

MMC 2604 Media, Cultures, and Identity Spring 2022 Syllabus

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2 p.m. or by appointment

Class Time: T (4:05-5 p.m.) & R (4:05-6 p.m.) McClarty Hall C

Course Description

In this course, we will engage in an examination of the role of media in facilitating, challenging, and enabling power dynamics as well as shaping identity in the United States and globally. We will address different types of media but will focus on journalism. More specifically, we will study the constructions of race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and ability in media as well as the conditions of production that enable them.

In addition, we will consider the mass media to be one among many of societal institutions that we encounter daily. Therefore, we will take an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the relationship between media, identity and power. We will explore your individual role and responsibility as a media consumer. Developing cultural awareness and sensitivity toward issues unfamiliar to your own personal experiences is a key component of this course.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Define power dynamics (e.g. cultural, social, and economic privileges) that are visible and invisible in various forms of media.
2. Discuss how course concepts explain real-world media examples by critically examining various forms of media.
3. Apply cultural awareness, sensitivity and empathy while discussing social issues and in professional situations.
4. Analyze how people see themselves and not how we think they see themselves in various forms of media.
5. Analyze how different groups of people are represented in journalism
6. Implement best practices for including diverse perspectives (across fault lines) in journalism.
7. Critique journalism's role in societal evolution

Course Learning Goals & Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. To think critically about social issues regarding the various power dynamics in our society
2. To become an effective consumer and producer of mass media, including journalism, strategic communication and other sub-fields
3. To gain hands-on experience of critically examining and producing media that reinforce and challenge social and political issues
4. To identify how cultural perspectives can influence media

Important Notes!!!

You will encounter ideas and thoughts you do *not* agree with, but understand that this is one of the central purposes of this course. Sometimes, we need to feel uncomfortable in order to step outside of our worlds and enter the realities of others. We seek to be challenged!

Class Principle

EVERYONE in this class demands respect, human dignity and common courtesy. Please exercise this class principle as you engage with your fellow classmates, professor and TAs throughout the semester. I expect no less!

ACEJMC Objectives

In addition to this course's specific objectives, the Journalism School also makes serious efforts to make sure the following goals are embedded across the curriculum:

CORE VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

As a student of the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications, you are expected to be aware of certain core values and competencies. Specifically, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

General Course Requirements

Following Current Events and News: This course is the beginning to your development as a media consumer and producer; thus, it is important that we keep up with news. Therefore, you are required to engage with a wide range of media content in addition to the class readings, documentaries and discussions. Keeping up with current events will allow us to distinguish how different media and their messages are created and inform our own cultural conceptions. Many of our class discussions may be centered on current events; thus, it is essential that you familiarize yourself with various news sources and be able to apply readings to practical situations that are found in the news.

Attendance and Class Participation: You should come to each class prepared, having done the readings/films/podcasts for the week—which will allow us time to engage with the material during class periods. In addition, you should be prepared to answer questions about the readings and share with classmates and the instructor any issues, thoughts and/or perspectives about the course material in a *thoughtful and respectful manner*. Class attendance will be key, as it will affect how successful you are in all other course requirements. Random attendance checks/in-class assignments will happen throughout the semester.

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation.

Students Requiring Accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

If you fail to turn in an assignment, you have a week to turn in the assignment. Five points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. After a week, you will **NOT** receive credit.

Required Texts

Electronic Readings (all other readings available online through Canvas)

Additional short readings (newspaper, magazine, or online articles, etc.) may be assigned during the semester. These will be provided to you either on Canvas or through email (URL links).

