

Kansas State University – A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications

MC 612 Gender Issues and the Media (Wassmuth) – Fall 2014

SYLLABUS

LOGISTICS

Class number: 16162

Course ID: 106680

Lecture: Tuesday 17:30 to 20:20

Classroom: Kedzie 216

Instructor: Dr. Birgit Wassmuth (say "Vass-moot")

Graduate assistant: David "Bondy" Valdovinos-Kaye; bondyk@ksu.edu; (785) 250-7195

Office: Kedzie 105 (main office of the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications)

Office hours: By appointment only

Phone: (785) 532-1110

Fax: [785] 532-5484

E-mail: wassmuth@k-state.edu

Website: K-State online, select Canvas (the new learning management system)

MISSION

The Mission of the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications is to pursue knowledge through creative works, scholarly research, and innovative teaching; to encourage professional competencies, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility; and to serve our constituents as defenders of free expression in a dynamic, multi-cultural society.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The portrayal of women and men by the media, and media employment issues based on gender. (Prerequisite: Junior Standing and one course in Mass Communication or Women's Studies.) (3 crh)

RATIONALE

A sensitive approach to gender, race, ethnicity and the media is no longer just the right thing to do, it is a matter of survival and success in modern life and business. Ethnic populations are growing faster than white populations, highlighting once ignored consumer markets and audiences. And, as technology expands, the world becomes more interconnected and fills the global village with a diversity of populations. This course focuses on the important role the media play in the coverage and portrayal of people from many sections of a diverse society.

OBJECTIVE

This course will help you identify bias in the media regarding racial and ethnic groups, women, gay, lesbian, transgender members of the community, and other underrepresented populations. It will help you develop a working knowledge of the historical roles the media have played in creating awareness of gender, racial, and ethnic issues. It will offer insights into the pervasiveness of stereotyping in the media and will offer strategies to avoid stereotyping in an effort to prepare you for productive careers, active leadership, and responsible citizenship in a global community.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

The programs of the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications are accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Of the 12 curriculum values/competencies defined by ACEJMC, this course will cover the following: 2) demonstrate an

understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications; 3) demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications; 4) demonstrate an understanding of diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society; 5) understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; 6) demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; 7) think critically, creatively and independently; 8) conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work; 9) write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

BY THE END OF THE SEMESTER, YOU WILL HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THE FOLLOWING:

- You'll be able to explain what stereotypes are and how to avoid them;
- You'll have a better understanding of why media bias exists;
- You'll better understand how images affect perception and behavior;
- You'll better understand how and why media images and reality often conflict;
- You'll have been introduced to several mass media theories;
- You'll be familiar with at least three media analysis techniques;
- You'll be more aware of how mass media have marginalized non-majority populations;
- You'll better understand your personal responsibility when working in or with the media;
- You'll have become a more observant, critical, and engaged media consumer;
- You'll be able to suggest solutions for more sensitivity toward "otherness" within your field of study, work environment, and career;
- You'll have become a change agent with the privilege and obligation to make a difference in the diverse world in which we live.

A FEW GROUND RULES

Active and meaningful class participation are essential to making this course a successful and rewarding learning experience. So is respect for the opinions of others. Gender-, race-, ethnicity-, and class-related issues are often sensitive topics. We expect a calm and rational exchange of ideas and views even though we may strongly disagree with one another. We will not tolerate shouting, name-calling, and other disrespectful behavior, neither in class nor online.

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. Our classroom is a safe zone.

TEACHING FORMAT

Illustrated lectures; in-class and online discussions and dialogue; viewing of movie clips and documentaries; guest speakers; in-class exercises; group presentations; critiques; self reflection; small group work.

FAIR WARNING

Over the course of the semester, you will be exposed to materials (movie clips, documentaries, news clips, Talk Radio clips, YouTube clips, advertisements, games, etc.) that some of you may find objectionable. These examples are carefully selected with the purpose of making a point in the learning process. They are not meant to offend anyone.

TEXTBOOK (required; available in the bookstore)

Race/Gender/Class/Media: Considering Diversity across Audiences, Content, and Producers (3rd edition, 2013), by Rebecca Ann Lind

ONE OF THESE BOOKS (your choice; just pick one and purchase it from your favorite vendor)

Black Like Me (1996, 1960), by John Howard Griffin

Self-Made Man: A Woman's Journey into Manhood and Back Again (2006), by Norah Vincent

Nickel and Dimed (2001), by Barbara Ehrenreich

Redefining Realness (2014), by Janet Mock

WEBSITE

All course-related information is available to you anytime and from anywhere on Canvas through K-State Online. Please check it on a regular basis as the information there evolves over the course of the semester. Some assignments may have to be completed online.

INFORMATION LITERACY

Fact finding, evaluative research, and critical thinking will be an integral part of this course to complement the information gained from the lectures, the textbook, and dialogue. I expect you be all-inclusive in your information gathering and critical in your selection of sources. This will help your learning experience by preparing you better for a constructive discourse in and outside class.

