

Issues and Policies in American Government: Race, Media, and Politics

GOV 312L

Unique Number 38440

Fall 2010

TTh 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

JES A121A

Professor

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Description

This course examines the ways in which the media shape how we think about race. In doing so, this course will first explore the nature and construction of race. Second, it will examine the media establishment and its role in politics. Third, it will apply theories of media norms to explore how racial stereotypes of the four largest minority groups in the U.S. are created and perpetuated. Finally, this course will examine the effects of racialized media images on political processes.

Prerequisites

Twenty-four semester hours of college coursework, including Government 310L, and a passing score on the reading section of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test (or an appropriate assessment test).

Required Text Books

There are two required text books for this course. Both books are available at the University Co-op.

Larson, Stephanie Greco. 2005. *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Leighley, Jan E. 2003. *Mass Media and Politics: A Social Science Perspective*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Supplementary Readings

Readings not found in the required texts can be accessed through Blackboard (courses.utexas.edu).

Grading

Your grade will be based on two exams, one movie review, and several pop quizzes/in-class assignments. The format for the two exams will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and essays and will cover the lectures, films, and readings. Quizzes will be given at random and at any time during lecture. Frequently, I give quizzes at the beginning of class so be on time. If you miss a quiz because of tardiness, you **CANNOT** make it up. Each quiz/in-class assignment will be worth 5 points each. You will receive one point for just handing in a quiz/in-class assignment. Credit for the remaining 4 points is determined by the quality of your work. Your quiz/in-class assignment grade will be calculated by taking the total number of points that you have earned divided by the total number of points available minus one quiz. In other words, each student can miss one quiz without it counting against his/her grade. In the case of a conflict, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. Without prior notification and proper documentation, missed quizzes, assignments and exams cannot be made up. **NO EXCEPTIONS**. The weight of each assignment in determining your final grade is as follows:

Exam 1 (October 12)	25%
Movie Review (due November 23)	25%
Exam 2 (December 2)	25%
Quizzes and in-class assignments	25%

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

Movie Review

Please select three movies (one from each decade) from the list below and write a review of them. Be sure to include how each movie deals with the issue of race, how racial/ethnic minorities are depicted, and which movie does a better job at treating race/racial issues. Movie

reviews should be between five and eight pages in length. All movie reviews must be typed in a 12 point font, double spaced, and have margins no bigger than 1.25 inches. 'A' quality papers not only review the movies but discuss some of the history behind the movies including drawing upon course materials to contextualize the films. Movie reviews are due on November 23th during class. Assignments not handed in during class will not be accepted.

Eligible Movies: *A Soldier Story* (1984)
 Powwow Highway (1989)
 Chan Is Missing (1982)
 Zoot Suit (1982)
 Chutney Popcorn (1999)
 Geronimo: An American Legend (1993)
 My Family (1995)
 Grand Canyon (1997)
 Real Women Curves (2002)
 Frozen River (2008)
 The Debut (2004)
 Diary of a Mad Black Woman (2005)

Citation

All papers require proper citation. All sources must be cited; not citing sources will result in a grade penalty. The complete lack of citation will result in a zero grade for the assignment. This course will use the American Political Science Association citation style. The use of other citations styles will result in a grade penalty. Examples of the American Political Science Association citation style are available on Blackboard.

Website

For class information and assignments please see the Blackboard site at courses.utexas.edu. Class notes **WILL NOT** be on Blackboard.

E-mail

No assignment is to be e-mailed to me or the TAs. Also, I regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Please exercise proper e-mail etiquette (for etiquette tips see <http://www.101emailtipstips.com/101-email-etiquette-tips.pdf>). Finally, make sure to check the syllabus or Blackboard first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question.

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness you will need to produce a note from the doctor stating that you could not attend class

that day. Generic UHS slips will not be accepted. In all other cases you will need to provide documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to me at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

Q-Drop Policy

If a student wishes to Q-drop this class before 40% of the class has been completed, the student may do so. After 40% of the class has been completed whether or not the student receives a Q or an F will be based upon the student's grade at that point. This grade will include attendance.

Expectations

Meeting the goals of the class requires three things—attendance, preparation and professionalism.

