

ETH 253
MASS MEDIA AND ETHNIC IDENTITY
Winter 2005

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Hours: Tuesday 1-2 p.m.; Thursday 8:30-10:30 a.m., or by appt.

Course Overview

The study of race and ethnicity in mass media is a terrain of contradictory, and often oppositional, methods and arguments. This scholarship tends to fall into two camps—for our purposes, social science and cultural studies. Each approach is deeply suspicious of the other, and both often fail to understand or account for the range of knowledge in the field. A goal of this course is to understand the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the array of methods used to study race and ethnicity in the media. We will confine our attention to television, film, newspapers and radio, the most common objects of study. Much of the scholarship in this area has been concerned with the problem of representation—the images that have been produced about racial and ethnic groups, the effects of these images on national culture, social life, and politics, and strategies for altering or eliminating damaging stereotypes. We will also consider the growing body of scholarship that investigates the efforts of communities of color to communicate and shape their identities in mainstream and alternative venues. This course will approach this material by examining the different traditions in media studies and how effectively they address questions of difference, inequality, and discrimination in both a United States and global framework.

Required Texts (available at Groundworks Books)

Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago)
Oscar Gandy, *Communication and Race: A Structural Perspective* (Arnold/Oxford)
Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness, 2nd Edition* (Minnesota)
Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U. S. Interest in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (California)
Chon Noriega, *Shot in America: Television, The State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema* (Minnesota)
Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (California)
Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge)
Roger Silverstone, *Why Study the Media?*

Course Reader available through University Readers Service www.universityreaders.com

Assignments

The central component of this course is close and careful reading of the assignments and active participation in class discussion. Grading will be based, in part, on evidence that students have completed the weeks' assignment and are prepared to engage with the material. Each student will be responsible for presenting and leading one week's discussion on the supplementary articles, and must complete a 3-5-page overview of the material that is due on that day. Topics for class discussion should be prepared in advance. Students will also research and write a 15-page paper due at the end of the quarter that addresses an area of interest in the study of race, ethnicity, and media. This will require the submission of a proposal, and a working bibliography, as well as the final project.

Schedule

January 4 Introduction

January 11 Situating the Scholar in media studies

Roger Silverstone, *Why Study the Media*

Hanno Hardt, "British Cultural Studies and the return of the critical in American mass communications research"

Robert McChesney, "Critical Communication Research at the Crossroads"

James Carey, "Mass Communication and Cultural Studies"

January 18 Historical Frameworks for Interpreting Race and Media

Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise*

Jane Rhodes, "The Visibility of race and media history"

Vaillant, Derek W., "Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago, 1921-1935,"

January 25 Gleanings from Quantitative Social Science

Oscar Gandy, *Communication and Race*

Romer, Jamieson and Coteau, "The Treatment of Persons of Color in Local Television News"

Greenberg and Brand, "Minorities and the Mass Media: 1970s-1990s"

Gilliam, Franklin D., et. al., "Where you Live and What you Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime"

[proposal due]

February 1 Race and the News Media

Entman and Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind*

Christopher Campbell, "A Myth of Assimilation: `Enlightened Racism and the News"

Teun van Dijk, "Elites, media and the reproduction of prejudice"
 Jane Rhodes, "Fanning the Flames of Racial Discord: The National Press and the Black Panther Party"

February 8 Political Economy and the Culture of Race

Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*
 Douglass Kellner, "Television, Government and Business: Toward a Critical/Institutional Theory"
 Herbert Schiller, "Corporations and the Production of Culture"
 John Fiske, "Los Angeles: A Tale of Three Videos"
 Meehan, Mosco, and Wasko, "Rethinking Political Economy"

February 15 Communities of Color and Media Control

Chon Noriega, *Shot in America: Television, the state, and the rise of Chicano Cinema*
 Hamid Naficy, "Narrowcasting in Diaspora"
 Catherine Squires, "Black Talk Radio: Defining Community Needs and Identity"
 Scott Wible, "Media Advocates, Latino Citizens and Niche Cable: The Limits of 'no limits' TV"
 Arlene Davila, "Selling Marginality"
[bibliography due]

February 22 Race, Ideology and the State

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*
 Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation and Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates"
 Stuart Hall, et. al., excerpts from *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the state, and law and order*
 Nicholas Garnham, "The Media and the Public Sphere"

March 1 Cinema, Racial History and Racial Formation,

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*
 David James, "Tradition and the Movies: The Asian American Avant-Garde in Los Angeles"
 Peter X. Feng, "We're Queer! We're Where? Locating Transgressive Films"

March 8 Discussion of class research

Final Paper Due Tuesday March 15