

Sociology 373: Sociology of Mass Media
11:30-12:20 MWF
Avery 119
Spring 2019

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Office Hours: Monday 2:00-4:00, Thursday 2:00-4:00, and by Appointment

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:

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| Goal | 1 | Students will become more aware of the media content that they consume. |
| Assessment | 1 | The journal assignment will require students to document the types of media content that they consume and link them to the readings and lecture. Regular class discussion will also require students to make connections between class and personal media consumption. |
| Goal | 2 | Students will learn how to analyze representations of race, class, and gender in mass media. |
| Assessment | 2 | Students will analyze representations of race, class, and gender in the film <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> (2004) for the media analysis paper. Students will also analyze these representations in regular class discussion. |
| Goal 3 | | Students will have a mastery of core concepts from class and readings. |
| Assessment | 3 | Students will demonstrate their mastery of core concepts in class discussion, essay exams, the journal assignment, and the media |

analysis paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS

(1) Gail Dines and Jean Humez (2018). *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*. 5th Edition. Readings from this book are labeled *GRC* in the syllabus.

(2) *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.

ASSESSMENTS

Participation	20%
Media Journal	5%
Media Analysis Paper	25%
Exam I	25%
Exam II	25%

Participation

Although I will lecture throughout the semester, participation is an important part of this class. Discussion makes the class more interesting, helps us to understand the material better, and helps tailor the class to the students in class. Each day of class will be given a participation grade, and your overall participation grade for the semester will be the average of these scores.

Participation Grading Rubric

0-50%	Did Not Attend Class Used Electronic Device in Class (e.g., phones, computers) Chatting Distracting or Disrespectful Behavior (e.g., napping) Did Not Speak in Group Work/Group Discussion
85% (Max)	Attended Class, Engaged, But Did Not Speak
86-100 (Max)	Comments Engage with Class Readings, Materials, or Discussion

Media Journal

The Media Journal is an assignment that provides with a chance for self-reflection and analysis of your media consumption habits. In this assignment, you must document 4 different types of media content that you watched (this can be across 1-3 weeks) and compare and contrast what you saw with our readings or discussions in class. Each example should be given a paragraph and provide enough details about the particular example (e.g., 4-8 sentences). Be sure to write on media you actually consumed and are interpreting, rather than simply describing someone else’s reaction to a media text. An example of how to do the Media Journal is provided on Canvas.

Midterms

We will have two midterms in the class. Both will be take-home essay exams.

Media Analysis Paper

This analytical paper gives you the opportunity to apply concepts from class (primarily gender and race) to *Million Dollar Baby* (be sure you secure a copy).

ELECTRONIC POLICY

Thanks in advance for doing your part to improve class discussion, attention span, etiquette, and participation grades by not using an electronic during class. Please note that using an electronic device in class will result in a 50% in your participation grade for that day on the first violation, and a 0% on subsequent violations.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism, Cheating, or Recycling a Past Paper will result in a zero on that paper.

GRADE APPEALS

Wait at least 24 hours. Provide a written statement explaining why you think you have been graded unfairly. Any grade complaint that references how hard you worked or studied will be rejected. I reserve the right to keep your grade the same or lower it. All appeals of grades must be made within 5 days following the day the assignment was returned.

LATE POLICY

Assignments (including Exams) will be docked 2 point points for each late interval. The example to the right assumes that the assignment was due by Noon.

Paper Submitted (Due by Noon in Example)	Cumulative Point Loss
12:59 PM	No Point Loss
1:01 PM	2 Points
2:01 PM	4 Points
3:01 PM	6 Points
1:01 PM (Next Day)	48 Points

GRADING KEY

97-100 = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	0-59 = F
93-96 = A	84-86 = B	74-76 = C	64-66 = D	
90-92 = A-	80-83 = B-	70-73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

1/7 M *INTRODUCTION*

1/9 W *OT: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MASS MEDIA*
 Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin (2009). Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, and Classical Hollywood (309-328). *America on Film*.