MEDIA USE

To succeed in this course you must keep up with current affairs, especially as they are reported by the media. This can be accomplished by regularly reading a mainstream daily newspaper (paper or online), reading an alternative publication, watching TV news, listening to the radio, reading Twitter news feeds, reading RSS feeds, and “reading” the Internet. You should also look at news magazines on a regular basis even if you only just look at the covers.

It is a good idea to build a personal clip file (folder) of articles and advertisements dealing with gender, race and ethnicity or aspects of the lives of underrepresented populations. Include items that you find to be unbalanced, unfair, offensive, biased, inappropriate, etc. as well as examples of outstanding coverage as you perceive it. At every class meeting, you will have a chance to mention some of the things you may have found or observed in the media recently.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

K-State notebook (single subject, as shown in class) to be used exclusively as your journal

Ring binder (or notebook) for note taking and to hold handouts

Computer access; Word processing; Internet access

USB jump drive

Glue stick; Stapler; Scissors

Be prepared to pay for photocopies, color photocopies, and binding.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND NETIQUETTE

We expect you to use your assigned KSU email account at all times because university-related information will only go to that address. I may not respond to emails coming from non-KSU addresses. Please be respectful, courteous and professional in your email communication. Never write an email in anger or when upset. Take a deep breath or even better -sleep over it first. I will ignore emotionally charged emails that show disrespect.

To get my attention, make sure to include specific information in the subject line. Be clear and specific in your writing to make it easy for me to respond. Always sign off with your full name. If this information is missing it may get deleted because it may mimic a virus or Spam.

Usually, I will respond to your email within 48 hours, unless I am out of town at a conference. Sometimes, I may hold my response until the next class meeting if I think that the answer can wait and will benefit everybody in the class.

COMPUTER USE

It is crucial to back up your computer work on a regular basis. I suggest that you always store your personal files on a memory stick or jump drive or any other portable storage device. Standard server maintenance or special repairs may sometimes cause files to be deleted. It is your responsibility to have back-ups of your work on a removable storage device. Neither Kansas State University nor the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications is responsible for "lost" or "damaged" files.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Twice-weekly journal entries (30 @ 5 pts); 150 points

Twice-weekly newspaper/magazine clippings glued into journal (30 @ 5 pts); 150 pts

Outside your comfort zone paper #1 (self reflection); 100 pts

Outside your comfort zone paper #2 (authentic voice interview); 100 pts

Outside your comfort zone paper #3 (public event attendance); 100 pts

Your turn #1: Discussion facilitator (teams of two); 100 pts

Your turn #2: Letter to the editor (published); 100 pts

Your turn #3: Showtime; 200 pts

TOTAL for undergraduate students: 1000 pts = 100%

Regular attendance and meaningful participation in class and online discussions are expected throughout the semester.

DEADLINES

Due dates for assignments are indicated on the course calendar. Any changes to deadlines or the course schedule will be announced in class and posted online. The deadline is always at the beginning of class. Deadlines are absolute. Late assignments (late without a valid excuse) will receive a point value of zero.

GRADING POLICY

Your course grade will be calculated from a cumulative point basis. No curve. Throughout the semester you can easily calculate your grade by dividing your "points earned" by the total points possible. Please see the online grade book in Canvas for details on your performance evaluations.

GRADING SCALE

90% - 100% = A (excellent to outstanding)

80% - 89.99% = B (good to very good)

70% - 79.99% = C (average, acceptable, OK)

60% - 69.99% = D (weak, below average, disappointing)

less than 60% = F (doesn't meet minimum expectations)

ATTENDANCE

This Junior/Senior-level course is taught like a seminar and requires active and meaningful participation by you at every class meeting. It covers an extensive amount of material and encourages original and critical thinking. Meaningful participation in discussions, presentations and critiques is essential for a successful completion of this class. So, please come prepared with your assigned readings completed before each class meeting.

Excessive absences will jeopardize your success in this course. Excessive, in the context of this course, is defined by three or more recorded, unexcused absences. This means that three unexcused absences will drop your final grade by one whole grade. Missing 50% of a class meeting counts as an absence. Missing seven class meetings (excused or not) will yield an automatic "F." Attendance will be taken at every class meeting.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

If you have to miss a regularly scheduled class meeting you must notify me, the instructor of record, in writing either in advance or within 24 hours after the missed class. Please send me an e-mail message to that effect by email or through KSOL/Canvas. If you call, it is appreciated but not sufficient to count as a valid excuse. Acceptable excuses are those concerning your own health or that of an immediate family member (life-threatening situations only!). Also acceptable reasons are deployment, legal obligations, and participation in university-sponsored out of town varsity sports competitions. Those excuses require proper written documentation to be considered valid. They may not be written by you, a roommate, a friend, a neighbor, or a member of your family.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

Lectures given in this course are the property of the instructor and Kansas State University. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without prior permission from me, or any guest lecturers, including panelists who may speak to this class. However, if a student has been approved by the Student Access Center, he or she may record the lectures as an accommodation of a disability. In any case, recordings, including class notes, may not be used for commercial purposes.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Kansas State University and the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications are committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics. We expect our students to adhere to those standards. Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest independent of whether or not the effort is successful.

