

Issues and Polices in American Government: Race, Media, and Politics

GOV 312L

Unique Number 38855

Fall 2021

TuTh 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

GAR 0.102

Professor

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Description

This course examines the ways in which the media shape how we think about race. In doing so, this course will first explore the nature and construction of race. Second, it will examine the media establishment and its role in politics. Third, it will apply theories of media norms to explore how racial stereotypes of the four largest minority groups in the U.S. are created and perpetuated. Finally, this course will examine the effects of racialized media images on political processes.

Cultural Diversity in the United States

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. The purpose of the Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag is for students to explore in depth the shared practices and beliefs of one or more underrepresented cultural groups subject to persistent marginalization. In addition to learning about these diverse groups in relation to their specific contexts, students should engage in an active process of critical reflection. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one underrepresented cultural group in the U.S.

Prerequisites

Twenty-four semester hours of college coursework, including Government 310L, and a passing score on the reading section of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test (or an appropriate assessment test).

Required Text Books

There are two required text books for this course. Both books are available at the University Co-op.

Wilson II, Clint C., Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2012. *Racism, Sexism and the Media: Multicultural Issues into the New Communications Age*, 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Graber, Doris A and Johanna Dunaway. 2017. *Mass Media and American Politics*, 10th Ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Supplementary Readings

Readings not found in the required texts can be accessed through Canvas (canvas.utexas.edu) in their respective corresponding modules.

Grading

Your grade will be based on three exams and several in-class assignments/quizzes. In the case of a conflict, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Without prior notification and proper documentation, missed assignments and exams cannot be made up and late assignments will not be graded. **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Also, grades are non-negotiable. Final grades that fall between .5 and .9 will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Once final grades have been submitted to the Registrar, the only grade changes that will be accepted are calculation errors.

The weight of each assignment in determining your final grade is as follows:

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
In-Class Assignments/Quizzes	25%

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	0-59
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Exams

The format of the three exams will be multiple choice and will cover all of the course lectures, films, and readings. All of the exams will be administered via Canvas during the regularly scheduled class time. The second and third exams will **NOT** be cumulative.

In-Class Assignments/Quizzes

In-class assignments/quizzes will be given during the regularly scheduled class time. Submission of in-class assignments/quizzes will be administered through Canvas and **MUST** be submitted during class time in order to receive credit. Late submissions will not be accepted. Each quiz/in-class assignment will be worth 5 points each. You will receive one point just for handing in an in-class assignment/quiz. Credit for the remaining 4 points is determined by the quality of your work. Each student can miss two quizzes without it counting against their grade. Your quiz grade is a weighted average (see above), with a maximum of 25 points.

Website

For class information and assignments please see the Canvas site at canvas.utexas.edu.

E-mail

No assignment is to be e-mailed to me or the TA. Also, I regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Please exercise proper e-mail etiquette (for etiquette tips see <https://www.netmanners.com/e-mail-etiquette-tips/>). Finally, make sure to check the syllabus or Canvas first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question.

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness, you will need to produce a note from your doctor stating that you could not attend class that day. In all other cases, you will need to provide documentation from Student Emergency Services (<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>). In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to me at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

Expectations

Meeting the goals of the class requires three things—attendance, preparation and professionalism.

Attendance: Although attendance in this class is not mandatory, it is expected. While I don't formally take attendance, it is unimaginable that you could pass this course without near perfect

attendance. However, I understand that there are legitimate reasons for occasionally missing a class. If you need to miss a class, I expect you to email me in advance of any anticipated class absences.

Preparation: Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to the first day we are scheduled to cover that topic. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect it.

Professionalism: Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls, bringing pets to class¹, and the consumption of tobacco products². I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

Course Conduct

I am committed to creating a learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued as a source of strength. Therefore, I request that all students work with me to create a class culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As a class, we will approach all discussions with respect and civility. Disagreements and debates in academic discourse are expected and welcome, but personal attacks are never okay, and will not be tolerated. I strive to ensure an open and welcoming classroom for all students. If I ever miss the mark, please don't hesitate to come and talk to me. We are all learning together.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy. Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made. Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment. Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours. Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Academic Integrity

¹ The Elliott Rule

² The Mock-Hall Rule.

I believe you are all capable of meeting my expectations for this course. If you are concerned about how well you are doing in this course, please come speak with me instead of considering academic misconduct. According to the Institutional Rules, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records. In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, they will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity web site at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>.

Special Accommodations

Many students have visible or invisible disabilities, and the University offers accommodations that allow them to achieve their full potential. Students with special challenges or disabilities should notify me at the beginning of the semester so that we can work together to create the conditions that allow you to excel in this class. Also, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities collaborates with academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. Please contact them at 512-471-6259 or <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/> if you require accommodations.

Religious Holy Day Observance

I respect your religious beliefs and practices and will make accommodations for students who choose to miss a class in observance of a holiday. You need to inform me by email at least two days in advance if you will miss class for religious reasons so that I can arrange appropriate accommodations, make-up quizzes, etc.

