

Syllabus - MCOM 1553-101—Gender, Sexuality, and Media; FALL 2024

Midwestern State University

Contact Information

Class Meeting Time: 11 A.M.-12.20 P.M.

Classroom: FA B114

Course Instructor: Dr. Supriya Karudapuram

Office Hours: 9-10.30 & Noon--2 WF and 3.30 to 5 P.M. TuR & by appointment

Office: D-WING 205 (Since I am still in the process of relocating offices, I might temporarily be housed in FA B-WING 109; final relocation TBA)

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Email: Supriya.karudapuram@msutexas.edu; you can also email me in D2L



Course Synopsis:

Gender and Sexuality in the Media is a major hot button issue in the US political and sociocultural landscape. I often come across influencers on YouTube interviewing random individuals about how many genders there are. Answers vary from 2 to 74! Gender as a social construct vs. a biological given has become a hotly contested topic in the US. By this I mean, whether gender is a biological byproduct or an effect of social construction. In this class, we will focus on the relations between gender and communication with an emphasis on media representations of different genders. Sexuality will also be an emphasis in class. The class will critically explore the intersections of gender and sexuality and how these intersections play out in diverse media including TV, print, social media, streaming services and so forth. By critical, I mean how power relations circumscribe and influence gender and sexuality in the media. Paramount is discriminatory attitudes and prejudice that is exhibited towards gender and sexuality when they go against the grain of normative constructs and ideologies.

Gender is also a much contested topic because of issues of social justice and equality. Are the genders treated equally—for example pay scales? What about leadership positions in organizations? Who holds top positions such as CEOs and CTOs?

Classroom instruction will be through lectures based on readings and in-class activities such as informal group discussions and responses to video screenings. I am available during office hours and beyond if necessary to provide supporting & clarifying instruction as needed. D2L will be the primary source of instructional information dissemination such as lecture slides, supplemental reading material, links to videos, and assignment instructions. Assignment submissions for written assignments will also be through D2L. The Mid-Term exam will have the option of completion and submission through D2L or in handwritten form. Details will be discussed closer to the mid-term exam date. So please get up to speed with D2L features and functions ASAP.

Required Text:

The Handbook of Gender, Sex, and Media. Edited by Karen Ross. Wiley Blackwell. 2012 edition. (please see if you can purchase an affordable version of this book. E-books are welcome. I will be drawing from readings as *conversation pieces* to stimulate and provoke intellectual and politicized discourse and debate in the classroom).

Print ISBN:9781444338546 | Online ISBN:9781118114254 | DOI:10.1002/9781118114254

Supplemental Readings will be made available as needed

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will learn how to acquire proficiency in analytical and critical writing about the intersections of gender and sexuality.
- 2) Students will be prepared to cultivate oral communication skills in conveying gender-based communication and media knowledge.
- 3) Students will grasp concepts and theories as well as aesthetics of visual communication as they pertain to gender and sexuality in the media.
- 4) The class will equip students to think critically about gender and sexuality meaning power relations that contain and control representations of gender and sexuality.

Grading

Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Points
1 Media Review Paper	5
1 Written Q&A on In-Class Screening of a Movie Article or Artifact? 10 pts.	5
What's in the News?	10
Social Media Controversy Draft Post	10

Assignment	Points
Observation-Participation Journal	10
In-Class Mid-Term Exam	25
Final Paper or Paper & Creative Project Proposal	25
Total Points	100

Grading Scale:

- 100-90 points= A
- 89-80= B
- 79-70= C
- 69-60= D
- 59 & Below: F

Brief Descriptions of Assignments:

Detailed descriptions for each assignment with rubrics and grading scheme will be made available through D21 well in advance of the deadlines for completion. ***Consult Weekly Course Schedule** below for due dates. If you are required to submit an assignment in class such as an outline it needs to be word processed. The Mid-Term Exam will most likely be an open-ended open book/slides take home exam. I expect college-quality work for all assignments—therefore it is crucial that you spellcheck and proofread written submissions.

