

MMC 2604: Media, Cultures, and Identity

Fall 2022 Syllabus

(August 17th version)

Instructor: Dr. Celeste Wagner

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 – 2:30 pm and Wednesdays 4:15 – 5:15 p.m. We can meet in person in my office or over Zoom. For either case, please sign up at least 15 minutes before the start time here: <https://calendly.com/celeste-wagner/office-hours>

Class Time: Monday 3 - 4:55 PM ([Matherly Hall 13](#))

Wednesday 3 - 3:50 PM ([Matherly Hall 13](#))

Course Description

In this course, we will analyze how the media represents groups, identities, and issues and how these representations can impact opinions and behaviors. We will analyze power dynamics in the representation of intersecting issues related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, racialization, nationality, culture, religion, ability, and class from an international and global perspective. While we will study different media types and genres, there will be a particular focus on journalism representations and journalism practice.

Course Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, you will learn:

- to analyze power dynamics in media representations of different groups and social and political issues.
- analytical skills to be culturally sensitive and responsible media consumers and practitioners.
- to understand the impact that media representations can have on public opinion, individual opinions and sentiments, and related behaviors.
- to reflect on issues of ethics in journalism's representation of societal issues.
- to understand the role and importance of our own subjectivities and experiences in how we consume and produce media narratives.

Class Values Around Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, class and religion.

It is very important for me that we create together an inclusive learning environment that makes everyone feel comfortable and welcome in class. Many times, learning something new entails feeling uncomfortable and challenging preconceived ideas. This is always a desired outcome of any learning environment because it encourages us to think with rigor, fairness, and creativity.

The goal is not to agree on everything or find consensus as a whole class, but to educate ourselves, and to respectfully engage in discussions about different topics. Thus, curiosity and respect towards different viewpoints, experiences and ideas will not only be a necessary path for class success but also for both personal and intellectual growth. For this, it is essential that we all exercise respect, courtesy, civil dialogue and empathy towards one another. I am convinced that the diversity that we all bring as a group is a strength and I am committed to making efforts to include class material that reflects a diversity of experiences, contexts, and identities.

Remember that many of the readings, documentaries, examples, etc., in the syllabus were created by specific individuals with their own viewpoints. I would love for everyone to feel comfortable sharing your observations and critiques about the material. As a matter of fact, your ability to analyze those aspects is a goal of the class.

Also, I will offer opportunities for you to anonymously share feedback about these and other aspects during the semester, but please, feel free to reach out to me if there's anything that is making you feel uncomfortable in any way or if you have any suggestions on new topics or on how to build this communal space for all of us to learn together. I really look forward to working with all of you to achieve this!

Course Requirements

Course Materials:

- Most of the required material will be available through Canvas, either linked or attached as a PDF.
- We will be using a combination of textbook chapters, academic journal articles, book chapters, and nonacademic sources (news articles, videos, documentaries, etc.).
- Students must complete listed readings/materials prior to the class in which they are discussed and be prepared to participate in individual/groups discussion/activities.
- Readings that are more difficult and are expected to take more time to finish will be marked in the syllabus with the following: (!)
- For classes in which the reading material is conceptually more challenging, I will provide reading guides in advance to help you identify what is relevant for this class and ignore what is not.
- When there is more than one reading per class, I encourage you to read/watch the material in the order that it is listed.

- Some of the material is likely to change during the semester. Please refer to Canvas every week to see what's required for the following week. Changes will be communicated through Canvas.
- There will be one **required textbook**, cited below. There is a physical copy available on reserve at the library (2 hours + overnight).
 - **Len-Ríos, M. E., & Perry, E. L. (Eds.). (2019). Cross-cultural journalism and strategic communication: Storytelling and diversity (Second Edition). Routledge.**

Before Class Assignments:

- Before class, students will have to engage in a short individual activity related to the class materials of that week.
- For Monday classes, these assignments are due on Mondays at 10 am. For Wednesday classes, assignments are due on Tuesdays at noon - 12 pm.
- Each one of these short activities will be specified each week on Canvas.

