COMM 324-01 Sex and Violence in Media

Wendy Maxian
maxianw@xavier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/communication_arts_syllabi_fall_2015

Recommended Citation
http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/communication_arts_syllabi_fall_2015/6

This Restricted-Access Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication Arts Syllabi 2015 at Exhibit. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Arts Syllabi Fall 2015 by an authorized administrator of Exhibit. For more information, please contact exhibit@xavier.edu.
Sex and Violence in Media
COMM 324
Fall 2015

Instructor: Wendy Maxian
Email: maxianw@xavier.edu
Office: Schott Hall 306
Office Hours: Mondays, 1 to 3 p.m. at GSC Coffee Emporium
Wednesday, 2 to 4 p.m. in my office
Appointments and walk-ins welcome.
Phone Number: 745-3126
Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 to 5:15 p.m.
Classroom: Alter 006

Core Requirements Met: Diversity Curriculum Requirement (DCR)
Ethics, Religion and Society (E/RS)

Program Requirements Met: Gender and Diversity Studies (GDST, Intersectionality req.)
Peace Studies

Course Description
Explores reasons behind the prevalence of sexual and violent media content and the impact of this content. Course topics will include psychological reasons why people consume such content, legal and market forces that encourage the creation of sexual and violent content, and the theoretical individual and social effects of consuming this type of content.

Course Objectives
The goal of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the forces behind the prevalence of sexual and violent media content and with the impact of this content on individuals and society. The primary assumptions of this class are that sexual and violent content are not created in a vacuum, and that this content has important ramifications for American culture and citizens.

We will begin by looking at larger, institutional frameworks that help encourage and regulate the creation of sexual and violent media content. Possible social and psychological impacts will then be presented and analyzed. Finally, we will apply our discussions to a series of special topics. Throughout the course, the representations of diverse groups of people will be considered along with when and how some of these groups and types of content intersect.

Throughout the course, we will run into several tensions created by these types of media content: sex vs. violence, day-to-day vs. media reality, average vs. extreme, those with agency and power vs. those without. Given that we’ll be studying sex and violence, viewing sexual and violent content, and experiencing the tensions they create, there will be times when you will be uncomfortable. Your discomfort means you are human and responding to challenging subject matter. You should consider the discomfort as an opportunity to learn more about class material and yourself.
If you feel you will be uncomfortable for most of the semester, you may want to consider taking a different class. Finally, please respect your fellow classmates’ personal taste and values. At no time will it be acceptable to ridicule someone because of his or her beliefs.

**READINGS**

Required readings and videos will be provided via hyperlink or PDF on Canvas.

**COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Dick, K. (Director). (2006). This film is not yet rated [Dvd]. New York: IFC.  
INTELLECTUAL RIGOR
This class is designed to get you thinking about and engaging with media psychology, media industries, and content creation. It is not designed for you to skate through with minimal effort. You will be required to think critically about abstract topics and to apply those thoughts to your work. This will require time and mental exertion. All class members are expected to participate in the creation of a classroom environment that encourages thinking, discussing, and practicing at a collegiate level. To that end, intellectual loafing will not be tolerated. Whether working by yourself or in groups, you will be expected to work. Any discussions should be productive and any assignments should be completed. Consistent loafing, mooching, or disrupting will not be tolerated and will be directly reflected in lower participation and indirectly reflected in assignment grades.

PLAGIARISM and ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
For the purposes of this class, plagiarism will be defined as using 3 or more words from another source as your own. Plagiarism and academic misconduct (in any form) will not be tolerated and will result in either failure of the assignment or class. You will also be subject to all university policies and procedures related to plagiarism and academic misconduct.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 24</td>
<td>Syllabus review, diversity and intersectionality Movie!</td>
<td>“This Film is Not Yet Rated” (in-class movie)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FRAMEWORKS

| Sept. 7 | Economic | Biagi (2013), Ch. 2 American Psychological Association (n.a., 2015) | Discussion post |
| Sept. 14 | Theoretical | Harris & Sanborn (2013), Ch. 2 Carey (1975) excerpt | Discussion post |
| Oct. 5 | Individual | McRaney (2011), all three | Discussion post Reaction Paper DUE |

NO CLASS—Thurs., Oct. 8, Fall Break

HUMAN BEINGS AND MEDIA

Nov. 23  Expert Paper  WORK DAY

NO CLASS—Thurs., Nov. 26, Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 7  Rape Culture and College Wrap-up  “Bro Code” or “Hunting Ground” (in-class movie)  “Reporting a Sexual Assault”  Expert Paper DUE Q&A with Kate Lawson, Title IV Coordinator

FINAL EXAM—Tues., Dec. 15 by 5:50 p.m. (Take-home)

GRADING and ASSIGNMENTS

✓ Attendance (10%)  
Having a rigorous, open, intelligent discussion is also part of the class. If you don’t attend, you can’t discuss. It will also count for 10% of your final grade. You are allowed 2 free absences. For each additional absence, you will lose 2% from your attendance grade. If attendance is a chronic problem, the instructor reserves the right to deduct more than 10% from a student’s final grade. Excused absences (university-sanctioned events, documented illness or emergency) will not count toward additional absences. If you know you will have an excused absence, please inform the instructor prior to the absence. To record attendance, a sign-in sheet will be passed around each class.