Attendance—Although attendance is not mandatory, it is expected. Therefore, I find it unnecessary to formally take attendance. Nevertheless, missing class will greatly affect your grade. First, I frequently give pop quizzes and in-class assignments. Students that miss a quiz will receive a zero. Second, exams are based on a combination of the course readings, class lectures, and supplementary media presentations. Thus, missing class will greatly affect your grade.

Preparation—Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to when class meets. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect it.

Professionalism—Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and the consumption of tobacco products. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

Ground Rules

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.

2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment.

Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours.

Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

The University defines scholastic dishonesty in the following way:

“According to the Institutional Rules, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records.”

In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be “subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further

information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/.”

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Holy Day Observance

If an assignment for exam falls due on a day when you are observing a religious holy day, I will work with you to find an acceptable alternative time to complete the assignment.

Outline of Course Topics and Readings

I. Introduction to Race in the United States

Reading: Larson, Chapter 1

Video: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 1

II. The Media and the Political System

Reading: Leighley, Chapters 1, 2, 5

III. Media Effects on Public Opinion

Reading: Leighley, Chapters 6, 7

IV. Racial Minorities in Films and Television Entertainment

Reading: Larson, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Wilson II, Clint C., Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2003. *Racism, Sexism and the Media: The Rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America*, 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 9.

Video: *Hollywood Chinese: The Chinese in American Feature Films*

V. Race and Adverting

Reading: Wilson II, Clint C., Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2003. *Racism, Sexism and the Media: The Rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America*, 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 6.

Alaniz, Maria Luisa. 1998. "Alcohol Availability and Targeted Advertising in Racial/Ethnic Minority Communities." *Alcohol Health and Research World* 22 (4): 286-289.

Taylor, Charles R. and Ju Yung Lee. 1994. "Not in *Vogue*: Portrayals of Asian Americans in Magazine Advertising." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 13 (2): 239-245.

VI. News Coverage of Racial-Minority Mass Publics

Reading: Larson, Chapters 7, 8 (pp 94-102), 9 (pp 108-115), 10 (pp 119-125), 11 (pp 130-139)

Leighley, Chapters 3, 4

VII. Indigenous Media

Reading: Larson, Chapters 8 (pp 102-107), 9 (pp 115-118), 10 (pp 125-129), 11 (pp 139-141)

Wilson II, Clint C., Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2003. *Racism, Sexism and the Media: The Rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America*, 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 11.

VIII. News Coverage of Racial-Minority Social Movements

Reading: Larson, Chapters 12, 13, 14

Video: *Eyes on the Prize* #4

IX. News Coverage of Racial-Minority Candidates and Politicians

Reading: Larson, Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Leighley, Chapter 8, 9

X. Race, Media, and Public Policy

Reading: Peffley, Mark and Jon Hurwitz. 2002. "The Racial Components of 'Race-Neutral' Crime Policy Attitudes." *Political Psychology* 23 (1): 59-75.

Roman, Ediberto. 2000. "Who Exactly is Living La Vida Loca: The Legal and Political Consequences of Latino-Latina Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes in Film and Other Media." *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice* 4 (1): 37-68.

Video: *Race: The Power of Illusion*, Episode 3

XI. Conclusion and Wrap-up

Reading: Larson, Chapter 20

Wilson II, Clint C., Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2003. *Racism, Sexism and the Media: The Rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America*, 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 10.

Course Schedule at a Glance

August 26	Welcome and Introductions
August 31-September 7	Introduction to Race in the United States
September 4	Professor Philpot's Birthday
September 9-September 16	The Media and the Political System
September 21-September 23	Media Effects on Public Opinion
September 28-September 30	Racial Minorities in Films and Television Entertainment
October 5-October 7	Race and Advertising
October 12	Exam 1
October 14-October 19	News Coverage of Racial-Minority Mass Publics
October 21-October 26	Indigenous Media
October 28-November 4	News Coverage of Racial-Minority Social Movements
November 9-November 11	News Coverage of Racial-Minority Candidates and Politicians
November 16-November 23	Race, Media, and Public Policy
November 23	Movie Review Due
November 25	Thanksgiving-No Class
November 30	Conclusion and Wrap-up
December 2	Exam 2