

MMC 2604: Media, Cultures, and Identity

Spring 2023 Syllabus

*(January 8th version; the syllabus is subject to change,
always refer to Canvas for the most recent version)*

Instructor: Dr. Celeste Wagner

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Class Time: Tuesdays 4:05 PM - 4:55 PM & Thursday 4:05 PM - 6:00 PM ([MCCC 0100](#))

Office Hours: Mondays 2 pm – 3 pm & Tuesdays 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm. We can meet in person in my office or over Zoom. For either case, please sign up at least 15 minutes before the start time here: <https://calendly.com/celeste-wagner/office-hours-2604>

Course Description

This course will examine the ways in which the media represents various groups, identities, and issues, and how these representations can shape opinions and behaviors. We will analyze the power dynamics at play in the representation of intersecting issues related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, racialization, class, nationality, culture, religion and ability from an international and global perspective. These issues will be examined in a variety of media contexts, including journalism, advertising, the entertainment industry, and sports, with a focus on both mainstream media representations and social media repercussions.

Course Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, you will learn:

- to analyze power dynamics in media representations of different groups and social and political issues.
- analytical skills to be culturally sensitive and responsible media consumers and practitioners.
- to understand the impact that media representations can have on public opinion, individual opinions and sentiments, and related behaviors.
- to reflect on issues of ethics in the media's representation of societal issues.
- to understand the role and importance of our own subjectivities and experiences in how we consume and produce media narratives.

Class Values Around Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along several dimensions, including gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, class and religion.

It is very important for me that together we create an inclusive learning environment that makes everyone feel comfortable and welcome in class. Many times, learning something new entails feeling uncomfortable and challenging preconceived ideas. This is a desired outcome of any learning environment because it encourages us to think with rigor, fairness, and creativity.

The goal is not to agree on everything or find consensus as a class, but to educate ourselves, and to respectfully engage in discussions about different topics. Thus, curiosity and respect towards different viewpoints, experiences and ideas will not only be a necessary path to succeed in class but also for both personal and intellectual growth. For this, it is essential that we all exercise respect, courtesy, civil dialogue, and empathy towards one another. I am convinced that the diversity that we all bring as a group is a strength and I am committed to making efforts to include class material that reflects a diversity of experiences, contexts, and identities.

Remember that many of the readings, documentaries, examples, etc., in the syllabus were created by specific individuals with their own viewpoints. I would like for everyone to feel comfortable sharing your observations and critiques about the material. As a matter of fact, your ability to analyze those aspects is a goal of the class.

Please, feel free to reach out to me if there is anything that is making you feel uncomfortable in any way or if you have any suggestions on new topics or on how to build this communal space for all of us to learn together. I really look forward to working with all of you to achieve these goals!

Course Requirements

Course Materials:

- Most of the required material will be available through Canvas, either linked or attached as a PDF.
- There will be one **required textbook**, cited below. There is a physical copy available on reserve at the library (2 hours + overnight).
 - **Len-Ríos, M. E., & Perry, E. L. (Eds.). (2019). Cross-cultural journalism and strategic communication: Storytelling and diversity (Second Edition). Routledge.**
- To be able to access the material through the provided links, you will have to be connected to UF Wi-Fi or the UF network via our **VPN** software if you are off campus. Refer to this [video instruction about how to connect to the VPN](#).
- We will be using a combination of **textbook chapters, academic journal articles, book chapters, and nonacademic sources** (news articles, videos, documentaries, etc.).
- Students must **complete assigned readings/materials prior to the class** in which they are discussed and be prepared to participate in individual/group discussion/activities.
- Readings that are more difficult and are expected to take more time to finish will be marked in the syllabus with the following: (!)
- For classes in which the reading material is conceptually more challenging, I will provide **reading guides** in advance to help you identify what is relevant for this class and ignore what is not.
- When there is more than one reading per class, I encourage you to **read/watch the material in the order that it is listed**.
- Some of the material is likely to change during the semester. Please refer to Canvas every week to see what's required for the following week.

Before Class Assignments:

- Before class, students will have to engage in a **short individual activity** related to the class materials of that week.
- Assignments are due at noon the day of each class.

- Each one of these short activities will be specified each week on Canvas.

