2014

324-01 Sex and Violence in Media

Wendy Maxian

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Sex and Violence in Media
COMM 324
Fall 2014

Instructor: Wendy Maxian
Email: maxianw@xavier.edu
Office: Schott Hall 310
Office Hours: Mondays, 2 to 4 p.m. at GSC Coffee Emporium
Wednesdays 2 to 4 p.m. in my office
Phone Number: 745-3126
Classstime: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 to 5:15 p.m.
Classroom: Smith 349

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 is not created in a vacuum, and that this content has important ramifications for American society and people.

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 and without agency and power. 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.
READEINGS
Required readings 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Intro: Syllabus and diversity</td>
<td>“Film is Not Yet Rated” (in-class movie)</td>
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**FRAMEWORKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sept. 1</th>
<th>Institutional and legal</th>
<th>Silverblatt (2004)</th>
<th>Reading quiz</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8 (Tues only)</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Biagi (2013), Ch. 2</td>
<td>Discussion post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NO CLASS—Work day, Thurs., Sept. 11**


| Sept. 22 | Theoretical | Harris & Sanborn (2013), Ch. 2 Carey (1975) excerpt | Discussion post |

| Sept. 29 | Psychological | Bradley et al. (1992) Bargh & Williams (2006) | Reading quiz Expert questions due |

| Oct. 6 (Tues only) | Individual | McRaney (2011), pp. 166-169, 210-213 | Discussion post |

**NO CLASS—Fall Break, Thurs., Oct. 9**

**HUMAN BEINGS AND MEDIA**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>Objectification and anonymity</td>
<td>Popova (2010) Bechdel Test</td>
<td>Expert 1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Douglas (2007)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>News and sports</td>
<td>Harris &amp; Sanborn (2013), pp 170-189, Ch. 7</td>
<td>Expert 1.3</td>
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**NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break, Thurs., Nov. 27**

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<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>Rape culture and college Wrap-up</td>
<td>Lauerman &amp; Surange (2014) “Reporting a Sexual Assault”</td>
<td>Expert 2.4</td>
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**FINAL EXAM—Tues., Dec. 16 from 4 to 5:50 p.m.**
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 3 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. To record attendance, a sign-in sheet will be passed around each class. If you know you will have an excused absence, please inform the instructor prior to the absence.

✓ Reading Quizzes and Discussion Posts (10%)
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.

✓ Reaction Activities and Papers (2 @ 10% = 20%)
You will be assigned to choose 2 reaction activities and write a paper about each. These will be 500- to 750-word papers that will ask apply concepts from the Frameworks section to your experiences. Both papers will be due no later than October 7. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ Expert Papers (2 @ 15% = 30%)
You will use the frameworks we establish to investigate two different questions. 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. Each paper will be 1,000 to 1,200 words. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ Expert Panels (2 @ 10% = 20%)
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 a brief presentation and help lead a class discussion on the week’s topics. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

✓ Final Exam (10%)
The final exam will have an in-class part, which will test you on the readings from the Human Beings and Media section of class, and a take-home portion, which will test you on themes throughout the semester. The in-class exam will be objective (multiple choice, T/F, matching, etc.) and the take-home will be short answer and essay. 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. All uploaded assignments will be submitted to Turnitin.

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
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<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>
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**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.*
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<tr>
<th>SLO Goal</th>
<th>How SLO Goal is Fulfilled</th>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be critical thinkers.</td>
<td>All assignments will help meet critical thinking requirement.</td>
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<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>
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<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>
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**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.

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.