

**WGST 236-130: Media, Race & Gender**  
**Georgetown University**  
**Summer 2019**  
**Online**

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**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

This interdisciplinary course will explore representations of gender, race, class, and sexuality through an intersectional and intertextual investigation of various medium forms. We will explore how representation as objects, consumers, subjects, creators, challengers, and critics both reflect and produce socio--cultural phenomena and ideas about the proper role of women in society. Our goal is to understand how cultural meaning is created, contested, and regulated. This course will aim in illuminating the ways in which we are passive consumers of media and empower individuals to become critical participants.

**Learning Outcomes**

	<b>At the end of this course, students should be able to:</b>	<b>Course topics that address these learning outcomes are:</b>	<b>This learning outcome will be evaluated primarily by:</b>
<b><i>Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</i></b>	Discuss, using reason, evidence and context, constructions of gender, including constructions of femininity, and masculinity, within the media.	Sex and Gender Construction in the media; Expressions of Femininity & Masculinity	Reading response papers Discussion board participation
<b><i>Communication</i></b>	Make clear, critical distinctions within contemporary discourses and debates, orally and in written form, about the impact of media and culture on the lives of women.	Gender Construction in the media; Expressions of Masculinity & Femininity	Reading response papers Discussion board participation Presentation
<b><i>Diversity</i></b>	Understand, respect, and interact constructively with others of similar and diverse cultures, values, and perspectives	Expressions of Femininity & Masculinity; Racialized Gender Identities; Sexuality in the Media	Reading response papers Presentation
<b><i>Depth, Breadth, &amp; Integration of Learning</i></b>	Apply theories introduced in lecture to appropriate aspects of our visual and material cultures.	Why Should We Study the Media?; Theoretical Tools; Historical Development of the Media; the Media Now and Beyond	Exam Presentation Reading response papers

## CLASSROOM FORMAT

As a distance learning course, this class will meet online. Canvas will serve as this course's classroom space. Lectures, videos, and course readings for each module can be found on Canvas. Because this is a discussion based course, and all of our communication will be written, you will spend a great amount of time reading and writing in this online course than you would in a face-to-face class.

## PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

In order to succeed in this class, it is very important to remember:

- *Don't let a day go by without logging in to the class.* There may be important announcements to read, posts from your classmates, and study questions to answer.
- *Utilize active reading strategies and don't get behind in the readings!* Review any study questions prior to doing the reading and take notes on key ideas.
- *Set aside a time each day as if you were "sitting in class."* Find a time that fits your schedule and preferences and block it off in your planner.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Access to a GU email account.

Articles on the WGST 236 Canvas site (C on course schedule).

Dines, Gail, and Jean M. Humez. *Gender, race, and class in media: A critical-reader.* Sage, 2017.

## POLICIES

*Canvas* – This course utilizes the learning management system, Canvas. On the course's Canvas site students will find access to additional course readings, assignments, and other resources.

*Communicating with Instructor / Netiquette Policy* – Students should check their e-mail regularly. The faculty at Georgetown University expect students to communicate effectively and professionally. Because e-mail is quick and easy, it is sometimes mistakenly considered informal. When you correspond with friends, informality is acceptable. However, in other circumstances, such as in academic and professional related communication, e-mail should be formal. Please use the following guidelines when sending academic and professional related communication:

- When communicating with the instructor by e-mail, please do not expect an immediate response. The instructor will reply to all messages within 24 hours on business days. Students should not wait until the night before an assignment is due to contact the instructor with questions.
- Indicate the topic of the message in the subject line.
- E-mails should begin with a greeting (i.e. Professor or Dr.). Using "Hey," "What up Sis," "Emerald," another informal greeting, or no greeting at all may not yield a response.
- Reference the class title and name somewhere in your e-mail if not the subject line.
- Use proper English, grammar, and spelling; proofread before sending. Do not use text language, emojis, or hashtags (#thatwontendwellforU).
- Before sending your e-mail be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus.
- Sign your name to all e-mails.
- If a student chooses to ignore this format in their e-mail correspondence, the instructor reserves the right to not answer the e-mail until properly formatted.

