

# JRN/WMS 380 WOMEN, MINORITIES, AND THE MEDIA

Fall 2008

**Instructor:** Dr. Joy Morrison  
**Class:** TR 11:30-1:00pm, 122 Bunnell  
**Phone:** 474-5055 (with answering machine)

**Office:** 222 Bunnell  
**Office Hours:** MTWR 2-4 pm  
**E-mail:** ffjfm@uaf.edu

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is taught as a seminar meaning that the focus will be on readings, oral presentations, and in-class discussions. We will study women, minorities and the media from a feminist, multi-culturalist perspective using a broad feminist analysis which encompasses issues of gender as well as class, race, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc. The course begins with an assumption that racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia exist in our society and that these need to be acknowledged. This is not a “male bashing” class although a discussion of our patriarchal society will be a major focus. There will be many videos and a few guests to complement the readings and discussions. The course is designed for Journalism students but it has a feminist focus making it interesting to those of you registered in Women’s Studies.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

Our mass media are hugely influential, and their major influence is educational. You will be introduced to critical theory as a way of examining how women and minorities are represented by the media. We will also look at several models of how children learn from the media. We will study the effects on society of these media representations. Hopefully by the end of the semester you will be able to critically analyze mass media products and discern things which were previously invisible to you. You should also have a good idea of how well the employment of men and women of all races in media industries reflects our society demographically. This course also encourages students of different gender, racial groups, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, abilities and ages to openly discuss their perceptions of how **they** are portrayed in the media, and to learn from each other and thereby become more sensitive to the feelings of different groups. The purpose of class discussion is the exchange of ideas, the stimulation of thought, and learning. I encourage debate, and respect **all** opinions when these are offered in a respectful manner. The purpose is NOT to win arguments or convince others that they are wrong, nor to dominate the dialogue. You should also become accustomed to taking a stand in oral presentations of the articles you are assigned, and defending your position. Another objective of this class is to produce journalists who are sensitive to issues of diversity in the media.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS:**

Read ALL assigned readings and to be able to discuss the important points in class. Regular attendance is recommended and will count towards your final grade. You will keep a journal of reflection, complete a few short essays and assignments, a research paper, and make a formal presentation of this paper. There are no exams.

## **REFLECTION JOURNAL:**

You are required to make write regularly in a book to stimulate your thinking and reflection. These journals will be handed in every three weeks during class, graded and returned to you the following week. Each of the four entries that you turn in is worth 50 points. **Late journals will not be accepted.** I

keep strict confidentiality and will not discuss anything that is recorded in a journal, although I encourage students to speak about their entries. These entries should link readings, lectures, discussions, and your daily encounters with the media. I would like an analytical and integrative discussion of different topics covered in the module rather than a rehash of discussions or readings. They will be graded for insight, originality, and individual progress as well as for clarity of writing. You may write them by hand if you have clear, legible handwriting. If you do not, please type them. These entries can be used to spark discussions in class, if you choose to share them.

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS:**

Students will make regular presentations of assigned readings and will receive feedback from the instructor to assist with developing presentational competency. This is an “O” (oral intensive) class and therefore you should also be ready at any time to discuss the assigned readings in a professional manner. Each student should be prepared to ask a question of the presenter. Each student will also make a 10-minute oral presentation on their term paper in the last day of class.

**ESSAYS/ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are five, each worth ten points. I will assign three short essays during the semester so that you can demonstrate a grasp of the subject matter. They will cover readings and videos. The two other assignments will be letters that you will write and mail.

**RESEARCH PAPER:**

You are required to write a 10 page paper with formal citation style on any minority group, or women, and their relationship to one of the mass media (TV, magazines, newspapers, film, radio, or the Web). This paper will be due in stages, the first being an outline of your topic with a bibliography. No more than three web sources will be permitted in your Works Cited/Bibliography. The second stage will be an optional draft due on December 5 which I will grade, and return to you Dec 9 for possible revision. The final paper is due in class on Thursday, December 11.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** There is no text for this course. I will give you articles (some online) to read for your journals.

**EVALUATION:** The grade is made up as follows, for a total of 500 possible points:

- |    |                         |              |
|----|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Journals                | = 200 points |
| 2. | Oral Presentations      | = 100 points |
| 3. | Term paper              | = 100 points |
| 4. | Essays/Assignments      | = 50 points  |
| 5. | Attendance (14 classes) | = 50 points  |

Each of you begin as an “average” student, i.e. with a C grade and proceed to work from there. To obtain an “A” grade you will need to produce work that far exceeds my normal expectations. My normal expectations are regular attendance, hard work, evidence of time spent with the material, and an ability to demonstrate understanding of all concepts. To obtain a “B” grade you will have to be above average!

