

SPCM 3310 / WMST ELECTIVE: VISUAL MEDIATED RHETORICS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY



Instructor: Jamie Landau, Ph.D. Candidate (M.A. University of Georgia, B.A. Vanderbilt University)

Course days, times, location: M/T/W/R/F, 1-2 p.m., 102 Moore College

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WebCT: SPCM 3310, Summer Thru 09- Landau

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Readings can be found in a course pack available for purchase from Athens Blueprint & Copy Shop located downtown at the corner of Pulaski, Prince, and Dougherty Streets. Readings are generally referenced on the schedule by the last name(s) of the author(s) or name of website. Also note that the readings are arranged in the course pack in chronological order of the schedule.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will survey types of media theory and criticism within and outside of the discipline of rhetoric. Extra attention will be given to the visual medium and the mediation of gender and sexuality. The purpose of the course is to enhance the ability of students to critically see, think, write, and in other ways create better mediated rhetorical artifacts for heterosexual women and men and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities. This course is reading intensive as well as it is heavy in discussion and group work.

COURSE CLIMATE:

Discussions of gender and sexuality invariably produce strong reactions in students. This course will result in the questioning of assumptions that many students may believe are beyond question. Some of these discussions may make students feel uncomfortable, but college is not about being comfortable. In fact, learning of any kind should involve challenging assumptions and necessarily includes feelings of discomfort. Strong reactions are fine, but there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing those reactions. It is essential, then, that the instructor and students in this course work together to create a safe climate of respect and civility. Constructive criticism and responses are welcome and expected. However, disrespect of any kind—including discriminatory speech that creates a hostile environment with respect to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, or ability—will not be tolerated.



GRADING:

Scale-

A = 930 to 1,000
A- = 900 to 929
B+ = 880 to 899
B = 830 to 879
B- = 800 to 829
C+ = 780 to 799
C = 730 to 779
C- = 700 to 729
D = 600 to 699
F = 0 to 599

Point distribution-

2 News Reports =	100
5 Discussion Leader Posts =	100
Short Paper =	150
Team Project Proposal =	150
Final Team Project =	350
Participation =	150
TOTAL =	1,000

ASSIGNMENTS:

- **2 News Reports (100 points / 50 points each)**
1-2 pages each, due: assigned days

Each student is responsible for delivering a news report *two* times over the course of the summer thru session; which days will be assigned during the first couple weeks of class. These reports should be posted in the 'News Reports' thread on the WebCT discussion board *no later than midnight prior to the day you are scheduled to deliver your news report. Assign a proper title within that thread that relates to your report. A hard copy also needs to be turned in to the instructor on your assigned news report day.* Each news report should do two things: 1) summarize one important current event in the world, national, state, or local news concerning visual media, gender, and/or sexuality, and 2) critically reflect on how the news event relates to this course. News reports can come from a range of sources, including even *credible* web sites and blogs (e.g. www.now.org, www.naacp.org, www.glaad.org, www.feministing.com). Make sure to document the news source in your report. In addition to posting each news report on WebCT, students are required to *extemporaneously* deliver their news report in class on the assigned day, and therefore delivered reports should NOT be read directly from a manuscript NOR memorized. *In-class news reports should last 1-2 minutes. If you have an unexcused absence on the day you are scheduled to deliver a news report, then you will receive zero credit for the report. News reports will be graded for content and delivery.*

- **5 Discussion Leader Posts (100 points / 20 points each)**
1-2 pages each, due: assigned days

Each student is responsible for making a discussion leader post *five* times over the course of the summer thru session; which days will be assigned during the first couple weeks of class. These assignments should be posted in the 'Leader Posts' thread on the WebCT discussion board *no later than midnight prior to the day you are scheduled to be a discussion leader. Assign a proper title within that thread that relates to your post. A hard copy also needs to be turned in to the instructor on your leadership day.* Posts should engage the readings in a

critical, substantive way and therefore are NOT summaries. They should offer active reflections on readings and/or pose questions related to the readings that will serve as jumping off points for you and the instructor to lead in-class discussion. These discussion leader posts are opportunities to try out new ideas, rather than necessarily be a place for completed thoughts. Make sure to include page numbers and full source citations. *If you have an unexcused absence on the day you are scheduled to be a discussion leader, then you will receive zero credit for your post.* All students are responsible for reading discussion leader posts before class whether or not they are assigned to post that day.