*Honor System:* Students are expected to abide by the Georgetown University Undergraduate Honor System. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the material and information posted on the Honor Council's website.

*Academic Resource Center:* Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)) for further information about accommodations available to you. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

*Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism:* As members of this class and the Georgetown University community, all students are expected to act honestly. This includes but is not limited to a pledge to never lie, cheat, steal, or in any other way act in an unethical manner. Unethical behavior is taken very seriously in this class.

Of particular importance to this class is a consideration of plagiarism. Plagiarism is when you misrepresent someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or organization as your own – intentionally or unintentionally. Again, intent does not matter when it comes to plagiarism. You are responsible for taking all steps necessary to make sure that your ideas are your own, or that proper credit is given for the ideas and words of others.

Plagiarism is not just directly copying sections of a paper from someone else or buying a paper from the internet. It also includes not properly citing authorities that you've consulted, giving your essay to someone else for editing, or plugging your own words into someone else's sentence structure. Plagiarism will always result in an "F" on the assignment in which it took place, with no chance for make-up, and may be grounds for failure of the class. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for a more in-depth discussion of plagiarism and the penalties involved. If you have any concerns about plagiarism or about a specific writing assignment, please contact me before you turn in the assignment. Once an assignment is submitted, it cannot be changed.

*Offensive Material:* Some of the things said or shown in this class may and should offend you. Films, if shown, as well as written material may contain violence, nudity, and/or coarse language. I, or your fellow students may say things that shock or disturb you. I expect students to exercise their own discretion and judgment when faced with such potentially offensive material. I also expect students to deal with their classmates with courtesy, respect, and decorum, even when a classmate has said or done something you find offensive (although this is not a license to be offensive, and abusive behavior or harassment will not be tolerated at any time). If the material covered in this class brings into question matters relating to your own faith, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or any other feature of your identity, please take the time to examine your reactions and their bases and reflect on the nature of your discomfort.

*Late Assignments & Missed Work:* Make-up work will not be accepted. Assignments are due as indicated on the syllabus.

## COURSE ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT

### 1. Discussion Board Participation (30%):

While you may be accustomed to participating in face-to-face classes by attending and speaking up in class, in an online class your participation will consist of completing weekly activities and posting your thoughts to discussion forums. Reading and responding to others' responses in writing complete the weekly discussions. These interactive weekly interactions with your classmates and the instructor will offer a rich opportunity to share impressions of the reading and viewing material. The weekly discussion topic will be posted in the forum for each week; follow the assignment instructions carefully. (See "Guidelines for Student Participation in Online Discussion Forums" below.)

As a result of these weekly activities/discussions, you will be reading and writing more in this class than in most courses. Students are expected to post a minimum of three times per week, on at least two different days during the week in which the materials are assigned. Anything posted after the week's end (Sunday at 7 p.m.) will be considered late and will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. In other words, you must post on the discussion board EVERY WEEK while class is in session in order to receive credit for your posts.

### ["Guidelines for Student Participation in Online Discussion Forums"](#)

With freedom to voice your opinion and personal thoughts on the web comes responsibility. Keep the following guidelines in mind when developing your posts:

#### *Netiquette*

- Identify yourself by your real name. Be mindful of your personal safety, and avoid including personal information, such as phone numbers or addresses, in discussion forums.
- Write in the first person (this is your opinion).
- Use humor, joking, or sarcasm with caution. We often rely on nonverbal cues such as facial expressions to communicate joking or sarcasm; but these cues are not always clear in an online environment. These cues can be simulated with emoticons to reduce misunderstandings.
- What you write is public--respect your audience and be mindful of proper netiquette. Netiquette, also known as "net etiquette," includes using language free of profanity, proper tone, and mechanics (including full sentences), as well as courtesy and respect for others' opinions. I may interpret breaches of netiquette as "disruptive behavior."

#### *How to Get Others to Read Your Posts*

- Jot down notes as you read; and before you post, think about the discussion question in the context of the readings. Address the discussion questions as much as possible (don't let the discussion stray).
- Distribute contributions evenly during the discussion period (not concentrated all on one day or at the beginning and/or end of the period).
- Give your post an interesting descriptive subject line to draw attention and invite responses from others.

