

Mass Media and Minorities Syllabus Addendum

Course Protocol:

Note: No laptop use texting, tweeting or cell phone activity permitted in class.

Note: Attendance required, absence affects grade

Note: E-mail protocol below

E-mail exchanges are no substitute for personal interaction during office hours. If you have not visited office hours over the course of the semester, please do not ask for a letter of reference. I will not know you well enough to write one. When you send an e-mail, please allow at least 24 hours for response during the week. If I am able to respond sooner, I will. I do not assure e-mail responses on the weekends.

Course Description:

This course approaches mass media as a cultural product. Consequently, we begin with an examination of political, historical and sociological structure of society to construct an analytic lens on media content. Media does not operate in a vacuum. **Course examines media behavior as part of a systemic construction of reality.**

This writing component course is designed to provide students a comprehensive historical and sociological overview of press and entertainment media treatment of minorities, including identity constructions of **racial, ethnic and gender groups as well as class issues and leaders who contextualize the minority experience. Topics about women focus on minority women.**

The chronological focus is WWII to the present. The ethnographical component of this course requires learning to apply theory by learning to see and to analyze one's immediate environment and to analyze its press coverage.

Students will begin to work on the final exam beginning the second week of the semester. As a first step, students are required to gather the demographics of the University of Texas. By the second week students must begin to collect a clip file of all *Daily Texan* **news stories** during the spring semester 01/18 through 05/05 about minorities at UT. These materials will be needed for the final exam. In addition, students must keep a count of all news stories about UT during his same period as well as a count of all news stories. No fiestas, food, frivolity or sports coverage to be included. No news briefs. Students should enter these counts on a daily basis because reconstructing this data at the end of the course leads to late papers and loss of credit. The final exam due date will be set after axam calendar is provided by the registrar. **Loss of one grade point for late papers subtracted from the earned grade.**

We will discuss coverage throughout the semester, so students must stay current to contribute to participation in these discussions. Every week a count of **all** UT news stories must be made, as well as a count of all those dealing with UT minorities. Totals to be handed in each week. Clips of UT minority stories will be handed in with the final exam. Students will work toward completion of final exam throughout the semester.

Learning opportunities are provided in visual and written materials, but as a writing component course, grades reflect student ability to demonstrate in written work comprehensive, contextual grasp of course material. Unless otherwise indicated, visuals will be viewed on Fridays in the Instructional Media Center, the Flawn Academic Center (UGL) or at home. On Thursday after a film assignment, a one-page reaction paper is required. Make two copies---one to hand in and one to use as reference for class discussion. This paper must address a main theme of the film and contributes toward the participation component of the class by providing students material for oral contribution. Each paper must show increasing ability to use language found in course material. These are ungraded papers for assessing writing skills.

As a writing component course writing skills affect grade. Three original written works are assigned to fulfill the writing component requirement: a one-page paper defining term and a 4-page mid-term conceptual essay; a 3-page film analysis of an assigned film and a final research paper of no less than 10 pages **due date to be announced.**

Film critique may not simply describe film plot or story; it must analyze the meaning or subtext of the film and make reference to its relevance to course material. See details of specific course assignments for more complete instructions.

Grading: Class participation: 15% (40 points); mid-term 40% (70 points); film critique 16% (40 points); final 45% (150 points). Total points possible; 300.

Note: Assigned videos and films must be seen during the week scheduled at the Media Instructional Center, 5th floor, College of Communication or at UGL (Flawn Academic Center) or at home. By the following Thursday a two-page reaction paper is due.

Required texts: (All texts are on reserve at PCL)

A Free and Responsible Press

Possessive Investment in Whiteness

Color Blind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat From Racial Equity

Lies My Teacher Told Me (selections)

On Writing Well (optional)

Note: Course requires complete *Roget's Thesaurus* for in-class use; hardback copies available at ½ Price Books for about \$7.

Students are expected to stay abreast of reading assignments. Pace of course lectures however may vary to accommodate student need and course focus. Students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking skills. **Students cannot earn an A in class without**

providing regular oral contributions. Both in oral class participation and in written assignments students are expected to become conversant with concepts of media's relationship to power, equity, social justice and economic determinates as they relate to representation of and participation by minorities in press and mass media. Relevant articles provided over the course of the semester must be kept in clip file for use in assignments as reference and context when warranted.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All papers must include reference to course material by citing appropriate sources and quoting comprehensively from reading assignments. Course material should provide at least 2/3 of the sources drawn upon for all written course work. All quotes must be relevant to the material being discussed and must be further elucidated by the student in his or her own words to contextualize the significance of selected quotes. No drop in quotes.

Note: A clip file must be constructed of *Daily Texan* articles from 01/18 to 05/05. Materials clipped from publication are best preserved within transparent plastic sleeves.

Learning Goals:

- (1) Students are expected to become able to discuss assigned course materials in written work using appropriate terms, concepts and examples provided in the course material.
- (2) Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of these components by the end of course in polished written work that does not make excessive use of passive voice and eliminates "clutter," or unnecessary words.
- (3) Students are expected to make use of course concepts to analyze and discuss in organized written work the content of assigned news reports and films.

Participation is measured by contributions to class discussions reflecting timely completion of work and relevance to topic under discussion. Students are expected to come to class with assigned text and prepared to specifically discuss the material assigned for that day so that they can respond when called upon. **Note:** A's are impossible and B's difficult to earn without participation.

Written Assignments: Specific steps in preparation.