The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences ranging from losing points on an assignment to probation or expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult with me, your instructor, before you hand in an assignment.

Cheating or assisting to cheat, plagiarism, unauthorized possession of exams, hired help (Web papers), unauthorized copying of software, destruction or vandalizing of library material or lab facilities, such as computers, scanners and printers, or multi-media equipment are also violations of academic integrity. *A student who has committed such an act has failed to meet a basic requirement of satisfactory academic performance. Please refer to the K-State Honor Code for details.*

INCOMPLETES

No incompletes will be granted in this course, unless there is a valid medical or family emergency that occurs after the 12th week of the semester. If that is the case, please send me a written request no later than two weeks before the end of the semester. If you qualify for an Incomplete, I will grant your request in writing and outline what needs to be completed and by what time. A missed assignment or class project will not automatically entitle you to get an incomplete. Also, note that an incomplete grade may only be granted if a student has reached at least a "C" average or better at that point.

SENSITIVITY AND RESPECT

As an individual and member of this academic community, I am strongly committed to sensitivity concerning gender, race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, and disability. Should you feel embarrassed or hurt by any sexist, racist or otherwise offensive remarks or behavior displayed by the instructor, guest speaker, teaching assistant or student in this class, please bring this matter to my attention right away. *Always feel free to discuss issues of such delicate and sensitive nature with your instructor, adviser, or mentor.*

WRITING CENTER

The KSU Writing Center is a free service offered to all KSU students. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you throughout the writing process on concerns such as topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and mechanics. Rather than edit your paper for you, writing assistants will help you learn strategies to become a better writer on your own. For more information or to make an appointment (appointments are strongly encouraged), visit <http://www.k-state.edu/english/writingcenter> or stop by Room 122D in the English Building.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. This statute guarantees equal opportunity for this protected group in the areas of public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the Student Access Center at accesscenter@k-state.edu, 785-532-6441, located in 202 Holton Hall.

Please note that instructors cannot accommodate students with disabilities if we are not appropriately notified early in the semester.

CELL PHONES AND IPODS

As a courtesy to the instructor and everyone around you, please turn your cellular phone to “silent” or “vibrate” before class begins and put it into your backpack or purse. Also, turn off your iPod or other entertainment device and remove the ear piece(s) from your ear(s).

LAPTOPS AND iPADS

Until further notice, you may use your laptop to take notes or to follow course-related materials, unless it bothers the students around you or it becomes obvious to me that you are not engaged in class. If I see that you are answering email or doing other class-unrelated activities, I will ask you to turn off and close your laptop or iPad. On occasion, I may ask computer users to sit in the front row or to help retrieve specific course-related information on the Internet during class.

“NO WHINING” POLICY

If you intend to earn a good grade in this course, please pursue that goal and start on the first day of class. Stay focused throughout the semester. Even though I am always open to hear a compelling argument, I will not tolerate any whining or complaining near the end of the semester when you may realize that you might not get a passing grade or the grade you envisioned. Please remember that I do not give grades; you earn them.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you ask me to be your “friend” on Facebook or to follow you on Twitter or to join you on LinkedIn or any other Social Media network I will respectfully decline the invitation. It would be a conflict of interest for me to accept these kinds of invitations from colleagues of my faculty, from my staff, or from our students. It is part of my personal professional ethics to remain “neutral.”

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, genetic information,

military status, veteran status, or other non-merit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment, including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era, as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, has been delegated to the Director of Institutional Equity, Kansas State University, 103 Edwards Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124, (Phone) 785-532-6220; (TTY) 785-532-4807.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records once the student has reached 18 years of age (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Under that law we cannot release your student ID number, grades, performance evaluations, or any other personal or academic information to anyone but you, unless you provide written permission to do so. *Also, to ensure privacy, I will not discuss grades with you or anyone else over unsecured lines such as email or phone.*

FEEDBACK

Because I believe in the importance of constructive feedback I encourage you to voice your reactions to this course not just during the last week of classes but at any time throughout the semester. That way, you will be the beneficiaries of your own suggestions for improvement. Please note that final course evaluations will be handled online.

THANK YOU AND HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER!

--Dr. Birgit Wassmuth, August 26, 2014

"By a nearly 3 to 1 margin, male front-page bylines at top newspapers outnumbered female bylines in coverage of the 2012 presidential election. Men were also far more likely to be quoted than women in newspapers, television and public radio. That's also the case in coverage of abortion, birth control, Planned Parenthood and women's rights."

-- Diana Mitsu Klos, Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2013, Women's Media Center