1 Media Review Paper:

You will review a media example for gender roles representation. Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 5 Points

Representation of Gender and Sexuality in the Media based on In-Class Movie Screening:

I will screen a popular movie in class. You will generate answers to 2 questions about how the movie represents gender and sexuality. 5 Points

Article or Artifact?:

Early on in the semester, you will provide a written overview of a research article or an artifact like a Ted Talk on gender roles or identity. 10 points

What's In the News?:

For this assignment, every student will focus on a gender-based event around the world. You will present on it in class and have a class involvement activity. 10 points

Observation and Participation Journal:

During the Finals Week you will submit a journal of 3 entries—2 are observations of gender/sexuality in the media and 1 is a record of your in-class participation activity in response to lectures and discussions and related classroom exercises. 10 points

Social Media Controversial Draft Post:

For this assignment, you will compose a draft post in response to a controversial issue on any social media platform. 10 points

Mid-Term Exam:

You will answer 3 short answer questions. There will also be a Match the Following and Agree/Disagree section based on readings covered till the Mid-Term Exam day. A study guide will be provided and we will have an in-class review session during the class prior to the exam day. Total Possible Points: 25 Points

Final Paper OR Paper & Creative Project:

You can do an appr. 3-page paper using 3 course/concepts using analytical and critical writing. Or you can do a shorter paper 2 pages in length and a creative project proposal such as a PowerPoint slides deck or a YouTube uploadable artifact or a digital installation like a montage on any platform based on course concepts/theories. Total Possible Points: 25 Points;

Course Policies:

Attendance:

You are allowed 1 unexcused absence during the semester. Otherwise attendance is mandatory as videos will be screened for assignments and class lectures may go beyond the readings. Absences beyond the 1 allowed absence will result in a cumulative 2-point deduction. Emergencies and religious holidays as well as attendance at university-permitted events such as sports will be excused—but please notify me via email ahead of time or in the prior class in person if you can. It is your responsibility to make up work missed as soon as possible by coming to my office preferably during office hours or through a peer. And yes, every class is important—so the question “did I miss anything answered?” is redundant.

Punctuality:

For Class:

Since films will be screened in class and presentations will occur, punctuality is required. You are allowed to be late up to 5 mts. after class begins 2 times during the semester. Subsequently each tardy show up will result in a cumulative 2-point deduction. If you are going to be late by 5 mts. beyond the allowed 2 times because of classes in a building across campus communicate that to me as soon as possible when classes start. Should emergencies occur on a class day that necessitates tardy show up, email me as soon as you can.

For Submission of Assignments:

On time submissions of assignments is crucial for grading and to honor students who do so. Since most of your submissions will be through D2L you have considerable latitude in submitting assignments on the required day/date. You are allowed to submit 1 written assignment by the following day without penalty. Subsequent to that I will deduct half the total possible

points for late submissions if within the week or by the weekend depending on the required date/day. Assignments submitted the week after the required date/day will result in an F. Mid-Term exam cannot be made up. Emergencies need to be communicated to me in a timely manner should they interfere with timely submission of assignments.

Classroom Conduct:

We live in a society and culture where difference either makes the world go around or not! Instructional choices are not meant to offend—however I realize issue and feelings may come up that may go against your sensibilities and sensitivities. In like manner, if and when we have discussions and activities, please honor your fellow classmates who may come from a different life path than you. You do not have to agree; however, you respectfully disagree. Disruptive behaviors such as *ad hominem* attacks, silencing your peers, and offensive language such as profanities and threatening non-verbal behaviors will not be tolerated and can result in me requiring you to leave the classroom and reporting such behavior to university authorities. Practice empathy—meaning put yourself in another person’s shoes—in this case your fellow classmates—and ask yourself if such behavior is acceptable to you before engaging in it.

Academic Honesty/ Integrity:

Academic honesty/integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism:

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. ***Any writing that is not the work of you or your group members is plagiarism. *Students in this course are expected to adhere to the MSU Student Honor Code.** Do note that D2L comes with a plagiarism detection tool.

By way of advice, do no wait till the last minute as this might increase the chances to cheat or plagiarize. Study. Look to me for guidance on assignments and the mid-term exam.

