

CO 4233/6233—GENDER & MEDIA

COURSE SYLLABUS

FALL 2018

Associate Professor: Pete Smith, Ph.D.

Office: 200 McComas Hall

Office Phone: 325-0983

Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 12:00-12:30; TTH 10:00-11:00 (via Skype; details will be given in an email to the class.)

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Required Texts

Faludi, Susan. *In the Darkroom* (New York: Picador, 2017). ISBN: 978-1250132697; other readings as assigned and can be found on the class Module page under the appropriate unit headings.

Course Description

(Three hours lecture) A critical exploration of discourses of gender and its intersections with sexuality, race, and class as represented in popular forms of media. (Same as GS 4233/6233)

Course Goals

This course examines the intersection between gender and the American media—specifically the media’s role in the social construction of masculinity and femininity, manhood and womanhood. To that end, this course will:

- (1) provide an overview of gender as a social construction and the media’s role in that construction.
- (2) examine the role that entertainment television plays in the construction of gender in the workplace and of women as crime victims and criminals.
- (3) discuss the intersection of gender and race in both feature films and the documentary.
- (4) examine the film industry’s role in the construction of modern American masculinity.
- (5) analyze the role of popular music in perpetuating gender and racial stereotypes.
- (6) examine the progress, or lack thereof, of women journalists in the newspaper industry.

(7) clarify issues facing the transgender community and their families, as explained in the book memoir.

Learning Outcomes

- (1) Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of gender and various theories that explain its social construction through class discussion, exams, quizzes, and written assignments.
- (2) Students will analyze the role that the media (e.g. film, music and television) play in that social construction process through class discussion, exams, quizzes, and written assignments.
- (3) Students will understand and analyze the intersection of race, class, and gender in popular media through class discussions, exams, quizzes, and written assignments.
- (4) Students will understand and explain the historical and current role that women have played in journalism—and the cultural limitations placed upon them—through class discussions, exams, quizzes, and written assignments.
- (5) Students will recognize the historical and current issues facing the transgender community—including blatant ignorance and discrimination—through a reading, discussion, and examination of *In the Darkroom*.

Attendance Policy

Given the method of delivery, attendance will not be taken in the course. Although there is no formal attendance policy, it is important to note that students who enroll in the course are expected to complete all assignments and participate in the course when asked or required.

Course Difficulty and Completion

Taking an online course and succeeding in the online classroom environment requires diligence, integrity, and discipline. Accordingly, each online student must take responsibility for his or her own actions (meeting deadlines, etc.), and keeping up with the course material and expectations. You will get to work at your own pace to some degree, but everyone should come into the course with an understanding that I have identical expectations of my online and face-to-face students.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Class delivery will consist of professor-led audio lectures and class notes (both found on the course Modules page under the appropriate unit heading.) Both are a summary of each class reading (including the Faludi book). They will be posted on Canvas to help you organize your own notes and thoughts as you prepare for quizzes, exams, class discussions, and written assignments.

The audio lectures are meant to reflect and elaborate on that week's reading and class notes, offer observations and additional information, and give you a few questions and ideas to think about.

Undergraduate Course Assignments

(1) Students are expected to complete **three (3) exams**, including the final. These exams will consist of a combination of questions, including multiple choice, true/false and discussion/essay. Each exam is worth **100 points**.

(2) Students also will complete **ten (10) quizzes**, each worth 10 points, for a total of **100 points**. See the course schedule for **approximate** quiz dates. Each quiz will open up by 8:00 AM on the assigned date and must be completed by 11:59 PM on the say day. Students will have **30 minutes** to complete the quiz once it is opened.

NOTE: Online quiz questions will be given to students in random order. Students will have to complete the quiz in one sitting and under a strict time limit. The instructor will not provide correct quiz answers until the time period for taking the quiz has expired.

