

SOCIOLOGY 293X~

Social Inequality in the Media

I have sworn to never be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides! Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere.

When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or sexual orientation, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe. ~Elie Wiesel

Spring 2008

MWF 10:30-11:20~ 107 Oglebay Hall

Professor: Daniel Brewster, M.A. (2004)

Office: 205 Knapp Hall

Office Hours:

MWF: 11:30-1:15

M: 3:30-5:30

Email: Daniel.Brewster@mail.wvu.edu

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to provide an analysis of social inequalities in the media, with emphasis on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. In order to achieve this purpose it is necessary to analyze varying forms of media, including but not limited to television, film, and music. There will be a specific emphasis on conflict and inequality.

The course will be broken into five distinct sections. The course will begin with an analysis of the three main sociological theories, in addition to the importance of the media. The remaining sections will be divided based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, respectively. Each of the four chapters will be supplemented by videos and songs. The textbook is somewhat dated, thus, it is necessary to supplement the text with more current research.

This class is designed to analyze information concerning manifestations of gender, race, sexual orientation and class that is often untold in the media, schools, families, neighborhoods, and places of worship. This class will ultimately attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How is it that otherwise decent people can be convinced that a group that is different from them is less than human and deserves lower status, hate, or violence?
2. How is it that some people, in the midst of the most violent and venomous of times, are determined and able to do whatever is in their power to interrupt the smallest individual acts of hate and the largest systemic kinds of violence and injustice?

Required Texts:

Holtzman, L. Media Messages: What Film, Television, and Popular Media Music Teach Us About Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation (2000). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe

Course Requirements:

Readings: In order to truly grasp the purpose of this course, reading is vitally important. Students are expected to complete required readings prior to the class for which they have been assigned. The reading is relatively minimal, thus, I strongly encourage and require a thorough reading of all assigned material prior to each lecture.

Attendance: I will periodically take attendance and use it as a factor in determining final grades. Anyone can make an “A” in my course and attendance is the first step in the process.

Media Day: There will be two media days of application for class, gender, sexual orientation and three media days of application for race. You will be required to reference the medium and discuss/analyze the representation of gender, race, class, sexual orientation in the varying forms of media (e.g., television, film, music, internet, etc). You can throw one of the media day assignments out (i.e., you can be absent for one without affecting your grade, however, if you maintain perfect attendance for all media days, you will receive ten-points of extra credit).

Participation: Your participation will serve as the foundation for the majority of classroom interactions. Students are strongly encouraged to take an active role in classroom discussions. I will reserve the right to use the Socratic Method whenever necessary (i.e., if classroom discussion is lacking, certain people are controlling the majority of classroom discussion). This class is designed to illicit understanding, accurate interpretations, and factual analysis of varying media.

Exams: There will be five regular examinations in this course. There will be no final exam. The exam will consist of 20 matching questions (worth 2.5 pts each), 10 multiple choice (worth 2 pts each), and 1 essay/short answer question (worth 30 points).

Make-Up Exam Policy: There will be very few opportunities for make-up examinations. All University sanctioned absences will be allowed but under the following circumstances, it is your responsibility to notify me in person of your absence prior to the actual absence. As for other absences, if you are ill on the day of an examination, it is your responsibility to notify me prior to the absence. If you fail to notify me within the actual class window, then I will assume that you just failed to attend. All make up exams will consist of 4 essay/short answer questions (i.e., will indubitably be more difficult than the regularly scheduled exam).

Semester Project: This project will be in group format. You will present one of the topics presented in the class for an entire class period to be determined randomly. There will be a supplement forthcoming.

Academic Dishonesty Defined: West Virginia University expects that every member of its academic community share the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. Academic dishonesty is defined to include but is not limited to any of the following:

1. Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects, including but not limited to:

- a. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
- b. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own.
- c. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations.
- d. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof.

