

Sociology 084.01—Mass Media in American Society

Spring 2006

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In their writings on emerging media(s) in the 21st century, Arthur and Marilousie Kroker note “The real world of digital reality has always been post-alphabetic.” Reading as a form of knowledge acquisition has, for much of the developed world, given way to a myriad of literacies which demand the ability to move fluidly through multiple media including television and cinema, radio and digital music, the internet and world wide web.

The responses from the social sciences and sociology to these emerging technologies of media delivery and consumption have been equally as varied. In an age where movies become primary historical documents, and news programs resemble rock videos, the need for critical response becomes paramount. As a core course in sociology, this class will do the following:

1. Examine and utilize the various methodologies common in sociological analysis of media studies.
2. Familiarize students with different sociological and theoretical literatures concerning the economic, social and cultural aspects of media analysis.
3. Provide a topical overview of the historical development of media structures in the United States and Western Europe (along with other selected geographical regions), giving attention to the rise of corporate control of media.
4. Provide an introduction into the relationship of representation and power, particularly in the case of race, class and gender.

Readings: Almost all the readings for this course are available in your two readers, which you can purchase at the bookstore. They are: Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez’ *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text Reader* and Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner’s *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*. The remaining articles may be accessed through the O’Neill library course reserves website. Readings are listed under Arend.

Course Requirements:

I. Attendance – I will take role in the class. You are allowed two absences. Any unexcused absences after this will result in a lowering of your final grade by one-third of a mark. Thus, your third absence would lower your grade from that of an A to an A-, your fourth absence would lower it again from an A- to a B+, and so on. Excused absences, including approved athletic events, medical appointments, and absences cleared by the dean will not lower your grade.

II. Readings – The readings are not extensive, but some of them are difficult. Each student is expected to complete the readings. *This is essential for passing the class.* We will reference the readings closely, both in discussion and in your written assignments. You will be required to present the readings and lead discussion for one class, in teams of three or four. There will be a sign up sheet the second week of class for discussion times. The discussion should not run more than one-half hour, and should address the following:

- a. The major arguments of the day's readings. This should be presented on a hand-out to all class members.
- b. Your analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the readings.
- c. Discussion questions concerning the readings as they related to other class materials and relevant current events. You will begin the discussion with these questions, but you are not required to lead the discussion per se.

III. Written Requirements – You are required to complete two five-seven page papers. You must show me that you have read and engaged with the readings in depth. I want to know what YOU think, but it is as important that you lay down a theoretical base for your arguments. This means citing the readings/theorists that are applicable and arguing for/with/or against their theories in the development of your own arguments and points. A strong response paper will be well organized, and it will demonstrate an intimate knowledge of and serious grappling with the issue at hand. I will give you specific guidelines for each paper. In terms of written work:

- a. All papers should be double-spaced.
- b. Margins should be standard, unless previously agreed upon in special circumstances.
- c. The font of all papers will be 12 point, either Times New Roman or Arial. If you want to use other specifications, check with me first.
- d. All assignments should demonstrate knowledge of style, grammar and punctuation appropriate to college level writing.

IV. Exams – You will have an in-class midterm and final exam. The exams will consist of matching, short answer, and/or short essay.

Grading Summary and Paper Guidelines In addition to attendance, your grade for this class will be based on the following components:

Class participation & group presentation	10 points
Response papers	40 points (2 x 20 points each)
Midterm	25 points
Final Exam	25 points
Total:	100 points

I assume you will do your own work; any plagiarized work will be referred to the dean. See also the following link for more information:

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/odsd/services/guide/part4/>.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Section 1: The Origins of Mass Media and its Role in Society

1. The Rise of the Mass Media

Tuesday, January 17: Introduction to course

Thursday, January 19:

Online Reserve

Croteau and Hoynes (Chapter One) “Media and the Social World” from *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*, 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Tuesday, January 24:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

McLuhan, Marshall, "The Medium is the Message"

Films: *The History of Mass Communications, Images in Media*

2. The Origins of Media Studies: Marxism and the Production of Mass Ideas

Thursday, January 26:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Kellner and Durham, "Adventures in Media and Cultural Studies," pp ix-xxxviii

Introduction to Part 1 pp. 3-8

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas"

Tuesday, January 31:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Gramsci, Antonio. "History of Subaltern Classes, The Concept of Ideology, Cultural Themes"

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry"

3. Cultural Studies

Thursday, February 2:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Introduction to Part II

Debord, Guy "The Commodity as Spectacle"

Tuesday, February 7:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Dorfman, Ariel and Armand Mattelart, "How to Become a General in the Disneyland Club"

Film: *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

Section 2: Method and Research in the Social Sciences and Media Studies

1. Content Analysis

Thursday, February 9: **Paper #1 Assigned**

Online Reserve

Fox, Bonnie. "Selling the Household: 70 Years of Ads in the Ladies Home Journal,"

Gender & Society, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (March, 1990) 25-40.