In-Class Activities / Class Participation:

- In this course we will apply “[active learning](#)” in-class activities every week.
- Students should come to class having read/listened/watched all class material for that class and be prepared to engage in individual or group activities.
- Participation in these activities will be graded.
- **Students can miss 3 in class activities.** However, for each missed activity they will **obtain 0 as the grade.**
- **Missing 4 or more in-class activities without justification will lead to a 0% grade on class participation.** Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences.
- Students will obtain an “**excused**” on Canvas for a missed activity only if they email me an **official medical note**. In those cases, they will not obtain 0 on the assignment. For all other emergencies or reasons, students should make use of their 3 allowed absences.
- **Class activities are only done in class** and cannot be done afterwards under any circumstance.

Exams:

- There will be **two exams** early in the semester to test students’ knowledge of the subject’s foundations (Part I of the syllabus).
- These might take place in the classroom or on Canvas.

Short Essays

- There will be two **short essay exams** focused on the application of concepts to specific issues (Part II of the syllabus).
- Students will have to show their abilities applying the theoretical and analytical foundations to specific media examples.

Assessments

- **Before class assignments:** 30%
- **Class participation / In-class activities:** 20%
- **Exams:** 20% total (10% each)
- **Short essays:** 30% (15% each)

Important Dates & Deadlines

Exam #1: Tuesday, January 31
 Exam #2: Thursday, February 16
 Short essay #1: Monday, March 27
 Short essay #2: Friday, April 21

Grading Scale

Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent
		B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%

A	100-94%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-93%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point. For example, 89.4% rounds down to 89%, 89.5% rounds up to 90%. We will stick to this rule even when this has an impact on the letter grade you obtain. Students can also review [UF grades and grading policies](#).

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the class, you will have to complete a course evaluation online via GatorEvals. Course evaluations are very important, as they will help me plan and adjust the syllabus for next iterations of this class. They are also important for future students who will indirectly benefit from your feedback. It is expected that students will offer professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. [Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [online](#). [Summaries of course evaluation results](#) are available to students online.

Students Honor Code

It is expected that all students will respect [UF student honor code and conduct code](#).

Reach Out

Please, if you are finding any difficulties or challenges in this class, don't hesitate to talk to me. You can sign up for office hours, email me, or just knock on my door 😊

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change; always refer to Canvas version)

PART 1: ANALYTICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: Introduction + Audiences

Class 1: Tuesday, January 10

- **Content:** General introduction to the course (and to each other)
- **Readings/materials:** Close reading of the syllabus
- **Before class:** Read the syllabus in detail + Complete survey "Getting to know each other" on Canvas
- **In-class activity:** Media recommendations game

Class 2: Thursday, January 12

- **Content:** Contemporary audience practices
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022, pp. 9-30](#)
 - [“More than eight-in-ten Americans get news from digital devices” Pew Research Center January 2021 Report](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 2: Difference as Constitutive of Social Life

Class 3: Tuesday, January 17

- **Content:** Excellence in journalism
- **Readings/materials:** Perry, E. L. & Len-Ríos, M. E. “Chapter 1: Conceptual Understanding” in Len-Ríos & Perry. [On page 6, the authors suggest students read an article. You don't have to, but feel free to skim through it if you want.]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 4: Thursday, January 19

- **Content:** Communicating across difference + Human rights
- **Readings/material:**
 - Woods, K. M. “Chapter 2: Talking across difference” in Len-Ríos & Perry
 - Watch [Chimamanda Adichie’s lecture on “The Danger of a Single Story”](#)
 - [“What are the Basic Human Rights?” Ted-Ed video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class:** TBD

Week 3: Why Representation Matters & Intersectionality

Class 5: Tuesday, January 24

- **Content:** The importance and impact of representation on the self and on society
- **Readings:**
 - Alhabash, S., Cunningham, C. & Kononova, A. “Chapter 3: Who is American?” in Len-Ríos & Perry
 - [Leavitt, P. A., Covarrubias, R., Perez, Y. A., & Fryberg, S. A. \(2015\). “Frozen in time”: The impact of Native American media representations on identity and self-understanding. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71\(1\), 39-53.](#)
 - Reading guide provided
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class:** TBD

