

Summer 2019  
COMM 365/ WMST 300: Gender, Race and Class in Media  
Mon-Thur. 1:30-3:35pm  
East Hall, Rm 121

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**Required Textbook:**

Dines and Humes, *Race, Gender and Class in Media*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

**Course Description:**

This course examines the relationships between United States media and the social constructions of gender, race and class. Employing a variety of theories from communication studies and cultural studies we will examine how gender, race and class are presented and performed in media content. Through examination of media representation this course attempts to expand insights into the ways media representations of gender, race and class impact patterns of cultural development. In this course we will examine the influence of media representations on the development of identity as well as perception of others.

**Course Objective:**

1. Develop awareness of the various ways that gender, race and class are presented in media content and the impact of those representations on the content and audience interpretations.
2. Develop a greater understanding of cultural privilege can influence media content.
3. Gain better understanding of the theories and approaches to interpreting and analyzing performances of gender, race and class in media content.
4. Develop skills to perform critical analysis of media representations
5. Improve critical analysis, communication, and oral presentation skills.

**Assignments:**

Participation: Attendance at all classes is extremely important and expected. Any more than two absences may subject the student to a reduced grade. If you must miss a class, please let me know IN ADVANCE of your absence. Material covered in missed classes is the responsibility of

the student and absence does not excuse assignments from being submitted on time. Late assignments will be reduced in grade. Assignments may be emailed only by prior arrangement.

For the courtesy of fellow students and in order to fully get the most out of the course; please make every effort to get to class on time. Chronic lateness may also result in a reduced grade (15 participation points may be forfeited for each absent/tardy beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence).

This class will be participatory and everyone is expected to join in discussions.

*Discussion Leader:* Be prepared to lead a class discussion for the respective reading. The leader should be prepared to address and explore the following questions: 1) How does the reading address inequality in media production, distribution, and/or content? 2) Does the reading address the social context of race, gender and/or class? How? 3) Does the reading address the social influence of audience perception on gender, race and/or class? How? 4) Does the reading describe and analyze certain media artifacts (i.e. film, television, magazines, newspapers, internet)? How? 5) Comment on anything you find worrisome or problematic about gender, race, and class in the media. 6) Comment on anything you find interesting, engaging, hopeful, about gender, race, and class you take away from the reading. Students are encouraged to employ samples of written material, or audio or video materials for discussion.

*Journal Assignment:* Your journal assignments are based on weekly readings and classroom discussions, this should include your analysis of what you are learning and experiencing.. These entries should be written in first person narratives and comment on the facilitations in class; the readings; your own facilitations including goals, preparation, and self-assessment. Here, you must demonstrate that you have done the readings and thought about them. Your journals should be typed and between 1,500 to 2,500 words. You will complete a total of 5 journals.

*Video Essay Assignment [Grades are combined into one mini-doc grade]*

1. **Video Essay Assignment [Grades are combined into one mini-doc grade]**

Your final project, a video essay or mini-documentary, is an integrative learning assignment. You will synthesize the knowledge you learned this semester with research in additional sources to bring some new information to the class.

Your goal is to create a **short** (5- to 7-minute) video presentation using video footage, text, images, and sound to craft engaging argument or narrative. Your video must have a point of view and demonstrate a thorough understanding of representations of gender, race, or class we have studied in this course along with deeper relevant research. Be encouraged to employ narratives that pulls the work together and includes voice-over segments, on-camera interviews and segments, as well as graphics.

- Your project should be analytical and grounded in research.
- Your prose should be clear and engaging.
- Your video should make thoughtful use of weblinks, images, audio, video, slides, and so on.
- Your video should demonstrate an understanding of the course material.

The first step is for everyone in the group to review these links and resources carefully.

[https://witness.org/portfolio\\_page/how-to-make-videos-for-change/](https://witness.org/portfolio_page/how-to-make-videos-for-change/)

<https://witness.org/resources/>

**2. Video Proposal Due, Week 3** (Bullet points) One person from your group posts the proposal to Bb.

1. General topic
2. **Sever**al relevant scholarly sources (3 to 5 sources outside of class readings)
3. Ideas for experts (or others) to interview
4. General idea about what you want people to take away from your mini-doc

**3. Final mini-doc due Week 5.**

<b><u>Grading:</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Discussion Leader 100pt (2 * 100)</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Journals (5 * 100)</i>	<i>500</i>
<i>Video Essay</i>	<i>300</i>
 <i>Semester Score</i>	 <i>1100</i>

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1:**

5-21: Class Introduction and Discussion...

Readings: For discussion 5-22-2018

- Part I: A Cultural Studies Approach to Media: Theory
- Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture,  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- The Economics of the Media Industry  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

5-22

Readings: For discussion 5-23-2018

- Hegemony  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

5-23

Readings: For discussion 5-24-2018

- Part II: Representations of Gender, Race and Class
- The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Redskins: Insult and Brand  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

5-24

Readings: For discussion 5-29-2018

- “Global Motherhood”: The Transnational Intimacies of White  
Femininity  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- The “Rich Bitch”: Class and Gender on the Real Housewives of New  
York City  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Entry #1 Due---Sunday 5-27-2018 @ 11:59pm**

**Video Tasks for the Week: Review Videos 01-08**

- Getting ready to make a human rights film
- Filming, audio and using cell phones
- Filming and protecting interviewees
- Editing and distributing your film
- Safety and Security
- Composition
- Lighting
- Direction

**Week 2:**

5-28: **Memorial Day (NO CLASS)**

5-29

Readings: For discussion 5-30-2018

- From Rush Limbaugh to Donald Trump: Conservative Talk Radio and the Defiant Reassertion of White Male Authority