Assessments

Weekly Reading Quizzes

Journal Reflections (2)

Major Assignment #1: Media Analysis

Attendance: Low Stakes Mini-Assignments in Class

Two Essay Exams

Extra Credit: 3% toward final grade

A	97 – 100%	Exceptional Achievement
A	94 -- 96.9%	
A-	90 – 93.9%	
B+	87 – 89.9%	
B	83 – 86.9%	Extensive Achievement
B-	80 – 82.9%	
C+	77 – 79.9%	
C	73 – 76.9%	Acceptable Achievement
C-	70 – 72.9%	
D+	67 – 69.9%	Minimal Achievement
D	63 – 66.9%	
D-	60 – 62.9%	
F	Below 60%	Inadequate Achievement

Assignment Details

1) **Weekly Reading Quizzes**

Every week you will be required to complete a quiz on Canvas. The quiz will comprise of 5 multiple-choice questions based on the week's readings and film(s). Questions will require you to understand the main arguments (not specific details) of the week's readings, podcasts and/or films. Quizzes should be taken by Monday at noon. The quiz will be available on Canvas by Friday at 8 p.m. I will drop the lowest two grades.

Aligns with Learning Objective (LO) 1.

2) Journal Reflections (2)

You will be going on a journey this semester. Thus, it's important to document your process and continue to reflect on your growth as a student. You will write three journal reflections throughout the semester. These writing assignments will reflect your own thoughts and experiences with the topics discussed in class. These reflections also will build from one another. You will receive specific questions to answer before each reflection is due, and a rubric will be provided. Each reflection is worth **50 points each**.

Aligns with LO 2.

3) Media Analysis (200 points)

For this writing assignment, you will be provided a range of visual media images and written stories. You will have to choose at least one image and one story (total of 2 media artifacts). You must write two 3-page essays (one for each media artifact) in which you include evidence to support your argument(s). For each essay, you will a) critically analyze these media by highlighting any problematic messages present using evidence from class and b) you will indicate how you would alter, change, and/or edit the media artifacts that you critiqued in the first part. Problematic messages may include any stereotypes, insensitive material, or assumptions. Materials and rubric will be provided via Canvas. Each essay is worth **100 points** (200 in total).

Aligns with LOs 5, 6 and 7.

4) Attendance: Low Stakes Mini-Assignments in Class

Throughout the semester, I'll be taking attendance. Low stakes mini assignments that will help prepare you for take-home essay exams and the critical media analysis assignment will be utilized as a way to document your attendance.

Aligns with LO 2.

5) Two Essay Exams (100 points each)

This semester, you will have three essay exams that will test your engagement with class material. For these essay exams, you will be provided with three questions and you'll have to choose two questions to answer in essay format. One of the broader purposes of this course is to help develop your critical thinking skills! The questions, therefore, are designed to test your ability to make connections across course readings, in-class lectures/activities, and films/podcasts.

Aligns with LO 1, 3, 4, and 7.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction (January 6)

Reading: Perry & Len-Rios, Chapter 1: Conceptual Understanding

Reading: Political Correctness, <http://www.vox.com/2015/1/28/7930845/political-correctness-doesnt-exist>

Watch: Chimamanda Adichie: *The Danger of a Single Story* (in class)

Watch: Explained: Political Correctness (in class)

Week 1 Reading Quiz (syllabus and readings) due by Sunday, January 9th at noon.

Week 2: Context of Media Production and Content (January 11 & 13)

Reading: James Lull, “Hegemony”

Reading: Woods, Chapter 2: Talking Across Difference

Film: *Social Dilemma* (in class)

Week 2 Reading Quiz due by Monday, January 10th at noon.

Journal Reflection #1 due by Friday, January 14th by noon.

The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity

Week 3: An Intro to Thinking about Race (January 18 & 20)

Reading: “A History: The Construction of Race and Racism”

Film: *I Am Not Your Negro* (Kanopy)

Listen: Skin Deep, <http://backstoryradio.org/shows/skin-deep/>

Watch: The First Time (in class), <http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2017/02/us/first-time-i-realized-i-was-black/>

Week 3 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

Week 4: Media Representation and the “Other” (January 25 & 27)

Reading: Horvit & Medvedeva, Chapter 8: Reporting Across Borders

Reading: Garza, Chapter 9: Immigrants and Immigration Reporting the New America

[Film: The Mindy Project \(in class\)](#)

Week 4 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

Week 5: Media Representation and the “Other” (Feb. 1 & 3)

Reading: Alabash & Cunningham, Chapter 3, Who is American?