- Avoid cursory, noncontributory posts, such as “I agree” or “great idea.” If you agree (or disagree) with a post, then say why--and support your statement with concepts from the online lecture or assigned readings, or by sharing a related example or experience.
- Avoid using texting abbreviations in your posts.
- Elaborate one single idea and try to keep your message to a couple paragraphs. Long, multiple-screen “mini-dissertations” are difficult to follow on screen and limit opportunities for the give-and-take essential to effective dialogue.
- Review your comments carefully for grammar and punctuation before you post. Well-formulated, grammatically correct, clear posts attract more attention (from both instructor and colleagues). Consider developing your initial posts in a word processing program that allows you to edit for spelling and grammar--then copy it into the discussion forum. This not only will improve the quality of your posts but also has the added benefit of preserving your insights and observations in word documents you can access after the online course has been completed. Another advantage to composing “offline” is avoiding a time-out from the online discussion forum while you compose your thoughts--resulting in a loss of your careful composition!

### *Earning Full Credit*

- Keep your posts related to the discussion question.
- Think of the assignment as a collegial dialogue--not a writing exercise. Engage in a discussion about the text and issues of the course materials.
- Cite or reference any part of your posts that aren't your own original thoughts. (Avoid plagiarizing!) Citing your sources is especially important in courses where your instructor offers full credit only when citations support the ideas in your post. When you refer to online resources include a hyperlink directly to the source to add context to your comments.
- After you have posted, check back to see if anybody has responded to you--and whether a return response is desired/expected. Build on others' responses to further develop threads of dialog.
- Respond to a colleague who either supports your own thoughts or lacks supporting evidence or seems to fall short on an important point. Pose questions, offer arguments (distinguish between opinion and argument), or play “devil's advocate.” Avoid responses that offer only right or wrong perspectives while ignoring other possible answers; pose open-ended questions that invite dialogue.
- Participation in online forums may be a significant portion of the assessment for your course, so check the course requirements for the weighting of the assessment in your final grade as well as the frequency and requirements for discussion posts to receive full credit.

<b>Rubric for Scoring Participation in Discussion Forums</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Timely contributions</b>	Well distributed throughout week. (2 points)	Somewhat distributed. (1 point)	Not distributed throughout the week. (0 points)
<b>Responsiveness to assignment. Demonstration of knowledge and understanding gained from assigned readings</b>	Demonstrate readings are very clearly understood and incorporated well into responses. (6 points)	Demonstrate some coverage of readings. Readings are somewhat understood and incorporated into responses. (4 point)	Postings are superficial and have questionable relationship to reading material. (0 points)
<b>Adherence to discussion guidelines</b>	Four or more guidelines followed. (2 points)	Two to three guidelines followed. (1 point)	Guidelines ignored. (0 points)

(Adapted from Joan Van Duzer, Humboldt State University, 9/30/08)

**2. Quizzes (worth 15% each)**

Throughout the course you will be required to complete two quizzes, accessible though Canvas. These quizzes will cover assigned readings, videos, and lectures. You may use your books and notes during the quiz, but each quiz will be timed. Therefore, I recommend you stay on top of the material so that you can maximize your potential. Each quiz will be released at 12:00 p.m. on Friday. You may take the quiz at any time between 12:00 p.m. Friday to 11:59. p.m. on Sunday. Once you open the quiz, you will be forced to finish it.

**3. Critical Analysis Papers (worth 20% each)**

Over the course of the semester, you will submit two critical analysis papers.

**Film Review:** You will write a review of two films assigned in class. You will analyze one or more themes presented in both films. The purpose is to demonstrate your understanding of the topics raised over the course of the summer.

**Textual/Production Critical Analysis:** You will analyze an advertisement from a mass circulation magazine or newspaper that deals with an item of clothing you or someone you knows wears. At the same time, you will research the company that makes the item, learning about the production process that is invisible in the advertising. The purpose of this paper is to give you a chance to apply our work on "semiotic" textual analysis, and to learn how to research and analyze the material production process.

**FINAL GRADING SCALE**

A (94-100)	A- (90-93)	B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)	C+ (77-79)
C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	D+ (67-69)	D (60-66)	F (59 or below)	