if attaching information to hand in, all items must be stapled together and have your name of all items. Most assignments will be uploaded to Dropbox with a deadline date, unless otherwise noted.

Module One – Understanding Media Effects and Images

Week 1 and 2

(Jan 11, 13 and (Jan 18, 20)

Overview of the Course

Introductions and Media Effects

(Read Chapters 1; 2-2.1)

Media Effects, Self –Assessment (“I Am” Exercise)

(Read Chapters 2.2, 2.4)

Week 3

(Jan 25,27)

Audience Studies

(Read Chapters 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7)

Week 4

(Feb 1, 3)

Analyzing Media Texts

Readings (6.2, 6.4, 6.8)

Race and Media Images (Stereotypes)

Documentary: Ethnic Notions

Week 5

(Feb 8, 10)

Discuss Ethnic Notions and Readings from Chapters 6.2, 6.4, 6.8

Diversity assignment – in class

Race/Media exercises in discovery (locate images of stereotypes and be prepared to discuss in class with examples)

Module Two -- Stereotypes in Mass Media

Week 6
(Feb 15,17) Watch a film on contemporary stereotyping; discuss its implications for race, gender and class in society

Week 7
(Feb 22, 24) Media and Body Image
Media/Body Image (Read Chapter 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 5.8, 5.9)
Documentary: Killing Us Softly

Week 8
(Feb 29 and March 2) **Exam 1 on Feb 29 (Bring scantron)**
March 2 **Student papers due and presentations on “Don’t Judge” begin** with Groups 1-3

Week 9
(Mar 7, 9) Groups 4-6 on March 7 and Groups 7-9 on March 9

Week 10
(Mar 13- 19) Spring Break – No Classes

Module Three – Entertainment/Pop Culture, Gender Identity, and Music

Week 11
(March 21, 23) Gender/ Identity
(Read Chapters 5.3, 7.6, 8.1, 8.4, 9.2)
Discuss Modern Family and other TV shows and characters

Week 12
(Mar 28, 30) Entertainment
Media images/Music Videos, Music History & Diversity (Read Ch. 7.4, 7.7)
Documentary: Dreamworlds

Week 13
(April 4, 6) **Exam 2 (April 6) bring scantron**
Music history, diversity of genres, song lyrics and music video images

Week 14
(April 11, 13) **Soundtrack of My Life paper and presentations due**

Week 15
(April 11, 13) **Soundtrack of My Life paper and presentations**

Week 16
(April 18, 20) **Soundtrack presentations continued**

April 25 – 11:00 am -1:30 pm Wrap up