

Enquire Teaching Timetable

[Return](#)

Course Outcome

COMM 2920 - Media, Sex and Violence

Learning Outcome

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. To familiarize students with concepts which interrogate the interplay between modern media and the production, reproduction and transformation of the contemporary social order.
2. To be able to understand and critique the role of the media in sustaining power and inequalities in contemporary societies.
3. To sensitize students to the potential and obstacles posed by media production and consumption for social change.

Course Syllabus

Course Objective

Media representation is the construction of symbols that shape, maintain, reinforce, repair, perpetuate and transform social reality. This course studies the conditions for producing a particular set of media representation and how it perpetuates the current power structure. How the progressive ideas of sex and violence can enter the social realm of discussion through media representation will also be studied.

The course explores media representation as a powerful tool in perpetuating certain social reality in the following aspects: (1) it is additive to existing cultural values; (2) it supplements face-to-face communication; and (3) the representation is monopolized (one-sided). The course also aims to sharpen students' sensitivity to the social reality that media representation of sex and violence as a commercial product is largely an outcome of the reliance of media organizations on advertising money as the funding source. In other words, the imperative of such media representation (a commercial product) is rooted in the particular socio-economic structures of commercial media organization.

The notion of "power" will also be studied in the following aspects: (1) it shapes our understanding of gender roles and "just" use of violence; (2) media organization is structurally more resourceful than the audience; (3) media representation of sex and violence is carefully constructed to appear as the "normal"/"natural"; and (4) the constructive nature of media representation is hidden.

Topics (subject to change by the instructor)

Introduction and getting to know each other

Media and Society

What's wrong with advertising?

Anything wrong with newspapers?

Aesthetics of violence and gender differences

Violence at a distance

Sex Industry I-Sex Workers

Sex Industry II-Pornography and Erotica

Beauty is the beast?

Men from Mars, Women from Venus?

Gender and Intimate Relationships

Women are no longer the weaker sex?

Assessment Type

	Assessment Type	Current Percent
1	Essays	0
2	Homework or assignment	0
3	Others	0
4	Short answer test or exam	0

Feedback for Evaluation

1. Course and Teaching Evaluation Survey
2. Internal Course Review

Required Readings

Course Pack Materials:

Week 1:

Read: "Sex and Violence Don't Sell"

Read: "Yellow Journalism"

Week 2: Media and Society

Read: "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action"

Read: "True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism"

Week 3: What's wrong with advertising?

Read: "Advertising: The magic system"

Read: "Handling Sex"

Week 4: Anything wrong with our newspapers?

Read: "Modern Communication: Enlargement and Animation"

Read: "Social Production of News"

Week 5: Aesthetics of violence and gender differences

Read: "Racism and the Aesthetic of Hyperreal Violence"

Read: "Aestheticization of violence"

Week 6: Violence at a distance

Read: "Regarding the pain of others"

Week 9: Sex Industry I-Sex Workers

Read: "Self-employment and 'Professionalism'"

Read: "Sex Worker"

Read: "Multiple Stigma, Discrimination and Violence"

www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/TorontoPosters/instigmamsmfsw.pdf

Week 10: Sex Industry 11—Pornography and Erotica

Read: "Pornography and Male Supremacy?"

Read: "Misguided, Dangerous and Wrong: An Analysis of Anti-pornography politics"

Week 11: Beauty is the beast?

Read: "Beauty is the Beast"

Read: "Looking good: The psychology and Biology of Beauty"

Week 12: Men from Mars, Women from Venus?

Read: "Masculinity"

Read: "Constructing Perfect Women"

Week 13: Gender and Intimate Relationships

Read: "Preface to the Fourth Edition, 1891"

Read: "Intimacy Transformed?"

Read: "The mating game"

Week 14: Women are no longer the weaker sex?

Read: "Sports, Media and Stereotypes"

Read: www.batteredmen.com

Read: "Battered Men? Battered Facts"

Recommended Readings

Dines, G. & Humerz, J. (2003) *Gender, Race and Class in Media*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Hart, A. (1995) *Understanding the media: A practical guide*. London and New York: Routledge. (Introduction, pp. 1 - 10; Media audiences; pp. 30-67)

Turner, G. (1996) *British Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

(Chapter on The Idea of Cultural Studies)

(Chapter on Texts and Contexts)

(Chapter on Ideologies)

Held, D. (1990) *Introduction to critical theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Oxford: Polity Press.

(Chapter 3: The culture industry: critical theory and aesthetics)

Askew, K. & Wilk, R. (eds) (2002) *The anthropology of media: a reader*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

(Chapter by Sut Jhally: Image-based culture: Advertising and popular culture)

(Chapter by Marshall McLuhan: The medium is the message)

(Chapter by Raymond Williams: The technology and the society)

Lull, J. (1997) *Media scandals: morality and desire in the popular culture marketplace*. New York: Columbia University Press.

(Chapter: The Search for Sandal)

Screen Editorial Collective (1992) *The Sexual Subject: A screen reader in sexuality*. London: Routledge.

(Chapter by Laura Mulvey: Visual pleasure and narrative cinema)

(Chapter by Griselda Pollock: What's wrong with "Images of Women")

(Chapter by Steve Neale: Masculinity as spectacle)

Cornell, D. (2000) *Feminism and pornography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(Chapter by Andrea Dworkin: Against the male flood: censorship, pornography and equality)

(Chapter by bell hooks: Good girls look the other way)

(Chapter by Audre Lorde: Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as power)