Technology Use & Abuse:

In-Class Use of Devices:

I will permit use of mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets if you use them for in-class research-related activities and/or for the oral presentation assignment if you need to consult an

outline and/or if you need to look up an uploaded file or materials on D2L and/or assigned readings. Laptops can be used for note taking during lectures. However, if I find you surfing the net for entertainment/social media and/or emailing/texting your personal circle or working on assignments for other classes, I will mark you down. As far as the oral presentation assignment, university policy prohibits you from connecting your personal laptop to the podium in the classroom for projection purposes. So, either save your presentation to OneDrive or email it to yourself as a downloadable attachment or best—save it on a flash drive/thumb drive/USB port.

AI such as Chat GPT:

The use of generative AI is not permitted in this course; therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered a violation of Texas Tech's Academic Integrity policy and the Student Code of Conduct since the work is not your own. The use of unauthorized AI tools will result in referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Disability Accommodations:

Please inform me on day 1 of class if you are a student with a disability and need accommodation in this class. Students with a disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before classroom accommodation can be provided. MSU provides students with documented disabilities academic accommodation (Disability Support Services, Clark Student Center, Room 168).

Campus Carry:

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Rules/Policies](#).

Campus Resources for Academic Success and Personal Wellbeing:

Tutoring Services:

Tutoring and Academic Support Services (TASP) Learning Center (TLC) located on the first floor of the Moffett Library provides tutoring free of charge to students. I emphasize writing related tutoring for this class. <https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php>

Library Assistance:

The Moffett Library is offering walking tours first week of classes and they have an Ask a Librarian chat function. Please spend some time navigating the site for their resources. <https://msutexas.edu/library/>

IT & D2L Support:

Campus Information Technology support is available via the [MSU Texas IT Webpage](#).

Support for D2L is available via [MSU Texas Student Resource Webpage](#).

Wellbeing:

Wellness related resources information is available via [MSU Texas Wellness Center Webpage](#).

Counseling services information can be found at [MSU Texas Counseling Webpage](#).

**It is my sole discretion to make alterations to the syllabus in your favor*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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WEEK 1

- TUESDAY, AUGUST 27th
 - Introductions
 - Overview of Class
- THURSDAY, AUGUST 29th
 - Activity on a web-based article/video of Gender and Sexuality in the Media
 - Screening of Video on Gender Identity and Small Group Discussion

WEEK 2

- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd
- Breakdown of Gender, Sexuality, and Media concepts
- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5th
Movie screening and Discussion

WEEK 3

- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th
- Movie Screening and Discussion contd.

- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th
- General Reading on Gender (TBA)
- SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th

Article or Artifact written assignment due by 11.59 P.M. on this day/date on D2L

WEEK 4

- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th
General Reading on Sexuality
- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th
General Reading on Media

WEEK 5

- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th
What's in the News Oral Presentation and In-class Involvement Activity
- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th
What's in the News Oral Presentation and In-class Involvement Activity

WEEK 6

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1st
- **What's in the News? In-Class Oral Assignment Due (no written work is necessary)**
- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3rd
- **What's in the News? In-Class Oral Assignment Due (no written work is necessary)**

WEEK 7: Book Chapter Readings Begin

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8th
 - **Part I—Mediated Women**; Chp. 1: Carolyn M. Byerly, *The Geography of Women and Media Scholarship*

- **Part III—Queering the Pitch;** Chp. 20: Matthew Heinz, *Transmen on the Web: Inscribing Multiple Discourses*
- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10th
 - **Part II—Rugged Masculinity and Other Fables;** Chp. 7: Jeffrey P. Dennis, *Men, Masculinities, and the Cave Man*
 - **Recommended Reading:** Chp.8: Stuart Price, *Rhetorical Masculinity: Authoritative Utterance and the Male Protagonist*
 - Mid-Term Exam Review Session

WEEK 8

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15th
 - **Part I—Mediated Women;** Chp. 13: Katherine Sender, *No Hard Feelings: Reflexivity and Queer Affect in the New Media Landscape*
 - **Recommended Reading: Part III—Queering the Pitch;** Chp. 16: Alexander Dhoest and Nele Simons, *Questioning Queer Audiences: Exploring Diversity in Lesbian and Gay Men’s Media Uses and Readings*
- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17th
 - ***MID-TERM EXAM**