In-Class Activities / Class Participation:

- In this course we will apply "[active learning](#)" in-class activities every week.
- Students should come to class having read/listened/watched all class material for that class and be prepared to engage in individual and group activities.
- Participation in these activities will be graded.
- **Missing 4 or more in-class activities will lead to a 0% grade on class participation.** While participation in these in-class activities is crucial for success in this course, I will not always take attendance. If necessary, you can also refer to [UF attendance policies](#).

Exams:

- There will be **two exams** early in the semester to test students' knowledge of the subject's foundations.
- These might take place in the classroom or on Canvas.
- There will be optional opportunities to improve grades in the exams that will be communicated in due time.

Short Essay

- There will be a **short essay exam** at the end of the class with guiding questions.
- Students will have to show their abilities applying the theoretical and analytical foundations to specific media examples of their choice.

Assessments

- **Before class assignments:** 30% (*For Monday's class, due on Mondays at 10 am, for Wednesday's class, due on Tuesdays at noon*)
- **Class participation / In-class activities:** 25%
- **Exams:** 20% total (10% each)
- **Short essay:** 25%

Overview of Important Deadlines

Exam 1: September 14th
Exam 2: October 5th
Short essay: December 5th

Grading Scale

Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	92-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point. For example, 89.4% rounds down to 89%, 89.5% rounds up to 90%. We will stick to this rule even when this has an impact on the letter grade you obtain. Students can also review [UF grades and grading policies](#).

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). 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.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the class, you will have to complete a course evaluation online via GatorEvals. Course evaluations are very important for me, as they will help me plan and adjust the syllabus for next iterations of this class. They are also important for future students who will indirectly benefit from your feedback. It is expected that students will offer professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. [Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [online](#). [Summaries of course evaluation results](#) are available to students online.

Students Honor Code

It is expected that all students will respect [UF student honor code and conduct code](#).

Reach Out

Please, if you are finding any difficulties or challenges in this class, don't hesitate to talk to me. You can sign up for office hours, email me, or just knock on my door 😊

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change; always refer to Canvas version)

Week 1: Introduction to the Class

Class 1: Wednesday, August 24th

- **Content:** General introduction to the course (and to each other)
- **Readings/materials:** Close reading of the syllabus
- **Before class:** Read the syllabus in detail + Complete survey “Getting to know each other” on Canvas
- **In-class activity:** Students’ introductions + media recommendations game

PART 1: Analytical Foundations

Week 2: Audiences & Journalism

Class 2: Monday, August 29th

- **Content:** Contemporary audience practices
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022, pp. 9-30](#)
 - [“More than eight-in-ten Americans get news from digital devices” Pew Research Center January 2021 Report](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings
- **In-class activity:** Each group selects one topic of the Reuters Institute 2022 Digital News Report. Then, the group selects either two countries or two regions. Following a series of guiding questions, the group presents to the class a comparative analysis of the selected topic.

Class 3: Wednesday, August 31st

- **Content:** Excellence in journalism
- **Readings/materials:** Perry, E. L. & Len-Ríos, M. E. “Chapter 1: Conceptual Understanding” in Len-Ríos & Perry.
- **Before class:** Find a news story about a social issue that recently interested you (any region, country, topic, but in English). Share a link to it on Canvas and explain in 100-150 words why you were drawn to it, and/or why you think it’s an important issue to cover. Remember, Monday assignments are due on Mondays at 10 am on Canvas.
- **In-class activity:** Each person briefly explains to its group the news story they chose. The group chooses 1 news story and then identifies whether it meets the five criteria of excellence in journalism, as defined in the weekly reading.

Week 3: Difference as Constitutive of Social Life

No Class on Monday, September 5th - Holiday

Class 4: Wednesday, September 7th

- **Content:** Communicating across difference
- **Readings/material:**
 - Woods, K. M. "Chapter 2: Talking across difference" in Len-Ríos & Perry
 - Watch [Chimamanda Adichie's lecture on "The Danger of a Single Story"](#)
 - ["What are the Basic Human Rights?" Ted-Ed video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials. Remember, Wednesday assignments are due on Tuesday at noon on Canvas.
- **In-class:** In groups, select contemporary issues that challenge human rights globally and find a news story on that topic. Analyze the article and specify the human right in question from the ones that are present in the video.