**Grading for JRN/WMS 380 will follow UAF guidelines:**

- A = An honor grade, indicates originality and independent work, a thorough mastery of the subject, and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required (425 points, or above)
- B = Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance (375-424)

- C = Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance (300-374).
- D = The lowest passing grade, indicates work of below average quality and performance (250-300).
- F = Indicates failure to meet lowest standards (below 250 points).

In the field of print and electronic journalism accuracy and clarity are essential. The ability to communicate information clearly and correctly is the cornerstone of effective communication. Every course in the Department of Journalism emphasizes developing strong writing skills. Therefore, a percentage of each course grade will be based on writing. I encourage you to make use of the Writing Center (8th floor, Gruening Building) where you can take a draft of any written material and get 30 minutes of free assistance.

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT:**

You are required to read and abide by the Student Code of Conduct on pages 120-121 in the 2008 Fall Class Schedule. Every course taught at UAF seeks to maintain high ethical standards, starting with an emphasis on producing original and factual work. **Plagiarism** is defined as appropriating passages or ideas from another person's work and using them as one's own. Lifting passages of text from the Web is also plagiarism and will not be accepted. **Fabrication** is the inclusion of an invented statement within the body of a work. Any student found to have plagiarized or fabricated statements will receive, at a minimum, an automatic "F" for the class. Any student found turning in a paper that has been used in another class will also receive an automatic "F" grade. You are required to write a definition of both plagiarism and fabrication and sign it to show that you completely understand what it means.

All opinions are respected in this class. Students will be mindful of their colleagues' feelings when commenting on each other's opinions. You may disagree with each other, and with me, as long as it is done in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

### **DISABILITIES:**

UAF is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities. You are encouraged to contact the coordinator of Disability Services (Mary Matthews) at the Center for Health & Counseling (x7043). See section on "Disability Services" on page 37 of the Fall Class Schedule. If you have any kind of learning disability, no matter how unimportant you think it might be, you must tell me about it. I am willing to work with you to help you succeed, but I need to know that some things are difficult for you. Don't be shy, and don't hesitate to call me, or come and talk to me in my office, or send me an email.

## Tentative class outline

**September 4** Introductions, discussion of syllabus; student profiles; Video: “Gender: the Enduring Paradox”; Reading assignments: *Gender: the Enduring Paradox*, *What is Gender? Schema Theory*, “*Media Depiction of Minorities*”(handouts); Project Implicit <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/>

**September 9-11** Discussion of video, readings, and IAT; Media theories; Video: “Women and Minorities”; Reading assignment: *White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack* (handout)

**September 16-18** Presentations on TV shows; **1<sup>st</sup> Journal**  
Assignment No. 1: *Sex, lies and advertising* review (10 points)

**September 23-25** Discussion of readings; Video: Dreamworlds3: Rock, Power and Desire in MTV”  
Assignment 2: negative letter

**September 30** Discussion of reading/video; Video: “All in the Family”;

**October 2** Discussion of article; Video: “Killing Us Softly 3”; **2<sup>nd</sup> Journal**  
Assignment No. 3: *Out of the Mainstream* review (10 points);

**October 7-9** Videos : "In the Life" and "Tongues Untied"  
Assignment No. 4: positive letter (10 points); reading: *Restrictive Portrayals of Asians*

**October 14-16** Videos: "How North is Home: the Asian-Alaskan Experience" **3<sup>rd</sup> Journal**  
Discussion of reading and videos; Reading assignment: “*Reflecting Reality*” and “*The Mexican Americans*”; Video “Latinos in Film”; Reading assignment: “Ugly Betty article.  
Annotated bibliography exercise using *Comm Abstracts*.”

**October 21-23** Assigned readings “Race on TV”; **NO CLASSES**  
Assignment: watch a TV show and report next class on race images

**October 28-30** Discussion of reading/video; videos: “Slim Hopes”, **4<sup>th</sup> Journal**  
“Game Over” and "Reviving Ophelia"; Reading assignment: “*Growing Old in Commercials*”

**November 4-6** Discussion of reading; Slide show on seniors in the media; Reading assignment:

**November 11-13** **Research topic & Bibliography**  
Video: "Images of Indians" & discussion of videos/reading;  
Reading: Assignment No. 5 - FAIR’s Media Activism kit review (10 points)

**November 18-20** Video: **5<sup>th</sup> Journal**

**November 25-27**

**December 2-4** **Research paper DRAFT**

-----  
-----

**December 9-11** Oral presentations **Research paper & 6<sup>th</sup> Journal due**