(3) Healthy communication is a two-way, active process. It is my belief that students, even those in an online environment, can and must contribute to the health and well-being of the classroom culture. Accordingly, I will post **five (5) topics** on Canvas over the course of the semester, and you will have the opportunity to earn a total of **50 points (10 points per topic)** for offering comments and feedback on the board. Topics can include anything from the textbook, class notes, or any current news item that I think is relevant to what you're learning from the course.

NOTE: To receive full credit for their discussion posts, students are expected to write at least **one full paragraph** as a response and comment on **at least one** student's response. Students also will be graded on the quality of their original posts and responses (Quality = the amount of information the student provides and whether or not that information is factual and communicated clearly).

(4) Students will write 3-5 page end-of-the-semester "reflection paper" based on the information learned in the class. This piece is due at the end of the semester and is worth **100 points**. The assignment will be explained in detail at a later date.

Grading Scale

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = below 60%

Graduate Student Assignments

(1) Graduate students are expected to complete **three (3) exams**, including the final. These essay exams are worth **125 points** each.

(2) Graduate students also will read a book that falls within the gender studies discipline (in addition to the Faludi book), and prepare a **4-6 page** critique summarizing the book's main ideas, its strengths, weaknesses, etc. An approved list of

titles will be given at a later date; or, a student may choose a title on his/her own (that choice, however, is subject to my approval). This assignment is worth **100 points**.

(3) Graduate students will complete a literature review (**5-7 pages** and worth **125 points**) to synthesize the academic research related to an area of interest from their graduate school studies with one particular area of gender studies (including any of the topics, theories, or areas we've covered in class). More details will be given at a later date.

(4) Graduate students will formally present their literature review projects at the end of the semester. Each student will have 10-15 minutes to discuss her/his research. This presentation is worth **50 points** toward the final grade.

NOTE: Presentations will be made via Skype. The presenter will be asked to summarize the literature collected, and discuss areas of future research, particularly as it relates to their chosen majors/fields (as the Department of Communication has no graduate program). The student will be graded on how well he or she is able to explain the research topic and literature in question and how well they answer any follow-up questions asked by the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to go over said time limit for Q&A purposes.

(5) See #3 under "Undergraduate Student Assignments."

Grading Scale

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = below 60%

Note on Exam Proctoring

All exams must be proctored. More information on proctoring, including a list of approved proctor titles, student responsibilities, the Proctor Request Form, and general proctoring guidelines, can be found here. Please read the page carefully and let the instructor know if you have any questions:

<https://online.msstate.edu/proctoring/>

NOTE: If you notice any issues with the proctor, please contact the instructor immediately.

Note on Written Assignments

This is an upper division communication course, so I expect you to be able to express yourself in a clear and articulate manner. Accordingly, all written assignments will be graded for accuracy, depth of analysis, examples used, citation of sources (if

applicable), and for the quality of writing. More details for each written assignment will be posted on Canvas at a later date.

All written assignments will be submitted to the course Canvas page. The assignments will then be submitted to “TurnItIn” to check for both obvious and inadvertent evidence of plagiarism. It is important, then, to make sure your work is your own and to make sure you document your work according to either APA or MLA style.

Please refer to the MSU Honor Code Policy for more information on the issue of plagiarism and its consequences:

<https://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/sites/www.honorcode.msstate.edu/files/2019-05/HonorCode.pdf>

Late or Missed Assignments

As noted in MSU AOP 12.09, “upon registration, the student accepts the responsibility of attending all classes and completing all in-class and out-of-class work that the instructor formally assigns.” In other words, all assignments are due in a timely manner. The guidelines for late or missed assignments are as follows (taken from MSU AOP 12.09: “Class Attendance and Reporting Absences” and listed on the next page):

(1) Although this is a policy for turning in late assignments and/or making up missed assignments, students are still expected to complete exams or assignments at the scheduled time. If students fail to do so—and they do not have a documented, valid excuse upon your return, or if they do not adhere to the agreed upon procedure for turning in a late assignment/exam or making up an assignment/exam—they will receive a **ZERO** for the assignment or exam in question.