Composition of grades

Examinations—500 points (100 for each of the respective Exams)

Media Day/In-class projects and activities—100 points

Semester Project—150 points

Attendance—50 points

Grade Scale-

A-720-800 points

B-640-719 points

C-560-639 points

D-480-559 points

F-479-below

*** In my course there will no grade “bumps.” In my opinion an 89.9 is “B”, a 79.9 is a “C” and so forth. Thus, do not ask for any grade welfare.**

****Extra credit is possible but no student will be allowed to complete more than 25 extra credit points. These opportunities will appear randomly throughout the semester (could be something as simple as classroom attendance). The offering of extra credit will also inhibit boosting of borderline grades (no matter the circumstances).**

Social Justice:

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon our communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. This University does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, or national origin. Any

suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class are appreciated and will be given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700). Please make an appointment with me at your earliest convenience to discuss any assistance that you will need.

Monday, January 14, 2008—Introduction to class

Wednesday, January 16, 2008—Discussion of Preface (pp. xi-xii)

Friday, January 18, 2008—Introduction to Media

Monday, January 21, 2008—Martin Luther King Recess~ NO CLASS

Wednesday, January 23, 2008—Lecture #1 Chapter 1 (pp. 7-17)

Friday, January 25, 2008—Lecture #2 Chapter 1 (pp. 18-30)

Monday, January 28, 2008—Lecture #3 Chapter 1 (pp. 30-48)

Wednesday, January 30, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Friday, February 1, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Monday, February 4, 2008—Examination #1

Wednesday, February 6, 2008—Lecture #4 Chapter 2 (pp. 51-70)

Friday, February 8, 2008—Lecture #5 Chapter 2 (pp. 70-95)

Monday, February 11, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Wednesday, February 13, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Friday, February 15, 2008—Examination #2

Monday, February 18, 2008—Lecture #6 Chapter 3 (pp. 98-115)

Wednesday, February 20, 2008—Lecture #7 Chapter 3 (pp. 116-146)

Friday, February 22, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Monday, February 25, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Wednesday, February 27, 2008—Examination #3

Friday, February 29, 2008—Lecture #8 Chapter 4 (pp. 149-162)

Monday, March 3, 2008—Lecture #10 Chapter 4 (pp. 163-197)

Wednesday, March 5, 2008—Lecture #11 Chapter 4 (pp. 198-206)

Friday, March 7, 2008—Lecture #12 Chapter 5 (pp. 209-230)

Monday, March 10, 2008—Lecture #13 Chapter 5 (pp. 230-253)

Wednesday, March 12, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Friday, March 14, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Monday, March 17, 2008—MEDIA DAY

Wednesday, March 19, 2008—Examination #4

Friday, March 21, 2008—NO CLASS EASTER BREAK

Monday, March 24, 2008—SPRING BREAK RECESS
Wednesday, March 26, 2008—SPRING BREAK RECESS
Friday, March 28, 2008—SPRING BREAK RECESS

Monday, March 31, 2008—Lecture #14 Chapter 6 (pp. 255-270)
Wednesday, April 2, 2008—Lecture #15 Chapter 6 (pp. 271-298)
Friday, April 4, 2008—Lecture #16 Chapter 6 (pp. 299-321)

Monday, April 7, 2008—MEDIA DAY
Wednesday, April 9, 2008—MEDIA DAY
Friday, April 11, 2008—Examination #5

Monday, April 14, 2008—Gender presentation—MALE
Wednesday, April 16, 2008—Gender Presentation—FEMALE
Friday, April 18, 2008—Class Presentation—OPTIONAL

Monday, April 21, 2008—Race Presentation—AFRICAN AMERICANS
Wednesday, April 23, 2008—Race Presentation—HISPANIC
Friday, April 25, 2008—Race Presentation—OTHER (INCLUDING WHITE)

Monday, April 28, 2008—Sexual Orientation Presentation—TRANSGENDERED
Wednesday, April 30, 2008—Sexual Orientation Presentation—HOMOSEXUAL MALE
Friday, May 2, 2008—Sexual Orientation Presentation—LESBIAN

Final Examination~Tuesday May 6th @ 11:00 a.m.