As a writing component course, students are required to demonstrate polished writing skills, including minimum use of passive voice, especially the overuse of "is," "are," "was," "were," "have," "has" and gerunds (verbs ending in "ing"). All those that students cannot eliminate must be circled in red prior to handing in paper.

In written assignments, students are required to eliminate repeated words by drawing on strongly varied vocabulary with the use of a thesaurus as needed. They are also required to eliminate unnecessary wordiness or “clutter.” Failure to do so reflects in the grade.

Note: Prior to turning in a paper, students must submit it to spelling, grammar and readability check. Score for readability must appear in upper right hand corner of first page. For additional help, students may make use of the following:

- **Undergraduate Writing Center**, for assistance on all aspects of writing from organizing the paper to handing it in

- **Noodlebib**, Web-based software for creating MLA and APA-formatted bibliographies

- **University Libraries**, for information and advice on library resources

For information about academic integrity at the University of Texas at Austin, please see the UT Austin **Dean of Students Web site**.

Note: Students with a C or lower on any assignment are should go to Writing Center for help on subsequent writing assignments. Submit papers in 12 point 1.5 spaced.

1) All papers must include reference to assigned materials by citing appropriate sources and further explicating these sections in your own words. Two-third of citations used in final paper must be drawn from a variety of assigned material drawing broadly from each work as relevant. Do not depend on just one source.

2) No more than one website or on-line source may be cited in any paper, with the exception of those required on syllabus as reference sites.

General Writing Guidelines:

This is a writing component course which means that your writing skills will be considered as a major part of the evaluation for grades. As required in writing component courses, all papers are extensively edited and handed back with margin notes for improvement. Subsequent papers should show evidence of having addressed these flaws. All papers should use 1.5 line spacing.

Papers are expected to demonstrate:

- 1) Comprehensive grasp of course material to date.
- 2) Strong writing skills including correct grammar usage and spelling, rich vocabulary.
- 3) Minimal use of passive voice and gerund verbs as noted above.
- 4) Varied vocabulary that avoids repetition of words (this will require use of bound, not a computer thesaurus. ½ Price Books is a good inexpensive source for this)
- 5) Tight editing, elimination of unnecessary words or “clutter”
- 6) Clear expository style that demonstrates organized content

- 7) Transitions between paragraphs to assure clarity
- 8) Critical thinking skills that present points lucidly and support points made
- 9) correct attribution and citations
- 10) Elimination of run-on sentences. Sentences should be strong enough to stand alone.
- 11) Run rough draft through computer edit and readability check; hand in rough showing this step and write readability score on each version.

Note: Papers without these steps will be returned without a grade.

Papers must use material from course. Regardless of the quality of a paper, the grade will reflect any failure to do so. Thus **reading the texts assignments** and taking lecture notes are key to grades. All papers should be first edited through software spelling and grammar check. Then both a rough draft and polished version of all papers should be handed in showing these edits. Also rough drafts should show edits and corrections made using *Championship Writing* or *Elements of Style* or *The Brief Penguin Handbook* (the most complete) as guides. Bibliography should indicate which of these was used as reference. Papers will not be accepted without these steps. **Note:** Before handing in any written assignment circle in red all passive verbs you have been unable to eliminate. Papers without this step will not be accepted. **Remember that excessive use of passive verbs that can be eliminated will lower your grade.**

Note: The purpose of an assignment, exam or final paper is to allow students to demonstrate a competent grasp of course material in polished writing. Students are expected to make use of new knowledge by citing appropriate sources drawn primarily from course material, (primarily texts and assigned handouts unless otherwise instructed) applying key concepts and discussing the ideas in student's own words.

Mid-Term: 1 page definition of terms and a 4-page Conceptual Essay: Students will trace and discuss a concept presented in course material across several assigned readings as directed.

3-Page Film Analysis: Assigned entertainment film (not documentary) from class viewing to critique portrayal of identity and representation issues and underlying meaning of the film drawing on course material to support observations. **Do not retell plot; examine subtext, symbols and icons; refer to readings. Make use of lecture notes taken during class discussions of film. This assignment requires viewing the selected film more than once.**

Final 10-Page Research Paper (plus bibliography): Students will be required to analyze press clips from the *Daily Texan* collected across the time period indicated using course concepts and ethic standards, and citing assigned reading that supports critical analysis of them. Paper must be written approved academic style, including footnotes and bibliography. Content must be original work and supported by drawing significantly on and comprehensively referencing course materials. To do this students must avoid just dropping in a quote or two, but must use the quote in ways that illustrate understanding in context and by expanding upon it in their own words.

Description of an A paper:

- (1) Follows directions and completes all aspects of the assignment.
- (2) Uses more than the minimum number of sources required.
- (3) Is well-written and well-organized, making it easy for reader to follow, comprehend.
- (4) Does an in-depth analysis of the data or information provided.

(From material provided by the Writing Center at UCLA)

A student who accomplishes the first three things on the list receives a B. A and B papers have effective to strong introductions and conclusions. The C paper lacks development of ideas and support (strong arguments backed by citations). Any student who fails to accomplish the third requirement receives a C or below, depending on the quality of the other requirements. A C paper accomplishes the above requirements but may be lacking in development or support; the writing style is basic or primary; there may be grammatical errors or misspellings and some syntactic problems (but not serious enough to cause confusion.).

Academic dishonesty: regulations:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

ADA protection

<http://www.utexas.edu/disability/>

Religious days of observation:

Students must advise professor of such planned absences a reasonable time in advance of missing class so that arrangements can be made to make up missed assignments or tests