

**RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA
EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS**

PSYCH 095 – FALL 2009

Professor Dharam P. Yadav
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:45 am – 12:00 pm
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through a series of topical discussions, case studies and visual presentations, students will be introduced to theory and research concerning the Psychology of media images of race, racial stereotypes, gender, sex roles, sexuality and violence, and how these images shape human consciousness. The goal of the course is to give the students a basic understanding of the nature of these pervasive images and the Psychological, social and developmental impacts these images have on society and in the lives of children and adults in such areas as social prejudice, gender roles, human aggression, health, and consumer behavior.

TEXT BOOKS

1. Harris, R.J. (2004). A cognitive Psychology of mass communication. Hilldale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
2. Alexander, A., & Hanson, (2006). Taking sides: Clashing views on controversial issues in mass media and society. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group.
3. Linz, D, & Malamuth, N. (1993). Pornography, Newbury Park, California: Sage Publication, Inc.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

I. Mass Communication Process and Effects

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| Tu 9/01 | 1. General Introduction – Purpose, Goals and Expectations of the Course: Alexander & Hanson, xiii-xviii. |
| Th 9/03 | 2. Models of Mass Communication Process: Harris, chap. 1.
3. Social Psychological context of Mass Communication Process and Effects.
a. Self Selection
b. Selective Perception
c. Mass audience |
| Tu 9/08 | d. Mass Society and the Media Culture: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 2-25. |
| Th 9/10 | 4. Technological Context of Mass Communication Process: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 346-359, 366-385
a. Convergence between the Mass Media, Communication Technologies and Microcomputers
b. New Communication Modes involving Interactive Media using Microcomputers |

II. Psychology of Mass Media Uses and Effects

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| Tu 9/15 | 1. Mass Media Uses and Gratifications
2. Direct Effects and Indirect Effects of Mass Media: Harris, chap. 2
3. Cognitive Effects, Affective Effects and Behavior Effects
4. Short Term Effects and Long Term Effects |
| Th 9/17 | 5. Intended Effects vs Unintended Effects
6. Content-specific Effects vs General Effects |

III. Mass Media Content and How It is Shaped

- Tu 9/22 1. Systemic Influences on Decision-Making in Media Organizations: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 130-154; Harris, chap. 6
2. Social Psychological Factors in Decision-Making in Media Organizations
- Th 9/24 a. Gatekeepers, their Values, Attitudes, and Perceived Audience Profile
- b. Goal Orientation of Decision Makers: Harris chap 7; Alexander & Hansen, pp. 244-265

IV. Media's Symbolic Environment and Portrayal of Race

- Tu 9/29 1. Portrayal of Racial Images, Stereotypes and Roles in Media Entertainment: Harris, chap. 5
- Th 10/01 a. Representation of African-Americans: Harris, chap. 3
- b. Portrayal of Hispanic-Americans
- c. Portrayal of Native-Americans
- d. Treatment of other Minorities
- Tu 10/06 2. Race, Mass Media and African American Culture: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 70-91.
3. Cross-Race Portrayals
- Th 10/08 4. Effects of Race Portrayals
- Tu 10/13 **DEBATE RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT TOPIC #1 DUE**
PRESENTATION OF DEBATE PROJECT
- Th 10/15 **FIRST REVIEW EXAMINATION**

V. Gender and Mass Media

- Tu 10/20 **FEEDBACK REPORT TOPIC #1 DUE**
1. Representation of Men's Roles: Harris, chap. 3
2. Portrayal of Women and Women's Roles: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 50-69
3. Treatment of Lesbians and Gay Men in the Media
- Th 10/22 4. Gender, Sexual images and Advertising: Harris, chap. 4
- Tu 10/27 5. Sex roles, Stereotypes, Rape crimes and Their Effects: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 92-109
- Th 10/29 **DEBATE RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT TOPIC #2 DUE**
PRESENTATION OF DEBATE PROJECT

VI. Sexuality, Pornography and Mass Media

- Tu 11/03 **FEEDBACK REPORT TOPIC #2 DUE**
1. Portrayal of Sexual Intimacy and Sex in Media: Harris, chap 5
2. Presentation of Non-Violent Erotica in the Media
3. Sexual Violence in the Media: Harris, chap. 10
- Th 11/05 4. Psychological Effects of Media Sex and Sexual Violence: Linz et al, pp 16-55
- a. Attitudinal Effects
- b. Physiological/Arousal Effects
- c. Behavioral Effects and Rape Crimes
- Tu 11/10 5. Sexual Violence against women, Scientific Research and Public Policy: Linz et al, pp 1-15; 56-62

