First Year Experience:  
Gender, Race & Sexuality in the Media

Course Description
In this class we will use a cultural studies approach to explore the complex role of media as it influences our ideas about ourselves and the world around us. We will develop and practice critical skills in “reading” media, and explore its dynamic relationship to contemporary issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and youth identity. As we learn to think critically about the various types of media that surround us, we will also consider our own identities and the way they are represented in media. We will assume that culture must be studied in terms of the social relations and system through which it is produced and consumed. Finally, we will work on our own group media projects as we seek to represent ourselves with creativity and autonomy.

Introduction to FYE
This class is part of the First Year Experience (FYE), an interdisciplinary program designed to help make your transition into college a success. A key goal of the course is to help you develop the skills and attitudes needed for the intellectual engagement of college-level work. Discovery, research, critical thinking, written work, attention to the cultural diversity of the campus, and active discussion will be key parts of this course. Enrollment in FYE courses is limited in order to allow you to work closely with your professor and fellow students.

Required Texts:
All required readings will be provided on SJSU’s learning management system (LMS), Canvas. Please print out each reading and keep in a notebook or folder. You must bring weekly readings to class for discussion. For inexpensive copies, I recommend San Jose Copy (6¢ ea) at 11 S. Third Street, (408) 297-6698.

Assignments and Evaluation
10% Participation  
10% Semi-weekly BrainDump writing assignment (5)  
10% Semi-weekly reading quizzes (5)  
55% Media Projects:  
1 – Identity zine (15%)  
2 – Partnered media analysis project (20%)  
3 – Media Intervention final projects (20%)  
15% Final Exam

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives
In this course you will learn to:
1. explore the complex role of media as it influences our ideas about women, men, and gender.  
2. develop and practice critical skills in “reading” media  
3. think critically about the various types of media that surround us  
4. explore the relationship of media to contemporary issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and youth identity (and understand each as a social construction).  
5. consider our own identities and the way they are (or are not) represented in media.
This course qualifies as an Area D1 (Social Sciences – Human Behavior) course in your General Education requirements. See complete learning objectives below.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Class Participation
The strength of this course depends largely on the strength of your contributions as individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives. Each of you will participate regularly in class, in groups, and in occasional meetings with me.

- In addition to regular class participation, you will follow online news on any one of the racial/ethnic communities we are studying—see the list of suggested sources on Canvas. You are expected to either browse the online site or sign up for an RSS or Twitter feed, so that you will be regularly following current news for that community. I encourage you to choose a community other than your own, but it’s up to you. Fifty points of your participation grade also depends on you regularly posting news or comments to the class twitter feed #woms5q.

And finally, in terms of class, participation means:

- coming to class on time. If you come in late, enter quietly and sit near the door, minimizing distraction to the class.
- bringing the necessary materials—pen or pencil, notebook or notepad, your course syllabus, and the reading for the day.
- interacting respectfully with your peers, paying attention, listening carefully, encouraging others' contribution, and contributing when you can.
- NOT texting or surfing or facebooking. I will give you my full attention for the class period, and I expect the same in return. If I see you texting or surfing, I will ask you to leave class for the day.
- checking Canvas regularly, and posting news or comments to the class Twitter feed occasionally.
- you should have a good email account that you check regularly. You respond (reasonably) promptly to your teammates' messages. I strongly recommend either your sjsu account, or gmail or yahoo -- I specifically discourage hotmail or aol addresses (they are more likely to be caught in spam filters). If you do use hotmail or aol, you are responsible for ensuring that any message you send is received.

BrainDumps (Reading notes) – hardcopies due in class on every other Monday
Good writing is arguably the single most important skill you will develop in your university education. And like any skill or talent, practice makes perfect. In this class, you will practice your writing skills by writing one page single-spaced every other week about the assigned course reading. I call this one page of writing a "braindump" in that I encourage you to do the assigned reading, then close the book, sit in front of the computer, and "dump" your thoughts onto paper. That is, write about what you just read, what you think the author was trying to say. Then go on to evaluate whether the author communicated their ideas well, what you understood, or didn't understand. Think about examples, counter-examples, what the ideas mean in terms of consequences, in particular circumstances. Always print out two copies of your weekly braindump, and keep the digital file someplace safe.

Quizzes
Every other week students will complete a short quiz on the week’s reading. Quizzes begin at 10:30 sharp and conclude at 10:37. Do not be late...you CANNOT make up a quiz for any reason.

Peer Mentor
We are fortunate to have Marie Lintner as our class Peer Mentor. A peer mentor is an advanced student who offers their insight and experience throughout the semester, informally and in a few class presentations. Marie is your inside resource for learning how to better navigate this campus and your college experience in general.

Marie Lintner
marie.lintner@sjsu.edu
Office hours: MW 1:30-3 at Student Services Center (SSC) 600
Teamwork

Teamwork is an important part of an SJSU education. Two of our three class projects involve working with other students. We will have a guest lecturer speak about productive strategies and tips for working in groups. As each assignment will explain, your individual grade is a combination of the team's overall project grade, and your peers’ assessment of your contribution.