Reading: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article244408367.html>

Listen: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/11/05/561876519/theres-an-immigration-gap-in-how-latinos-perceive-discrimination>

Film: *Party of Five* (in class)

Film: *Immigration Nation* (in class)

Week 5 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

Week 6: Race and Crime (Feb. 8 & 10)

Reading: Taylor, The Double Standard of Justice

Reading: Perry, Chapter 10: Achieving Excellence in Crime Coverage

Film: *13th* (Netflix)

Film: *The Hate You Give* (in class)

Week 6 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

The Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality

Week 7: Gender and Media Representation (Feb. 15 & 17)

Reading: Len-Rios & Volz, Chapter 5: Gender and the Media

Reading: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/08/11/nonbinary-ancient-medieval-finland/>

Watch: The Changes Everything (Kanopy)

Film: *What were Feminist Thinking?* (in class)

Week 7 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon

Week 8: Objectification, the Male Gaze and Media Representation (Feb. 22 & 24)

Reading: <https://theconversation.com/sexually-objectifying-women-leads-women-to-objectify-themselves-and-harms-emotional-well-being-120762>

Reading: <https://www.girlfriend.com.au/male-gaze-in-film>

Film: *Miss Representation* (Kanopy)

Watch: *Killing Us Softly* (in class)

Week 8 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.
Midterm Exam due on Friday.

Week 9: Queer Studies and Media (March 1 & 3)

Reading: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0185.xml>

Reading: Hicks, Chapter 6: Mass Media and the LGBT Community

Film: *Disclosure* (Netflix)

Film: *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (in class)

Week 9 Reading Quiz due by Wednesday at noon.

Week 10: **SPRING BREAK**

The Social Construction of Class

Week 11: Class Politics and Media (March 15 & 17)

Reading: Thomas & Hendricks, Chapter 4: Making Class Matter

Reading: Deepa Kumar, “Debunking the Myth of a Classless society”

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/10/24/18009856/working-class-income-inequality-randy-bryce-alexandria-ocasio-cortez>

Film: *Parasite* (Kanopy)

Film: *Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class* (in class)

Week 10 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon

Week 12: The Politics of Intersectionality (March 22 & 24)

Reading: Suggs, Jr, Chapter 14: Telling—and Erasing—Diverse Stories in Sports Media

Reading: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>

Film: *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power* (Kanopy)

Film: *Period. End of Sentence* (in class)

Week 11 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

Week 13: Health Inequalities and the Media (March 29 & 31)

*This week's theme(s) is(are) not to suggest that health inequality is necessarily linked to different abilities. They can be, but one is not always connected with the other! In other words, a person with diabetes will not have the same experience as someone with autism.

Reading: Hinnant and Len-Ríos, Chapter 12: Rx for Communicating About Health Inequalities

Film: *What the Health?* (in class)

Media Analysis Assignment due Monday, March 28 by noon.

Week 14: Ability Studies (April 5 & 7)

Reading: Painter, Chapter 11, The Complexity of Disability

Film: *Crip Camp* (Netflix)

Film: *Deaf U* (in class)

Week 15: Religion, Race and Islamophobia (April 12 & 14)

Read: Mason, Chapter 7: Missing In Action

Watch: TED Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/dalia_mogahed_what_it_s_like_to_be_muslim_in_america/transcript?language=en

Watch: Race vs. Religion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BCSckITfs0>

Film: *PrayAway* (in class)

Film: *Ghost of Sugarland* (in class)

Week 16 Reading Quiz due by Monday at noon.

Journal Reflection #3 due by Friday, April 15 by noon.

Week 16: Last Week of Classes (April 20)

Where do we go from here? discussion

Exam 3 Due by Dec. 15 at noon

Happy Summer Break!!!

University Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conductiononor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Class Recordings: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited.

To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

Counseling and Wellness Center Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these asses