(2) As noted in MSU AOP 12.09, “excused absences shall not result in attendance or grade penalties...When excused absences occur on days of scheduled exams and/or quizzes or other measures of academic progress (e.g., assignments) listed on specific dates in the course syllabus, the instructor will provide a student with an opportunity for a comparable evaluation prior to or after the absence. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a request of making up missed exams or other measures of academic progress in a timely manner, and the instructor should communicate a response to such requests in a timely manner.”

“When absence from class is essential, the student must inform the instructor through a designated means of communication and provide satisfactory documentation of the impending absence unless prescribed otherwise in the syllabus. If possible, all arrangements should be made prior to the absence.”

“The student should discuss and document the scope and time frame for completion of missed work with the instructor in an agreed-upon timely manner. The student should recognize that failure to comply with this documented, mutually agreed-upon procedure could result in a grade penalty, if prescribed in course syllabus.”

Only the following reasons will be considered in determining whether or not an assignment may be taken or turned in at a later date. Taken from MSU AOP 12.09:

- “Participation in an official university activity with authorization from an appropriate administrator sponsoring the activity (e.g., Department Head or higher). If the validity of the activity is questionable, the matter should be referred to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for final resolution.
- Death in a student’s immediate family to include a student’s parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, spouse or partner, as well as natural, adopted and/or in-law children.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student’s presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- An illness or injury of a student’s immediate family (to include parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, spouse or partner, as well as natural, adopted and/or in-law children) is eligible for excused absences, but is subject to the instructor’s discretion.
- University or other organized events intended to provide personal enrichment or entertainment will not be considered university authorized activities as it pertains to course attendance and will not qualify as an excused absence.”

“It is the student’s responsibility to obtain valid documentation from a physician or clinical psychologist that contains the date and time the student sought medical consultation and/or treatment and present that documentation to the instructor upon returning to class. The instructor may ask the student to obtain verification of their excused absence through the Dean of Students Office.”

“If a student accrues a significant number of excused absences and/or unexcused absences, then the instructor should contact the student about the best course of action regarding the timely completion of the course or withdrawal from the course.”

MSU Honor Code

Mississippi State has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: “As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Student will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code.

Mississippi State University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields and assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. The MSU Honor Code is critical to these ideals, to the goal of assuming a place of preeminence in higher education, and to the development of the whole student. For additional information please visit: <https://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/>

Title IX

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU's educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU's Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources and information are available at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>

University Safety Statement

Mississippi State University values the safety of all campus community members. Students are encouraged to register for Maroon Alert texts and to download the Everbridge App. Visit the Personal Information section in Banner on your mystate portal to register. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort via Safe Walk, call University Police at 662-325-2121, or in case of emergency, call 911. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit ready.msstate.edu.

Support Services

Students who need academic accommodations based on a disability should visit the Office of Student Support Services, 01 Montgomery Hall, call 662-325-3335, or visit the website at www.sss.msstate.edu.

Students with Disabilities

From MSU AOP 91.122: "Mississippi State University does not permit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in its educational programs. To that end, MSU is committed to the integration of all individuals with disabilities into the programs and services of the University and to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunity for qualified students with a disability. In addition to making its academic programs and services accessible to all students, MSU strives to be a

barrier-free campus. Various departments within the Divisions of Students Affairs, Academic Affairs and Campus Services play an important role in ensuring equal access to campus facilities and programs.”

“Under the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, all qualified students with a disability, as defined by law, are eligible for reasonable accommodations or modifications that enable a qualified individual the opportunity to enjoy equal access to the University’s programs and services unless such accommodation or modification would result in an undue burden to the University or fundamentally alter the nature of a program. MSU provides appropriate support and accommodations through the voluntary disclosure of a disability and a request for accommodation. Disability Support Services (“DSS”), within the Department of Student Support Services, provides disability consultation and the coordination of support services and accommodations for all qualified students with disabilities.”