Week 4: Why Representation Matters

Class 5: Monday, September 12th

- **Content:** The importance and impact of representation on the self and on society
- **Readings:**
 - Alhabash, S., Cunningham, C. & Kononova, A. "Chapter 3: Who is American?" in Len-Ríos & Perry
 - [Leavitt, P. A., Covarrubias, R., Perez, Y. A., & Fryberg, S. A. \(2015\). "Frozen in time": The impact of Native American media representations on identity and self-understanding. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71\(1\), 39-53.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings
- **In-class:** Watch a fragment of [Stuart Hall's 1997 lecture on representation and media](#) + conceptual mapping exercise

Class 6: Wednesday, September 14th: [Quiz 1 in class about content included in weeks 1-4](#)

Week 5: Intersectionality, Hybridity & Globalization

Class 7: Monday, September 19th

- **Content:** Intersectionality as a conceptual lens to think of social difference
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Watch video "Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality" on Youtube](#)
 - ["What's Intersectionality? Let These Scholars Explain the Theory and Its History", *Time*](#)
 - ["In northern Argentina, gendered violence and discrimination leave their mark on Indigenous communities", *The New Humanitarian*](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials
- **In-class activity:** In groups, discuss a recent issue that has been in the news cycle about aspects that you consider are related to intersectionality. It could be about issues of privilege, oppression, inequality, or power. Analyze which aspects of power and identity are involved and how they are impacting the events. Be ready to present to class.

Class 8: Wednesday, September 21st

- **Content:** Hybridity as a conceptual lens to think of social difference + context of globalization
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Watch “Hybridity: an exploration of identity” TED-ED talk by Amara Pope on YouTube](#)
 - [“K-pop invasion: From a local trend to a global phenomenon, and beyond” Asia News Network](#)
 - [“Globalization Isn’t Dead, It’s Just Not American Anymore”, *The Washington Post*](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** Analysis of an example of global pop culture in groups.

Week 6: Mass Media Theories

Class 9: Monday, September 26th

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Social constructionism and framing
- **Readings/materials:** Baran, S., & Davis, D. (2015). “Social constructionism”, “Framing and frame analysis”, “The development of theories of frames and framing”, “Effects of frames on news audiences”, pp. 309-327 in Section 2, Chapter 10. In [Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future](#). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the reading
- **In-class activity:** In groups, students analyze elements of framing in the coverage of one issue by two different media outlets. The example will be provided in class.

Class 10: Wednesday, September 28th

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Agenda setting and the spiral of silence
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Sparks, G. G. (2006). “Chapter 9: The effects of news and political content.” In *Media effects research. A basic overview*, 2.
 - Watch [interview to McCombs on agenda setting theory](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on video and reading
- **In-class activity:** Individually, students write 4-5 issues that they believe make the U.S. news agenda today. Then, we aggregate the responses and discuss class agreements and disagreements.

Week 7: Global and International Standpoint

Class 11: Monday, October 3rd

- **Content:** The representation of “the rest of the world”

- **Readings/materials:**
 - (!) [Hall, S. \(1992\). "The West and the rest: Discourse and power," in *Essential Essays: Identity and Diaspora \(Vol. 2\)*](#) [Only pages: 141-148; 155-161; 164-165; 181-182. This accounts for the following sections: "Introduction" until the end of "Five Main Phases"; from "Discourse and Power" until the end of "Orientalism"; "Idealization"; "Conclusion"]
 - ["What the West gets wrong about India", DW](#)
 - ["The 'Africa In the Media' Study Shows How Africans are Misrepresented in American Television", Okay Africa.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials + reading guide
- **In-class activity:** Individually, think of an example of an international issue in the Global South or a in developing country that has received coverage in the U.S. In groups, choose a news story published in the U.S. about one of those international issues. Using the conceptual tools proposed by Hall, groups analyze how the issue is framed and represented.