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

- Part III: Reading Media Texts Critically
- Inventing the Cosmo Girl: Class Identity and Girl-Style American Dreams

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

5-30

Readings: For discussion 5-31-2018

- Educating *The Simpsons*: Teaching Queer Representations in Contemporary Visual Media

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

- When in Rome: Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Sports Talk Radio

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

5-31

Readings: For discussion 6-04-2018

- Playing “Redneck”: White Masculinity and Working-Class Performance on Duck Dynasty

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

- Black Women and Black Men in Hip Hop Music: Misogyny, Violence, and the Negotiation of (White-Owned) Space

Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Entry #2 Due---Sunday 6-3-2018 @ 11:59pm**

**Video Tasks for the Week: Review Videos 09-17**

- **Holding your camera**
- **Camera movements**
- **Moving with your camera**
- **Exposure**
- **Focus**
- **Sound**
- **Viewpoint**
- **Zooming**

**Week 3**      **Begin Interviewing**

6-4

Readings: For discussion 6-05-2018

- “(In)Justice Rolls Down Like Water...”: Challenging White Supremacy in Media Constructions of Crime and Punishment  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Part IV: Advertising and Consumer Culture
- Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-5

Readings: For discussion 6-06-2018

- The New Politics of Consumption: Why Americans Want So Much More Than They Need  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Part V: Representing Sexualities
- Pornographic Values: Hierarchy and Hubris  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-6

Readings: For discussion 6-07-2018

- Deadly Love: Images of Dating Violence in the “*Twilight Saga*”  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Hereto Barbie?  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-7

Readings: For discussion 6-11-2018

- Part VI: Growing Up With Contemporary Media
- Disney: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader in Animating Inequality  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Growing Up Female in a Celebrity-Based Pop Culture  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Entry #3 Due---Sunday 6-10-2018 @ 11:59pm**

**Continue Interviewing and Development of Mini-Doc**

**Week 4:**

6-11

Readings: For discussion 6-12-2018

- “Too Many Bad Role Models for Us Girls”: Girls, Female Pop Celebrities and “Sexualization”  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Video Games: Machine Dreams of Domination  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-12

Readings: For discussion 6-13-2018

- “You Play Like a Girl”: Cross-Gender Competition and the Uneven Playing Field  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Part VII Still Watching Television in The Digital Age
- Why Television Sitcoms Kept Re-Creating Male Working-Class Buffoons for Decades  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-13

Readings: For discussion 6-14-2018

- A Shot at Half-Exposure: Asian Americans in Reality TV Shows  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Performing Class: Gilmore Girls and a Classless Neoliberal “Middle-Class”  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-14

Readings: For discussion 6-18-2018

- Don’t Drop the Soap vs. the Soap Opera: The Representation of Male and Female Prisoners on U.S. Television  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- Donald Trump and the Politics of Spectacle  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Entry #4 Due---Sunday 6-17-2018 @ 11:59pm**

**Complete Interviewing, Work on Editing and final preparation of Mini-Doc**

## Week 5:

6-18

Readings: For discussion 6-19-2018

- Part VIII: Social Media, Virtual Community, and Fandom
- The Political Economy of Privacy on Facebook  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-19

Readings: For discussion 6-20-2018

- “Don’t Hate the Player, Hate the Game”: The Racialization of Labor in World of Warcraft  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_
- *GimpGirl* Grows Up: Women with Disabilities Rethinking, Redefining, and Reclaiming Community  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-20

Readings: For discussion 6-21-2018

- #Ferguson: Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States  
Discussion Leader \_\_\_\_\_

6-21: Final Production Presentation...

### **Journal Entry #5 Due---Sunday 5-27-2018 @ 11:59pm**

- **Include reflection of the development of mini-doc, as well as information gathered from classmates mini-doc’s.**

## Other Class Policies:

### Late Exams & Projects

I will deduct 15 points from a project for every day late (weekends equal one day). In the case of family and/or medical emergencies, I may make an exception to these policies based on the particulars of the case. However, if an emergency does arise, you should contact me before the

actual due date (e.g., via rrcraig@gmu.edu email, day or night). I do not offer extensions to students after the due date has passed, except in the case of serious family or health emergencies.

### Grade Disputes

If you have a question or a concern with a grade given in the course, you should follow the following procedure to ask for a re-evaluation of the grade: (1) Wait at least 24 hours to think about the grade, (2) Write a short, one-page letter that describes your reasons for asking for a re-evaluation. In short, present a measured and articulate argument for why you deserve a better grade on your work. Then, (3) email me this letter. I will then re-read your work and re-consider the mark. The final decision (whether it results in an improved grade, or, potentially, a less favorable mark) will be made before the end of the semester. Further appeals of grades should follow the procedure outlined in the George Mason University calendar. Finally, should you have a concern about the grade you received on a specific exam or assignment, you should **contact me within three class periods of receiving your grade** for that assignment. I will not review grades re-submitted after this time period has elapsed.

### Honor Code

George Mason University students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code; please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code if you have not already done so. All papers, projects, and exams are to be original and prepared for this class. Papers and projects for this class may be related to a task in another class, but you must get specific permission from both instructors. While hired typists and proofreaders are permitted, your exams, papers, and projects must be your own work.

### Disability Support Services

To provide an equitable learning environment for each student, the instructor will readily adjust assignments for students who have special needs, as documented and confirmed by the Disability Resource Center. If you have special needs in the classroom, please bring a letter from Disability Support Services confirming and describing your need within two weeks of the start of the semester. You may have Disability Support Services write the instructor directly and, in either instance, the instructor will hold the information in confidence.

### Changes to the syllabus

As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the above syllabus, in the interest of furthering student learning and/or ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Students will be given ample notice regarding any major changes to the course plan.