**DEBATE RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT TOPIC #3 DUE
PRESENTATION OF DEBATE PROJECT**

VII. Violence and Mass Media

- Th 11/12 1. Psychological Context and meaning of Media Violence: Alexander & Hanson, pp. 26-49; 208-222
- Tu 11/17 **FEEDBACK REPORT TOPIC #3 DUE
DEBATE RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT TOPIC #4 DUE
PRESENTATION OF DEBATE PROJECT**
2. U.S. Surgeon General's Commission on Media Violence
3. Psychological Effects of Media Violence: Harris, chap. 9
- a. Modeling Effects
- b. Stimulating and Cathartic Effects
- c. Long-term Effects
- Th 11/19 4. Media Violence Research: Children, and Public Policy
- Tu 11/24 **DEBATE PROJECT REPORT – FINAL DEADLINE**

VIII. Media Portrayals and Media Literacy

- Tu 12/01 **FEEDBACK REPORT TOPIC #4 DUE**
1. Commercial Advertising, Consumer Socialization and Health Impacts: Harris, chap. 4; Alexander & Hanson, pp. 110-129
2. Media Literacy: Harris, chap. 12
3. What can be done to influence Mass Media
- Th 12/03 **SECOND REVIEW EXAMINATION**
- Tu 12/08 **FEEDBACK REPORTS/DEBATE PROJECTS REVIEW/EVALUATION**
- Th 12/10 **CLASSES END**
- FINAL EXAMINATION**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lectures and Readings: All readings corresponding to the list of topics indicated in the outline will be required of all class members. Appropriate materials will be placed on reserve at the Bailey-Howe Library.

Review Examinations: There will be two (2) review examinations and a final based on assigned readings that are listed in your course outline. Each examination will incorporate short-answer questions as well as objective test items including multiple choice, true – false questions. Final examination will be held in the final examination week.

Debate Research Project: You will complete a comprehensive Debate Research Project of about ten (10) to twelve (12) pages on the topical thesis of your debate from a synthesis of at least eight (8) empirical studies that are available to you from the scholarly research literature. You are also encouraged to incorporate in your debate project an independent personal case study focusing on the analysis of your debate topic.

The goal of this (scholarly) project is to produce a systematic examination of a specific problem pertaining to mass media's content, audiences, and social psychological effects with respect to race, gender, sexuality and violence. Your project report should be typed and should incorporate a statement of the importance of your thesis along with a

coherent and systematic analysis of the arguments and research evidence that would support your thesis. Your project should also provide a succinct summary of your conclusions pertaining to the thesis of the debate topic. Finally, your project report should reflect proper documentation and citations of the origins of its contents that are obtained from the scholarly work of others.

I'll be glad to discuss with you your ideas and interests regarding the debate research project. As an initial step for these discussions, a one-page statement outlining the goals and methodology of your proposed project should be handed in to me at least three (3) weeks before the date of the debate.

Feedback Report on Debate Projects: For each debate topic, each student will prepare a three (3) page typewritten report of the major conclusions and issues which were examined in the presentation of the debate project and what you learned from the presentation. These reports will be due on the date of the next class meeting following the debate presentation. The due dates are listed as part of the schedule of topics.

You will be required to make an oral presentation of your debate project in accordance with the schedule as follows.

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Debate Topics</u>
Tu Oct 13	Race and the media.
Th Oct 29	Gender, sex roles and the media.
Tu Nov 10	Sexuality, pornography and the media.
Tu Nov 17	Violence and the media

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COURSE EVALUATION

Your final grade in this course will be determined on the basis of your performance in your debate research project, review examinations, case study assignments, class presentations and participation. Specifically, each of these components will be evaluated as follows:

Debate Research Project	=	25% of final grade
Review Examinations and final	=	50% of final grade
Class Attendance, Participation and Feedback Reports on Debate Topics	=	25% of final grade

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SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATION OF DEBATE RESEARCH PROJECTS

DATE

TOPIC

Tu 10/13

*Do the mass media realistically portray ethnic minorities and race relations in our Society?

OR

*Are mass media's portrayals of ethnic minorities inaccurate and detrimental to race relations in our nation?

Yes: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

No: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Th 10/29

*Do the mass media realistically portray women and gender roles in our society?

OR

*Are television's images of women inaccurate and detrimental to gender role socialization in our society?

Yes: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

No: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Tu 11/10

*Should pornography materials depicting sexual violence against women be banned in our society?

OR

*Does pornography (materials which depict women in situations that are sexually explicit, violent in nature, humiliating, demeaning and subjugating) have harmful effects on our society, and require strong legislation to control it?

Yes: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

No: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Tu 11/17

*Is television violence harmful to our children and our society?

OR

*Does television violence have harmful effects on children and society, and require government regulation?

Yes: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

No: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____