Class 12: Wednesday, October 5th: [Quiz 2 \(in class\) about content included in weeks 5-7](#)

PART 2: Applying Knowledge to Specific Issues

Week 8: Ideology and Politics

Class 13: Monday, October 10th

- **Content:** Framing of political protests
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Brown, D. \(January 16, 2020\). "What do we want? Unbiased reporting! When do we want it? During protests!", *The Conversation*.](#)
 - [Mourão, R. R. \(2019\). From mass to elite protests: News coverage and the evolution of antigovernment demonstrations in Brazil. *Mass Communication and Society*, 22\(1\), 49-71.](#) [You can skip sections on research methodology]
 - Video TBD
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** Each group searches for news coverage of protests (right-leaning or left-leaning) in ideologically diverse media. The group analyzes similarities and differences in the representation of the protests based on the "protest paradigm" presented in the readings and shares with the class.

Class 14: Wednesday, October 12th

- **Content:** Polarization and misinformation
- **Readings/materials:**
 - ["Americans' main sources for political news vary by party and age," Pew Research Center 2020 report](#)

- Watch [short video on Affective Polarization](#) by Prof. Lelkes
- [Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, D., & Ling, R. \(2020\). Diffusion of disinformation: How social media users in Singapore respond to fake news and why. *Journalism*, 21\(3\), 381-398](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on class materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 9: Social Class

Class 15: Monday, October 17th

- **Content:** Media representation of social class
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Thomas, R. J. and Hendricks, M. A. "Chapter 4: Making Class Matter: Journalism and Social Class" in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Watch documentary "Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class" on Kanopy](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** Groups are assigned different regions in the world. Each student in the group chooses one country in said region. Then, each student searches for diverse sources on socioeconomic or social class distribution in that country as well as internet access statistics. Each group then presents their findings to the rest of the class. Activity ends with a classroom reflection about global disparities and what this might mean for media practices.

Class 16: Wednesday, October 19th

- **Content:** How we talk about class matters
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Ramasubramanian, S. \(2005\). A content analysis of the portrayal of India in films produced in the West. *The Howard journal of communications*, 16\(4\), 243-265.](#)
 - ["Media language slows down fight against poverty" Interview to Ana Beatriz Chiquito about her research in Latin America](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** Search engine exercise on most recent news about keywords related to different regions in the world

Week 10: Gender and the Body

Class 17: Monday, October 24th

- **Content:** Gender in news-making processes
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Volz, Y. & Len-Ríos. "Chapter 5: Gender and the Media: Envisioning Equality" in Len-Ríos & Perry. [Only pages 101-116]

- [Mitchelstein, E., Andelman, V., & Boczkowski, P. J. \(2019\). Joanne Public vs. Joe Public: news sourcing and gender imbalance on Argentine digital media. *Digital Journalism*, 7\(10\), 1311-1327](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** Each member of a group selects a different newspaper (they must be either all local or all national outlets). Each member will go through the first 4 articles of the newspaper's homepage and account for the gender of the sources cited. Then, all members aggregate this information and share with the class.

Class 18: Wednesday, October 26th

- **Content:** Body image and impact on the self
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Volz, Y. & Len-Ríos. "Chapter 5: Gender and the Media: Envisioning Equality" in Len-Ríos & Perry. [pages 117-130]
 - Cohen, R., Slater, A., & Fardouly, J. (March 17, 2019) "[Women can build positive body image by controlling what they view on social media.](#)" *The Conversation*
 - Watch the [documentary "The Codes of Gender"](#) (abridged version) by Sut Jhally
- **Before class:** Analysis of a social media visual ad of your choice using at least 3 of Goffman concepts summarized by Jhally in the documentary and/or from the readings (300 words max.).
- **In-class activity:** Each group selects one of the ads previously submitted on Canvas. After discussion, each group presents to the rest of the class a short analysis of the ad using at least 3 of the concepts learned in the class materials.

Week 11: Race and Ethnicity

Class 19: Monday, October 31st

- **Content:** Industry aspects + the representation of race/ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Hall, S. (!) "[The Spectacle of the Other](#)" [Only pages 234-238; 257-261; [these pages correspond to the subsections "Why does difference matter?", "Stereotyping as a signifying practice", "Representation, difference and power"](#)]
 - "[Hollywood Diversity Report 2020: A Tale of Two Holywoods.](#)" *UCLA* [Only pages 2-4, 16-23]
 - [Noble, S. "Google has a striking history of bias against Black girls."](#) *Time*.
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material + reading guide for Hall
- **In-class activity:** Using concepts learned in Hall's reading, groups select one media example (social media post, news article, etc.) about any issue (politics, sports, entertainment, etc.) and analyze the representation of race.