“Students with disabilities who wish to request an accommodation or modification must identify themselves to DSS. Students that do not voluntarily disclose their disability to DSS and request accommodations are not eligible for services. Accommodations and modifications are determined based on appropriate disability documentation. Qualified students with disabilities must meet the same academic standards as other students at the University. Accommodations or modifications pertaining to service or assistance animals will be considered under the University Service and Assistance Animal Policy (O.P. 91.123). Likewise, employment accommodations pertaining to student-employees will be considered under the University’s Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Reasonable Accommodation in Employment Policy (O.P. 60-123).”

CO 4233/6233

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (August 22)

- Overview of syllabus
- **Unit 1: Television entertainment & Gender (Readings 1-2)**

- **READING:** (1) “That’s What She Said”: Gender, Satire, and the American Workplace on the Sitcom *The Office*,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, January 2013, Vol. 37(1): pp. 64-80.

Week 2 (August 27-29)

- “That’s What She Said” continued;

Week 3 (September 3-5)

- “That’s What She Said” continued;
- **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3—LABOR DAY—NO CLASS**

Week 4 (September 10-12)

- “That’s What She Said” continued;
- **QUIZ 1 will be held on September 12;** it will cover material from reading #1.
- **READING:** (2) “Television’s ‘New’ Feminism: Prime-time Representations of Women and Victimization,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, October 2016, Vol. 23(4): pp. 302-21.

Week 5 (September 17-19)

- “Television’s ‘New’ Feminism” continued;

Week 6 (September 24-26)

- “Television’s ‘New’ Feminism” continued;
- **QUIZ 2 will be given on Sept. 24 or 26;** it will cover material from reading #2.
- **Unit 2: Film, Race, & Gender (Readings 3-4)**
- **READING:** (3) *John Wayne’s America*, pp. 11-27, 35-45.

Week 7 (October 1-3)

- *John Wayne’s America*, continued;
- **QUIZ 3 will be given on October 3;** it will cover material from reading #3.

Week 8 (October 8-10)

- **MONDAY, OCTOBER 8—EXAM 1 (readings 1-3)**
- **READING:** (4) “Construction of the Crack Mother Icon,” *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 2012, Vol. 6(4): pp. 264-75.

Week 9 (October 15-17)

- “Construction of the Crack Mother Icon” continued;

- **QUIZ 4 will be held on October 17;** it will cover material from reading #4.

Week 10 (October 22-24)

- Construction of the Crack Mother Icon” continued;
- **UNIT 3: Print Journalism, Gender, and Issues of Equality**
- **READING:** (5) “You Can Do Anything’: The Agendas of Carolyn Bennett Patterson, *National Geographic’s* First Woman Senior Editor,” *Journalism History*, Winter 2012, Vol. 37(4): 190-206.

Week 11 (October 29-31)

- You Can Do Anything” continued;
- **QUIZ 5 will be given on October 29 or 31;** it will cover material from reading #5.
- (6) “‘Still a Boy’s Club’: Perspectives on Female Sports and Sports Reporters in University Student Newspapers,” *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 2015, Vol. 16(1): pp. 65-74.

Week 12 (November 5-7)

- Still a Boy’s Club” continued;
- **QUIZ 6 will be given on November 7;** it will cover material from reading #6.

Week 13 (November 12-14)

- **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14—EXAM 2 (readings 4-6)**
- **Unit 4: Public Discourse, Private Memories, & The Question of Gender Identity**
- **READING:** (7) *In the Darkroom* (Part 1)

Week 14 (November 19-21)

- *In the Darkroom* continued (Part 1 continued)
- **QUIZ 7 will be held on November 19;** it will cover material from Part 1 of *In the Darkroom*.
- **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21—NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Week 15 (November 26-28)

- *In the Darkroom* continued (Part 2);
- **QUIZ 8 will be held on November 28;** it will cover material from Part 2 of *In the Darkroom*.