Class 6: Thursday, January 26

- **Content:** Intersectionality as a conceptual lens to think of social difference
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Watch video “Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality” on Youtube](#)
 - [Watch “What is intersectionality?” video on YouTube](#)
 - [“What's Intersectionality? Let These Scholars Explain the Theory and Its History”, *Time*](#)

- [“In northern Argentina, gendered violence and discrimination leave their mark on Indigenous communities”](#), *The New Humanitarian*
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 4: Hybridity & Globalization

Class 7: Tuesday, January 31: Quiz #1 in class (content: class 1 – class 6)

Class 8: Thursday, February 2:

- **Content:** Hybridity as a conceptual lens to think of social difference + context of globalization
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Watch “Hybridity: an exploration of identity” TED-ED talk by Amara Pope on YouTube](#)
 - [“K-pop invasion: From a local trend to a global phenomenon, and beyond”](#). *Asia News Network*
 - [“Globalization Isn’t Dead, It’s Just Not American Anymore”](#), *The Washington Post*
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 5: Mass Media Theories

Class 9: Tuesday, February 7

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Agenda setting
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Sparks, G. G. \(2006\). "Agenda-setting theory," "Framing the news." In “Chapter 9: The effects of news and political content.” In *Media effects research. A basic overview, 2.*](#)
 - Watch [interview to McCombs on agenda setting theory](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 10: Thursday, February 9

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Frame analysis and framing
- **Readings/materials:** [Baran, S., & Davis, D. \(2015\). “Framing and frame analysis”, “The development of theories of frames and framing”, “Effects of frames on news audiences”, pp. 316-327 in Section 2, Chapter 10. In *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future.* Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 6: Global and International Standpoint

Class 11: Tuesday, February 14

- **Content:** The representation of “the rest of the world”
- **Readings/materials:**

- (!) [Hall, S. \(1992\). "The West and the rest: Discourse and power," in *Essential Essays: Identity and Diaspora* \(Vol. 2\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Only pages: 141-148; 164-171. This accounts for the following sections: "Introduction" until the end of "Five Main Phases"; and from "Idealization" to the end of "Summary: Stereotypes, Dualism and 'Splitting'"]
 - **Reading guide provided**
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials + reading guide
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 12: Thursday, February 16: Quiz #2 (content: class 8 – class 11)

PART 2: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO SPECIFIC ISSUES

Week 7: Ideology and Politics

Class 13: Tuesday, February 21

- **Content:** Framing of political protests
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Brown, D. \(January 16, 2020\). "What do we want? Unbiased reporting! When do we want it? During protests!", *The Conversation*.](#)
 - [Brown, D. K., & Harlow, S. \(2019\). Protests, media coverage, and a hierarchy of social struggle. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 24\(4\), 508-530. Links to an external site.](#)[You can skip sections on research methodology]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 14: Thursday, February 23

- **Content:** Polarization and misinformation
- **Readings/materials:**
 - ["Americans' main sources for political news vary by party and age," Pew Research Center 2020 report](#)
 - Watch [short video on Affective Polarization](#) by Prof. Lelkes
 - [Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, D., & Ling, R. \(2020\). Diffusion of disinformation: How social media users in Singapore respond to fake news and why. *Journalism*, 21\(3\), 381-398](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 8: Social Class

Class 15: Tuesday, February 28

- **Content:** Media representation of social class
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Thomas, R. J. and Hendricks, M. A. "Chapter 4: Making Class Matter: Journalism and Social Class" in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Watch documentary "Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class" on Kanopy](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 16: Thursday, March 2

- **Content:** How we talk about class matters
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Stamps, D. \(2017\). The social construction of the African American family on broadcast television: A comparative analysis of *The Cosby Show* and *Blackish*. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 28\(4\), 405-420.](#)
 - [“Media language slows down fight against poverty” Interview to Ana Beatriz Chiquito about her research in Latin America](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 9: Gender

Class 17: Tuesday, March 7

- **Content:** Gender in the industry: news and marketing
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Volz, Y. & Len-Ríos. “Chapter 5: Gender and the Media: Envisioning Equality” in Len-Ríos & Perry. [Only pages 101-116]
 - [Watch “Gender Marketing” video on YouTube](#)
 - [Mitchelstein, E., Andelsman, V., & Boczkowski, P. J. \(2019\). Joanne Public vs. Joe Public: news sourcing and gender imbalance on Argentine digital media. *Digital Journalism*, 7\(10\), 1311-1327](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 18: Thursday, March 9