Class 20: Wednesday, November 2nd

- **Content:** The representation of race and ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Watch [“Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a Media Stereotype \(Abridged Version\)”](#) on Kanopy
 - [“Lack of Asian representation in media shows through in recent blunders”, *The Baltimore Sun*](#)
 - [“Racism in football: new research shows media treats black men differently to white men”, *The Conversation*](#)
 - [“UK media’s portrayal of Muslims ‘misleading and negative’: study,” *Al Jazeera*](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on class material.
- **In-class activity:** Drawing from Hall’s concepts learned last week, groups select and analyze issues of representation in one example of the [“Every single word spoken by a person of color” project](#).

Week 12: Nation and Immigration

Class 21: Monday, November 7th

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Garza, M. M. “Chapter 9: Immigrants and Immigration: Reporting the New America,” in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [“What does it mean to be a refugee?” TED-ED video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the reading.
- **In-class activity:** Groups select news about either refugees or migrants in different regions in the world and analyze if there are different ways of framing their stories, depending on whether they are refugees or migrants and where they come from.

Class 22: Wednesday, November 9th

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Eberl, J. M. et al. \(2018\). The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: A literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42\(3\), 207-223](#)
 - Documentary TBD
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on readings
- **In-class activity:** Len-Ríos & Perry suggested activity.

Week 13: Sexuality

Class 23: Monday, November 14th

- **Content:** The representation of LGBTQ+ communities and rights in the media
- **Readings/materials:**

- Hicks, G. R. "Chapter 6: Mass media and the LGBT community" in Len-Ríos and Perry.
- Watch [documentary "Out in the Night: Criminalization of Race, Gender Identity and Sexuality"](#) on Kanopy [*To be confirmed*]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** Students search for coverage on same-sex or equal marriage legislation in different parts of the world and in different media and analyze whether there are differences in the coverage.

Class 24: Wednesday, November 16th

- **Content:** The representation of LGBTQ+ communities in the media
- **Readings/materials:** Sender, K. (2006). Queens for a day: Queer Eye for the Straight Guy and the neoliberal project. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23(2), 131-151
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the reading
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 14: Religion

Class 25: Monday, November 21st

- **Content:** The representation of religion in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Mason, D. L. "Religion in mass media markets and news," in Len-Ríos and Perry.
 - [Watch "What You Don't Hear About France's Muslims," AJ+](#) on YouTube
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** Using concepts learned in the class materials, groups analyze recent news coverage of religion. What are the religions that receive more coverage? Are there similarities or differences in the contexts in which religion is talked about, the vocabulary used, and other framing elements?

No class on Wednesday, November 23rd – Holiday

Week 15: Disability and Trauma

Class 26: Monday, November 28th

- **Content:** The representation of disability in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Painter, C. "Chapter 11: The complexity of disability," in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Video + article "Disability Representation in the Media" in Respect Ability](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material.
- **In-class activity:** Each group chooses a news article that covered an issue related to disability. Using Len-Ríos guidelines on how to report on disabilities, each student analyzes the selected piece and presents to the rest of the class.

Class 27: Wednesday, November 30th

- **Content:** Thinking of trauma through a lens of disability
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Rajabi's TEDx talk "Trauma Unmakes the World" on YouTube](#)
 - [Rajabi, S. \(2019\). Living with Herbert: Mediating Survival and Resilience. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 8\(4\), 136-155.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material.
- **In-class activity:** Len-Ríos & Perry suggested activity on page 291-292

Week 16: Conclusion / TBD

Class 28: Monday, December 5th

- **Content:**
- **Readings/materials:**
- **Before class:** *Short Essay due on Monday, December 5th*
- **In-class activity:**

Class 29: Wednesday, December 7th

- **Content:**
 - **Readings/materials:**
 - **Before class:**
 - **In-class activity:**
-