- 1/11 F GRC: Tristan Booth. Queering *Queer Eye* (409-418).
- 1/14 M GRC: Kelly Kessler. Showtime Thinks, Therefore I Am (600-609).
- 1/16 W GRC: Kirsty Fairclough. Nothing Less than Perfect (265-270).
- 1/18 F GRC: Victoria Collins and Diane Carmody. Deadly Love (319-326).
GRC: Anne Petersen. That Teenage Feeling: *Twilight*, Fantasy, and Feminist Readers (342-353).
- 1/21 M **MLK Day—No Class**
- 1/23 W GRC: Andrea Braithwaite. It's About Ethics in Games Journalism (536-543)?
OT: Erik Kain (2016). No, Rey From 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' Is Not a Mary Sue.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2016/01/04/no-rey-from-star-wars-the-force-awakens-is-not-a-mary-sue/#688fb6fa1b9a>
OT: IDRlabs (2018) Is Luke a Mary Sue?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xem4yyx6wok>
- 1/25 F OT: Jeffrey Brown (2015). Girl Revolutionaries (167-196). *Beyond Bombshells*.
- 1/28 M OT: Kimberly Walsh, Elfriede Fürsich, and Bonnie Jefferson (2008). *Beauty and the Patriarchal Beast*. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, **36**, 123-132.
- 1/31 W OT: Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin (2009). Masculinity in Classical Hollywood Filmmaking (257-277) *America on Film*.
- 2/1 F OT: Gillam and Wooden (2008). Post-Princess Models of Gender: The New Man in Disney/Pixar. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, **36**, 2-8.
- 2/4 M GRC: Jackson Katz. From Rush Limbaugh to Donald Trump (146-152).
MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF RACE AND ETHNICITY
- 2/6 W GRC: Stuart Hall. The Whites of Their Eyes (90-92).
- 2/8 F OT: Charlton McIlwain and Stephen Caliendo (2013). Mitt Romney's Racist Appeals. *American Behavioral Scientist*, **4**, 1-12.
- 2/11 M GRC: "[In]Justice Rolls Down Like Water...Challenging White Supremacy in Media Constructions of Crime and Punishment (217-222).

- 2/13 W *GRC:* Guillermo Rebollo-Gil and Amanda Moras. Black Women and Black Men in Hip Hop Music (209-215)
- 2/15 F *OT:* Emily Drew (2011). Pretending to be “Postracial”: The Spectacularization of Race in Reality TV’s *Survivor*. *Television & New Media*, 12, 326-346.
GRC: *GRC:* Rosemary Pennington. Dissolving the Other (108-115).
- 2/18 M *GRC:* Grace Wang. A Shot at Half Exposure: Asian Americans in Reality TV Shows (457-463).
- 2/20 W *OT:* Elizabeth Hass, Terry Christensen, and Peter Haas (2015). Film and the Politics of Race: The Minority Report (291-311). *Projecting Politics*.
- 2/22 F NO READINGS (WORK ON MIDTERM ESSAY)
Media Journal Due on Canvas by 9:00 AM
- 2/25 M NO READINGS (WORK ON MIDTERM ESSAY)
- 2/26 T MIDTERM ESSAY EXAM DUE ON CANVAS BY 9:00 PM**
- NEWS MEDIA AND POLITICS*
- 2/27 W *OT:* W. Joseph Campbell (2017). Hurricane Katrina and the Myth of Superlative Reporting (197-217). *Getting It Wrong*. 2nd Edition.
- 3/1 F *OT:* Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence, and Steven Livingston (2007). The Semi-Independent Press (46-71). *When the Press Fails*.
- 3/4 M *OT:* Shanto Iyengar (2016). The Media Marketplace (51-89). *Media Politics*.
OT: Damaris Colhoun (April 16, 2015). *BuzzFeed’s Censorship Problem*. *Columbia Journalism Review*.
OT: Matthew Ingram (December 10, 2018). Did *The Washington Post* Pull its Punches on Amazon and USPS? *Columbia Journalism Review*.
https://www.cjr.org/the_new_gatekeepers/washington-post-bezos-amazon.php
- 3/6 W *OT:* Richard Perloff (2018) Examining the Conundrums of Political News Bias (258-283).
OT: Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts (2018). The Fox Diet (145-187). *Network Propaganda*.
OT: Yarimar Bonilla and Jonathan Rosa. #FERGUSON