Campus Safety and Other Resources

Classroom Safety and COVID-19

To help preserve our in-person learning environment, the University recommends (but does not mandate) the following:

- Adhere to the University's mask guidance.
- Get vaccinated in order to help protect against the transmission of the virus and reduce serious symptoms in those who are vaccinated.
- Engage in proactive community testing.

For more information, please visit protect.utexas.edu.

UT Counseling and Mental Health Resources

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) is committed to serving UT's diverse campus community by providing counseling and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being.

- Location: Student Services Building (SSB), 5th floor
- Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

- Phone: 512-471-3515 (for appointments)
- Crisis Phone: 512-471-CALL (2255)
- Web: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu>

The Behavior Concerns Advice Line is a service that provides The University of Texas at Austin's faculty, students, and staff an opportunity to discuss their concerns about another individual's behavior.

- Phone: 512-232-5050 (caller can remain anonymous)
- Web: <https://besafe.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>

Emergencies and Immediate Threats

Cases that present an immediate threat to self, others, or property should be considered an emergency and should be directed to the Police Department by calling 911.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, please follow the guidelines provided by the Office of Campus Safety and Security.

- Phone: 512-471-5767
- Web: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety>

Outline of Course Topics and Readings

I. *Introduction to Race in the United States*

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapter 1

Raul, Pamela. 2011. "Is race reflected by your outfit?" *New York Times*, ST6.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/fashion/when-color-is-reflected-in-a-janitors-outfit-studied.html>

Video: *White Like Me: Race, Racism, and White Privilege in America*

II. *The Media and the Political System*

Reading: Graber, Chapters 1-3

III. *Media Effects on Public Opinion*

Reading: Graber, Chapters 11, 13

IV. *Racial Minorities in Films and Television Entertainment*

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapters 2-5

Metzgar, Emily T. and Bill W. Hornaday. 2013. "Leaving it there? The Hutchins Commission and modern American journalism." *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality* 28(4): 255-270.

Video: *Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging A Media Stereotype*

V. *Race and Advertising*

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapter 7

VI. *Indigenous Media*

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapter 11

Deggans, Eric. 2012. "Why ethics and diversity matter: The case of Trayvon Martin coverage." Poynter.org. <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2012/mostly-white-and-sometimes-brown-media-people-in-a-mostly-brown-and-sometimes-white-world/>

VII. *Race and the News*

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapter 6

Graber, Chapters 5, 9-10

Woods, Keith. 2002. "The language of race." Poynter.org. <https://www.poynter.org/news/language-race>

Apuzzo, Matt. 2014. "U.S. to expand rules limiting use of profiling by federal agents." *The New York Times*, A1.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/16/us/politics/us-to-expand-rules-limiting-use-of-profiling-by-federal-agents.html>

VIII. *News Coverage of Social Movements*

Reading: Larson, Stephanie Greco. 2005. *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Chapters 12, 13, 14

Video: *Eyes on the Prize* #4

IX. *Media Coverage of Minority Candidates and Politicians*

Reading: Larson, Stephanie Greco. 2005. *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Graber, Chapter 7-8

X. *Race, Media, and Public Policy*

Reading: Graber, Chapter 6

Merolla, Jennifer, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, and Chris Haynes. 2011. “Illegal”, ‘undocumented’, or ‘unauthorized’: Equivalency frames, issue frames, and public opinion on immigration. *Perspectives in Politics* 11(3): 789-807.

Farley, Reynolds. 2008. “The Kerner Commission Report plus four decades: What has changed? What has not?” University of Michigan Institute for Social Research Population Studies Center Report 08-656.

Video: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 3

XI. Conclusion

Reading: Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao, Chapters 9-10

Course Schedule at a Glance

August 26 - September 2	Introduction to Race in the United States
September 4	Professor Philpot's Birthday
September 7 - September 14	The Media and the Political System
September 16 - September 21	Media Effects on Public Opinion
September 23	Exam 1
September 28 - September 30	Racial Minorities in Films and Television Entertainment
October 5 - October 7	Race and Advertising
October 12 - October 14	Indigenous Media
October 19	Exam 2
October 21 - October 26	Race and the News
October 28 - November 2	News Coverage of Social Movements
November 4 - November 11	Media Coverage of Minority Candidates and Politicians
November 16 - November 23	Race, Media, and Public Policy
November 25	Thanksgiving Break--No Class
November 30	Conclusion, Wrap-up, and Review
December 2	Exam 3

One Final Note...

Many students face obstacles to their education as a result of work or family obligations or unforeseen personal difficulties. If you are experiencing challenges throughout the term that are impacting your ability to succeed in this course, or in your undergraduate career more broadly, please reach out to me or your TA immediately so that we can work together to form a plan for your academic success. If you are unable to attend my or the TAs' student drop-in hours, please email us to set up a time that better works for you.