✓ Reading Quizzes and Discussion Posts (20%)  
Because this is a seminar, we will be discussing readings. Completing and thinking about the readings before class will be necessary. During the Frameworks section, you will alternate between taking reading quizzes and writing brief discussion posts. There are 6 total assignments in this section. Quizzes and discussions will be due on Tuesdays before the beginning of class.

✓ Reaction Paper (10%)  
You will be asked to choose 2 reaction activities and write a paper about your experiences. This will be 750- to 1,000-word papers that will ask apply concepts from the Frameworks section to your experiences. Your paper will be due no later than October 5. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ Expert Paper (25%)  
You will use the frameworks we establish to investigate a research question. Each week that is listed, a group will investigate that topic. Each student will answer a different question of their choosing (with the instructor’s approval). This is not a group project. You will be simply organized in groups. Your paper will be 1,200 to 1,500 words. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ Expert Panel (15%)  
Along with your paper, you will serve as an expert discussant on your question. The instructor will facilitate discussions to help find common themes. Each person will make

4
a brief presentation and help lead a class discussion on the week’s topics. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ **Final Exam (20%)**
The take-home final exam will have will test you on the readings from the Human Beings and Media and on themes from throughout the semester. The exam will be some combination of objective (multiple choice, T/F, matching, etc.), short answer and essay questions. The exam will be submitted via Canvas. Details will follow.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All assignments will have a specific due date and time. Any assignment turned in after the deadline will not be accepted. All assignments must be turned in via Canvas as Word documents (.doc or .docx). Word counts (text only) must be included in each assignments header. Assignments not in Word format or with word counts will be penalized.

There will be no set distribution of grades in this class. You will be graded on how you perform. Other class members’ scores will have no influence over your scores. Your final grade will simply be the percentage of points you accumulate put into the following scale. Finally, there will be no rounding of grades in this class. Your final average will determine your grade. A 93.87% will be an A-, not an A. The grade requirements have been established and adjusting them arbitrarily is unfair to all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLASSROOM DECORUM**
To create a relaxed and open intellectual classroom filled with critical thought and lively discussion, everyone must feel comfortable and able to contribute. As such, the following rules must be followed during every class.

1) **Be critical of ideas, not people.** You can challenge a person’s ideas, but cannot attack the person.

2) **Common courtesy is required.** Listen attentively and quietly to everyone’s ideas even if you do not agree. Every class member has the right to fully express his or her ideas.

3) **Be respectful of other class members.** We are all adults. As such, we should behave in a civil manner. Any form of verbal or non-verbal disrespect will not be tolerated. Examples include, but are not limited to, mocking, name-calling, eye rolling, using obscenities, and gesturing. Demeaning other class members is absolutely unacceptable.

4) **Other students’ learning may not be disrupted.** The point of attending class is to learn about the topic at hand. When you disrupt your classmates’ learning, you are disrespectful. Talking to other classmates, texting your friends, checking your Facebook page or going online, and reading or working on material for other classes is unacceptable. If you do not want to be a part of class, please do not attend.
The first time you do not follow any of these rules during a class, you will be called out. Should you opt to continue disregarding these rules during a class, you will be asked to leave. Constant disruption of multiple classes will have a severe, negative impact on your grade.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements.

The disclaimer: This syllabus is designed to be a general outline for this course. Events that transpire during the semester may require the instructor to change the syllabus. If changes are made, they will be done so as soon as possible and you will be notified in class. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

Core SLOs Met

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO Goal</th>
<th>How SLO Goal is Fulfilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be effective communicators in writing and orally.</td>
<td>Reaction and Expert Papers fulfill writing requirements. Participation and the Expert Panel will fulfill oral communication requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be critical thinkers.</td>
<td>All assignments will help meet critical thinking requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be creators of new knowledge and expression.</td>
<td>The Expert Paper and Panel will be original research and will fulfill this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to understand and appreciate the arts, humanities and science disciplines, and reflect on connections among these studies.</td>
<td>Course content is presented using psychology, supply and demand, communication theory, legal, visual communication, and sociological and diversity principles. Discussions and assignments help students integrate these principles to meet the requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be integrated individuals who articulate a coherent, ethical perspective on the world and their place in it.</td>
<td>Reaction Papers and Expert assignments will fulfill this component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be aware global citizens.</td>
<td>Course content is presented using psychology, supply and demand, communication theory, legal, visual communication, and design standards and principles. Students will continually assess their relationship to media via these different perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E/RS GOAL: Students will be intellectually, morally and spiritually educated individuals capable of critical reflection on ethical and/or religious questions of social significance from the perspective of multiple disciplines with unique methods.</td>
<td>Students will reflect upon legal, industry, and social standards related to sex and violence in media content. Discussions and assignments help students integrate these principles to meet the requirement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>