Week 16 (December 3-5)

- *In the Darkroom* continued (Part 3);
- **QUIZ 9 will be held on December 5;** it will cover material from Part 3 of *In the Darkroom*.
- **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5—REFLECTION PAPER DUE—by 11:59 CT (via Canvas)**

FINAL EXAM: The final exam can be taken between Monday, December 3 and Friday December 7 and will cover our reading and class discussion of *In the Darkroom*.

Graduate Student Exam/Assignment Dates:

- **October 8:** Exam 1
- **November 14:** Exam 2
- **December 3:** Literature Review
- **December 5:** Book Review
- **December 7:** Final Exam (Exam 3)
- **TBA:** Literature Review Presentation

SAMPLE

Contact Hours

I. Television Entertainment and Gender (**15 total contact hours**)

A. Television Portrayals of Gender in the Workplace (*8 contact hours*)

1. Research on Gender Behaviors in the “Real World” Workplace (3 contact hours)

2. Comparisons between the “Real World” Gender Behaviors and Portrayals in *The Office* (2 contact hours)

a. Analysis of episode #13, season 4: “The Dinner Party”

b. Analysis of episode #4, season 5: “Jan’s Baby Shower”

c. Analysis of episode #14, season 5: “Stress Relief, Part 1”

d. Analysis of episode #15, season 5: “Stress Relief, Part 2”

3. Final Discussion and Analysis of Gender Portrayals in the Workplace (3 hours)

B. Prime-time portrayals of Rape, Rape Myths, and Women as Victims (7 contact hours)

1. Rape Myths, Patriarchy, and Victim-blaming (includes a “debunking” or rape myths using research from the CDC, among other organizations) (3 contact hours)

2. A Case Study of *Law & Order: SVU* (2 contact hours)

a. Analysis of episode #10, season 18: “Motherly Love”

b. Analysis of episode #8, season 16: “Spousal Privilege”

c. Analysis of episode #20, season 14: “Girl Dishonored”

3. Final Discussion and Analysis of Rape, Rape Myths, and Prime-Time TV (2 hours)

II. American Film and the Intersection of Race and Gender (**13 total contact hours**)

A. The Social Construction of American Masculinity in Film (5 contact hours)

1. The Evolution American Masculinity, Colonial Era-Present (3 contact hours)

2. The Case of John Wayne (2 contact hours)

B. African-American Women and American Cinema (7 contact hours)

1. Stereotypes of African-American Stereotypes in the Media: A Historical Overview (3 contact hours)

2. Stereotypes for a New Age: The Evolution of the “Crack Mother” in American Film (e.g. *Precious*) (3 contact hours)

- a. Analysis of *Precious: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire* (1 hour)

III. Journalism, Gender, and Issues of Professional Inequality **(8 total contact hours)**

- A. Women Journalists and Editors in the 20th Century: Coverage of "Soft" and "Hard" News Stories (1 contact hour)
- B. The Case of Carolyn Bennett Patterson, *National Geographic's* First Woman Senior Editor (2 contact hours)
- C. Stereotypes of Women as Sports Reporters (Broadcast and Print) (2 contact hour)
- D. Perception of Gender Inequality in Campus Newsrooms (3 contact hours)

IV. Public Discourse, Private Memories, and the Transgender Community **(10 total contact hours)**

- A. Using the GLAAD Media Reference Guide (Transgender Section) to Introduce Students to Transgender Facts and Proper Terminology (2 contact hours)
- B. Using the Memoir to Study Transgender Culture (.5 contact hours)
 - 1. Susan Faludi, author *In the Darkroom* (.5 contact hours)
- C. A Discussion of *In the Darkroom*, Part I (2 contact hours)
- D. A Discussion of *In the Darkroom*, Part II (3 contact hours)
- E. A Discussion of *In the Darkroom*, Part III (2 contact hours)