- 3/8 F OT: *MEDIA REGULATION, NORMS, ROUTINES, AND TRENDS*
Michael Epstein (2004). *Final Cut: The Making and Unmaking of Heaven's Gate*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyeOmPMHRYg>
[15:00-1:15:26]
- 3/11 M OT: Peter 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](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2013/07/hollywood_and_bla_ke_snyder_s_screenwriting_book_save_the_cat.html)
- OT: Lindsay Ellis (2/28/2017). Are Disney Villains Going Extinct?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doQB5d3Gggw>
- OT: Hadley Freeman (2017). From Black Mirror to Stranger Things, Why Do We Keep Going Back to the 1980s? *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/feb/18/stranger-things-why-tv-is-obsessed-with-the-80s>
- 3/13 W OT: Todd Platts (Under Review). "[Zombies] Couldn't Be Done on Network": Producing AMC's *The Walking Dead*.
- 3/15 F GRC: *POLITICAL ECONOMY & CONSUMER CULTURE*
David Croteau and William Hoynes. The Economics of the Media Industry (23-32).
- GRC: John Bellamy Fostre and Robert McChesney. The Internet's Unholy Marriage to Capitalism (37-42).
- 3/18 M **Spring Respite**
3/20 W **Spring Respite**
3/22 F **Spring Respite**
- 3/25 M OT: John Oliver (2017). Net Neutrality II. *Last Week Tonight*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92vuuZt7wak>
- 3/27 W GRC: Jonathan Hardy. Mapping Commercial Intertextuality (279-284).
- 3/29 F GRC: Chris Jordan. Marketing "Reality" to the World: *Survivor*, Post Fordism, and Reality Television (451-456).
- 4/1 M GRC: Richard Butsch. Why Television Sitcoms Kept Re-Creating Male Working Class Buffoons For Decades (442-448)
- GRC: Shannon O'Sullivan. Playing "Redneck" (200-208).

- 4/3 W OT: Jason Bailey (December 9, 2014). How the Death of Mid-Budget Cinema Left a Generation of Iconic Filmmakers MIA. *Flavorwire*.
<http://flavorwire.com/492985/how-the-death-of-mid-budget-cinema-left-a-generation-of-iconic-filmmakers-mia>
- CULTURE, IDEOLOGY, AND MEDIA*
- 4/5 F OT: Phillip Gianos (1998). Movies and the Great Depression (p. 75-103).
 GRC: Michael Lee and Leigh Moscovitz. The “Rich Bitch” (135-145).
- 4/8 M OT: Bradford Wright. (2001). Questioning Authority (226-253). *Comic Book Nation*.
- 4/10 W OT: Ernest Giglio (2005). Picturing Vietnam on Film (201-220). *Here’s Looking at You*.
- 4/12 F OT: Kyle Bishop (2009). Dead Man Still Walking: Explaining the Zombie Renaissance. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, **37**, 16-25.
- 4/15 M OT: Kendall Phillips (2005). *Night of the Living Dead* (81-100). *Projected Fears*.
- 4/17 W OT: Stephen Prince (2009). No End in Sight (281-309). *Firestorm*.
- 4/19 F OT: Ross 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: Graeme Virtue (2017). Death Wish: Is The Bruce Willis Remake An Alt Right Fantasy?
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2017/aug/08/eli-roth-death-wish-remake-alt-right-film-bruce-willis>
- MEDIA EFFECTS AND AUDIENCES*
- 4/22 M OT: Ted Anthony (12/28/2018). Old Favorites, Outdated Attitudes: Can Entertainment Expire?
<https://www.apnews.com/4ebd33ab2629490183763f90862e2977>
- GRC: Michael Morgan and James Shanahan. Television and the Cultivation of Authoritarianism (44-50).
- 4/24 W GRC: Janice Radway. Women Read the Romance (53-60).
- 4/26 F **EXAM ESSAY II DUE BY NOON ON CANVAS**