WEEK 9

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22nd
 - Part I—Mediated Women;** Chp.2: Claudia Bucciferro, *Chilean Women in Changing Times: Media Images and Social Understandings*
 - Recommended Reading:** Chp.5: Ilana Elea, *Fanfiction and Webnovelas: The Digital Reading and Writing of Brazilian Adolescent Girls*

- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24th
 - **Part II—Rugged Masculinity and Other Fables**; Chp. 9: Guido Ipsen, *Conan the Blueprint: The Construction of Masculine Prototypes in Genre Films*
 - **Recommended Reading**: Chp. 12: Claire Harrison, *Studio5ive.com: Selling Cosmetics to Men and Reconstructing Masculine Identity*
- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27th
Media Review paper due by 11.59 P.M. on D2L

WEEK 10

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29th
 - **Part V—All About Sex**; Chp. 27: Feona Attwood, *Sex and the Media*
- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31st
 - Chp. 29: Laura Harvey and Rosalind Gill, *The Sex Inspectors: Self-help, Makeover, and Mediated Sex*

WEEK 11

- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th
 - Katharina Lindner, ‘In Touch’ with the Female Body: Cinema, Sport, and Lesbian Relationship
- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7th
Social Media Controversy Draft Post Written Assignment due by 11.59 P.M. on D2L
Brief oral discussion of the post—context and sample

WEEK 12

- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12th

- **Part I—Mediated Women;** Chp. 3: Elza Ibroscheva and Maria Stover, *The Girls of Parliament: A Historical Analysis of the Press Coverage of Female Politicians in Bulgaria*
- **Recommended Reading:** Chp. 6: Limor Shifman and Dafna Lemish, *Virtually Blonde: Blonde Jokes in the Global Age and Postfeminist Discourse*
- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14th
 - **Part II—Rugged Masculinity and Other Fables;** Chp. 10: Sarah Godfrey and Hannah Hamad, *Save the Cheerleader, Save the Males: Resurgent Protective Paternalism in Popular Film and Television after 9/11*
 - **Part III—Queering the Pitch;** Chp. 21: Johannes Sjoberg, *Transgendered Saints and Harlots: Reproduction of Popular Brazilian Transgender Stereotypes through Performance on Stage, on Screen, and in Everyday Life*

WEEK 13:

- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19th
 - **Part III—Queering the Pitch;** Chp. 15: Rebecca Kern, *Androphobia?: When Gender Queer is too Queer*
 - **Recommended Reading:** Martin Fradley, *Why Doesn't your Compass Work? Pirates of the Caribbean, Blockbusters, and Contemporary Queer Theory*
- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21st, CLASS WILL BE HELD ON-LINE
- **Part V—All About Sex;** Chp. 28: Jane Arthurs, *Deliciously Consumable: The Uses and Abuses of Irony in 'Sex-Trafficking' Campaign Films*
- **Recommended Reading:** Begonya Enguix and Elisenda Ardevol, *Enacting Bodies: Online Dating and New Media Practices*

WEEK 14

- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26th
 - **Part I—Mediated Women;** Chp. 4: Erin Meyers, *Gossip Blogs and ‘Baby Bumps:’ The New Visual Spectacle of Female Celebrity in Gossip Media*
 - **Recommended Reading: Part III—Queering the Pitch;** Susan Berridge, *Raised Voices: Homophobic Abuse as a Catalyst for Coming Out in US Teen Television Drama Series*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27th to SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1st—
THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 15: Book Readings Conclude

- TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
 - **Part V—All About Sex;** Chp. 30, Begonya Enguix & Elisenda Ardevol, *Enacting Bodies: On-line Dating and New Media Practices*
- THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5th
 - **Part IV—Women, Men, and Gender;** Chp. 25: Corinna Chong, Heather Molyneaux, and Helene Fournier, *Communication and Commodification: Video Technology and the Gendered Gaze*
 - Workshop for Final Assignment, Reflections, and Wrap Up

WEEK 16

- ***SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7th—FINALS BEGIN**
- ***Final Paper/Paper & Creative Project Proposal due—deadline TBA**
- **Observation-Participation Journal due—deadline TBA**

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