- **Content:** The construction and representation of gender
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Watch the [documentary “The Codes of Gender”](#) (abridged version) by Sut Jhally
 - [B\(l\)ack By Popular Demand: An Analysis of Positive Black Male Characters in Television and Audiences’ Community Cultural Wealth](#)
 - [Jackson T. M, Bryant, S. & Brown, B. \(2021\) “See me! Recognize me!” An analysis of transgender media representation, *Communication Quarterly*, 69\(2\), 172-191](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 10: Spring Break (no classes on March 14 & 16)

Week 11: Gender & the Body

Class 19: Tuesday, March 21

- **Content:** Body image
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Cohen, R., Slater, A., & Fardouly, J. (March 17, 2019) [“Women can build positive body image by controlling what they view on social media,” *The Conversation*](#)
 - Watch the documentary “Missrepresentation” [TBD]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment

- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 20: Thursday, March 23 (no classes – work on Essay #1)

Essay #1: due Monday, March 27 (weeks 7-11)

Week 12: Race & Ethnicity

Class 21: Tuesday, March 28

- **Content:** Industry aspects + the representation of race/ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [“Hollywood Diversity Report 2020: A Tale of Two Holywoods,” UCLA](#) [Skim through main findings and figures in pages 1-23]
 - [Mastro, Dana. Effects of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping.](#) [Pp. 325-329 (from the beginning until the end of "Native Americans") + pp. 332-337 (from "Effects of media on racial..." until the end)]
 - [Watch “Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People” Documentary on Kanopy](#) [You need to be logged in to the VPN]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 22: Thursday, March 30

- **Content:** The representation of race and ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [“Lack of Asian representation in media shows through in recent blunders”, The Baltimore Sun](#)
 - [“Racism in football: new research shows media treats black men differently to white men”, The Conversation](#)
 - Watch [“Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a Media Stereotype \(Abridged Version\)” on Kanopy](#) [You need to be logged in to the VPN]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 13: Nation and Immigration

Class 23: Tuesday, April 4

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Garza, M. M. “Chapter 9: Immigrants and Immigration: Reporting the New America,” in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Watch “Why Americans Love/Hated the Irish? Video](#)
 - [Watch “History Professor: Southern Italians Used to Be Treated the Same as Central Americans” Video](#)
 - [Watch “Ugly History: Japanese American incarceration camps” Video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 24: Thursday, April 6

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Figueroa-Caballero & Mastro. "Examining the effects of news coverage linking undocumented immigrants with criminality: Policy and punitive implications."](#)
 - Reading guide
 - [Watch "What does it mean to be a refugee?" TED-ED video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on readings
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 14: Sexuality

Class 25: Tuesday, April 11

- **Content:** The representation of LGBTQ+ communities and rights in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Hicks, G. R. "Chapter 6: Mass media and the LGBT community" in Len-Ríos and Perry.
 - [Watch the "Further Off the Straight and Narrow" Documentary.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 26: Thursday, April 13

- **Content:** The representation of LGBTQ+ communities in sports
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Moscowitz, L. M., Billings, A. C., Ejaz, K., & O'Boyle, J. \(2019\). Outside the sports closet: News discourses of professional gay male athletes in the mainstream. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 43\(3\), 249-271.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the reading
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Week 15: Religion & Disability

Two units concentrated in one week

Class 27: Tuesday, April 18

- **Content:** The representation of religion in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Mason, D. L. "Religion in mass media markets and news," in Len-Ríos and Perry.
 - Read the report "Missing & Maligned: The Reality of Muslims in Popular Global Movies" <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-muslim-rep-global-film-2021-06-09.pdf> [Focus on the main findings and figures.]
 - ["Does the Media Portray Evangelicals Fairly?"](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 28: Thursday, April 20

- **Content:** The representation of disability in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Painter, C. "Chapter 11: The complexity of disability," in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Video + article "Disability Representation in the Media" in Respect Ability](#)

- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Essay #2 due Friday, April 21

Week 16: Conclusion

Class 29: Tuesday, April 25

- **Content:** Conclusion
 - **Readings/materials:**
 - **Before class:** -
 - **In-class activity:** Bingo! (Extra credit)
-