2. Frame Analysis

Tuesday, February 14:

Online Reserve

Binder, Amy. "Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Descriptions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, Issue 6 (Dec., 1993), 753-767.

Gamson, William A., David Croteau, William Hoynes, Theodore Sasson. "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 18. (1992), pp. 373-393.

3. Ideological Analysis

Thursday, February 16:

Online Reserve

Ingraham, Chrys. 1999. (Chapter Four) Four Weddings and an Industry: Popular Film and Television Weddings, in *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture*. (NY: Routledge: 123-157).

Phillips, Jerry and Ian Wojcik-Andrews. "Telling Tales to Children: The Pedagogy of Empire in MGM's Kim and Disney's Aladdin." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 20.1 (1996) 66-89.

Section 3: Political Economy and Mass Media

1. Media Ownership and Consolidation

Tuesday, February 21: **Paper #1 due**

Film: *Money for Nothing: Behind the Business of Pop Music*

Thursday, February 23:

Online Reserve

Croteau and Hoynes (Chapter Two) "The Economics of the Media Industry" from *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*, 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

**In person reserve at O'Neill Library [Only two chapters from one book can be put online.]

Croteau and Hoynes (Chapter Three) "Political Influence on Media" from *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*, 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Tuesday, February 28:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Croteau, David and William Hoynes. "The New Media Giants: Changing Industry Structure"

Online Reserve

Fairchild, Charles. "Deterritorializing Radio." *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 21, pp. 549-561.

Thursday, March 2: **MIDTERM**

****NO CLASS: Spring break March 7 and 9****

2. Chomsky and Herman's Propaganda Model

Tuesday, March 14:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Chomsky, Noam and Edward Herman, "A Propaganda Model"

Film: *The Myth of the Liberal Media: The Propaganda Model of News*

3. Audiences, Media Influence and Politics

Thursday, March 16:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Symthe, Dallas. "On the Audience: Commodity and Its Work"

Tuesday, March 21:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Sender, Katherine, "Selling Sexual Subjectivities: Audiences Respond to Gay Window Advertising"

Radway, Janice A. "Women Read the Romance"

4. Media and Consumer Culture

Thursday, March 23: **Paper #2 Assigned**

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Schor, Juliet. "The New Politics of Consumption: Why Americans Want So Much More Than They Need"

Tuesday, March 28:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Giroux, Henry A. "Kids for Sale"

Jhally, Sut, "Image-Based Culture"

Thursday, March 30:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Kilbourne, Jean, "The More You Subtract, the More You Add"

Film: *Killing Us Softly 3*

Section 4: Historical Silences – Representations of the "Other"

Tuesday, April 4:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

Introduction to Part IV

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Thursday, April 6: **Paper #2 Due**

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Wilson II, Clint C. and Félix Gutiérrez, "Advertising and People of Color"

Film: *Ethnic Notions*

Tuesday, April 11:

Durham and Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*

hooks, bell. "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance"

Dines, Gail. "King Kong and the White Woman: Hustler Magazine and the Demonization of Black Masculinity"

Online Reserve (recommended, but not required)

Johnson, Kirk A. "Objective News and Other Myths: The Poisoning of Young Black Minds." *Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 60, Issue 3 (Summer 1991), 328-341.

Thursday, April 13: NO CLASS: Easter Break

Tuesday, April 18:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Hart, Kylo-Patrick R. "Representing Gay Men on American Television"

Raymond, Diane. "Popular Culture and Queer Representation: A Critical Perspective"

Thursday, April 20:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Gamson, Joshua. "Sitting Ducks and Forbidden Fruits"

Section 5: Focus on Pornography

Tuesday, April 25:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Rich, Frank. "Naked Capitalists"

Online Reserve

Schlosser, Eric. (Section 3) "Empire of the Obscene" and "Out of the Underground" from *Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market* (NY: Mariner Books, 2003)

Thursday, April 27:

Dines and Humez, *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*

Boyle, Karen. "The Pornography Debates"

Jane, Caputi. "Everyday Pornography"

Tuesday, May 2:

Finish course material and review

Thursday, May 4:

EXAM

Filename: SC084_Arend.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\COJULUN\My Documents\1STAFF ASSISTANT\Syllabi\Spring 06
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\COJULUN\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
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