Workload / Credit Hour Policy

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Grading Policy

Grades are assigned on the following scale:

- 98-100 A+
- 93-97 A
- 90-92 A-
- 88-89 B+
- 83-87 B
- 80-82 B-
- 78-79 C+
- 73-77 C
- 70-72 C-
- 68-69 D+
- 63-67 D
- 60-62 D-
- 59- F

Classroom Protocol

You will receive more details about all of these assignments during the semester, but generally:

- All assigned work is due at the beginning of class, whether turned in online or in hard copy. Printing problems are not an excuse. LATE work will be downgraded a half-grade every day it is late. I strongly suggest you invest now in an inexpensive printer ($50-100) of your own if you do not have one already.
- Unless otherwise noted, all work must be typed and double-spaced in a plain 12 point font with one-inch margins all the way around the page. Except for formal essays, for EVERYTHING you turn in, please write your full name at the top right of the page, along with date and topic.
- Handwritten work is not acceptable, unless specifically stated in class.
- Grade checks – If you require a midterm grade check of any kind (athletic, EOP, fraternity/sorority, etc., personal), you must come to my office hours. I cannot guess your grade in class, or email your request. Come to my posted office hours for a quick discussion and I will sign off on your request. No exceptions.
- My office is in Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH), 238A. DMH is on San Fernando Street, just two buildings down from the MLK Library. Please come by and see me during office hours at least once during the semester. Seeing your professor during office hours is an excellent habit to establish – you can ask a question, clarify your understanding of lecture material, we can just chat about how you are doing in class, or you can ask about my little girl. Office hours are part of our job as professors, and you absolutely have the right to our time.
- And finally, I assume you are adult and are in this class because you want an education. You do not need to ask my permission to leave early, go to the bathroom, etc. This also means that if you are chattering with a friend, texting, playing videogames, or are in any way disruptive to me or other students, I will ask you to leave.

FYE Student Learning Objectives

By the end of the FYE course, students will be able to:

1. discuss the value of higher education to individuals and society;
2. locate academic and co-curricular experiences and resources at SJSU that will help them achieve their educational goals;
3. identify the skills and attitudes that contribute to academic success as a university-level scholar and assess their own strengths and limitations in those areas; and
4. demonstrate an ability to participate actively and respectfully in class discussions and dialogues, recognizing how their own and others’ identities influence their interactions and how to bridge differences.
General Education D1 Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation. [GE]

2. Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts;

3. Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them; and

4. Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

5. Recognize the interaction of social institutions, culture, and environment with the behavior of individuals.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes. Information on add/drop deadlines is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/. Information about late drops is available at: http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/.

Peer Connections Center

The Peer Connections Center offers free tutoring and advising in a variety of subjects at three locations: 1) on the 1st floor of Clark Hall, 2) in room 600 of the Student Services Center Building, and 3) in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village B. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/

University Policy - Campus policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the AEC (Accessible Education Center at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) to establish a record of their disability. For more info call (408) 924-6000 (v) or (408) 924-5990 (TTY).

University Policy - Academic Integrity Statement (From Office of Judicial Affairs):

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at: http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/. Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Videos

Videos are regularly scheduled during class time, but can also be seen independently at the IRC, in the southeast end of Dudley Moorhead Hall. They are generally open from 8am to 9pm, but call to check at 4-2888.
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Terms to Know</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>M 1/26 Intro - Why Media Matters</td>
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<td>W 1/28</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>M 2/2 Doing Gender</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 1 (1-9) OpenStax, “Sex, Gender &amp; Sexuality”</td>
<td>sex, gender, gender socialization, essentialism, social constructionism, transgender, intersexual</td>
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<td>W 2/4 Scavenger Hunt</td>
<td>Wear comfortable shoes; bring only a pen/cil</td>
<td>Peer Connections, Writing Center, Mosaic, AS, LGBT Center, Chavez Center, DMH 238A</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/16 On Sexuality Quiz #1 on Sexuality reading</td>
<td>Schwartz, “Gender of Sex’y” Valenti, Feminists Do It Better “When You Meet a Lesbian”</td>
<td>heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender</td>
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<td>2/18 Guest Speakers Zine Projects Due</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/23 Intro to Media Studies Braindump #2 due</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 2 (10-30) Complete survey</td>
<td>media, digital divide, media determinants, capitalism, media studies, pros &amp; cons of media, fears of media</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3/2 Analyzing Media Quiz #2</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 3 (31-53)</td>
<td>Ideology, identity, representation, interpretation, evaluation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3/9 Language &amp; Representation Braindump #3 due</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 4 &amp; 5 (61-92) Anzaldua, &quot;Wild Tongue&quot;</td>
<td>language, constructionist, reflective/mimetic, discourse</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/16 Theories of Media Quiz #3</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 6 (94-109)</td>
<td>Contexts: production, distribution, audience. Inscribed reader, actual reader, direct effects</td>
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<td>3/18 Media Analyses due</td>
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<td>3/23 Spring Break</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/30 Art of Narrative Braindump #4 due</td>
<td>M&amp;S ch. 17 (272-288)</td>
<td>narrative, point of view, narrator, narrative structure, dominant discourse, hero, heroine</td>
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| 4/6  | **Race-ing Media**  
Quiz #4 | See Canvas for reading |
| 4/8  |  |
| 4/13 | **Signs & Semiology**  
Braindump #5 due | M&S ch. 8 (133-39)  
signs, semiology, conventions,  
connotations, denotation |
| 4/15 |  |
| 4/20 | **Masculinity & Media**  
Film: Tough Guise  
Quiz #5 | M&S ch. 21 (379-99)  
dominant masculinity, homophobia |
| 4/22 |  |
| 4/27 | **Culture Jamming** | M&S ch. 14 (217-33)  
culture jamming, media activism |
| 4/29 | *Final Projects Due* |
| 5/4  | **Student Presentations** |
| 5/6  | **Student Presentations** |
| 5/11 | **Student Presentations** |
| 5/13 | **Last day of class** |

**Final exam wed 5/20, 12:15 - 2:30pm**  