- **Short Paper- Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Media Advertising Rhetoric (150 points)**
3-4 pages, due: 7/15

This purpose of this paper is to perform a short rhetorical criticism of visual media advertising rhetoric. As your rhetorical artifact of analysis, you should choose one television commercial, or one print or online advertisement. You should analyze the ad in terms of its persuasion about gender and/or sexuality and make one overarching nuanced claim (i.e. thesis). Some questions to answer are, "Who is the audience for the ad, and how can you tell?" "What claims is this ad making in terms of gender and/or sexuality (i.e. what does the ad imply/promise if you buy the product)?" "How does visual rhetoric (images, figure and ground, shapes and space, color and lighting, movement, etc.) sell the product and its promotion of gender and/or sexuality?" How does verbal rhetoric (i.e. sound, voiceover, captions, etc.) work along with the visual rhetoric to sell the product and persuade about gender and/or sexuality?" Your criticism should be backed up by evidence from the rhetorical artifact and supported by readings from this class and elsewhere. For my review, make sure to include a copy of (or online link to) the advertising rhetoric. A bibliography page is required and will be graded but does not count toward the page limit.

- **Final Team Project- A Rhetorical Visual Mediated Artifact of Gender and/or Sexuality (500 points)**

A primary goal of this course is to critically see, think, write, and in other ways create better rhetorical artifacts for heterosexual women and men and LGBTQ communities. Toward that end, throughout this course you will be working in a team of about four students to design and produce some sort of public rhetorical visual media artifact to be completed by the end of the summer thru session. You will submit your team proposal and final portfolio to me as well as present your project in "public." I expect students to learn a lot about themselves and teamwork when working on this final project. It is also intended that this experience opens student minds to the rhetorical problems *and* possibilities of our gendered and sexed world. The best education is about making this world a better place for society as a whole as much it is about gaining individual knowledge within the classroom.

- **Team Project Proposal (150 points, no page limit, due: 7/2)**

- (75 pts) Written description and preliminary portfolio of sample rhetorical artifact(s)

- (50 pts) Outline of and reflection on individual member duties

- (25 pts) Schedule of project deadlines

- **Final Team Project (350 points, no page limit, due: 7/31)**

- (200 pts) Rhetorical artifact(s) and final portfolio of written descriptions of artifact(s), etc.

- (100 pts) Presentation of project in "public"

- (50 pts) Written reflections and evaluations of self and peers' work, and project

- **Participation (150 points)**

While I mini-lecture on background information or assigned readings, this course is centered around the idea that each student is independently helping the class as a whole investigate the relationships between rhetoric, visual media, gender, and sexuality. As a result, I will expect each of you to speak often and freely in and out of class. No small percentage of

your education should result from such discussions. Therefore I ask for two commitments from you: 1) you must make an attempt to read all assigned materials and, 2) you must come to class prepared to intelligently discuss them. Anything less and you have cheated the entire community, not to mention yourself. I do not want 'talking' for the sake of talking but instead want intelligent, thoughtful analysis and debate. Thus, as you will see, 15% of your final grade derives from the sources below. I take your participation *very* seriously. In order to receive all 150 points, you must have an excellent record of attendance and turning in assignments, as well as make an exceptional attempt to add your voice to class discussions, leadership days, projects, and WebCT posts. I will independently monitor your participation points throughout the semester but will provide you with a mid-point evaluation.

In-class discussions/activities- Students are encouraged to participate in daily in-class discussions and activities, ranging from answering my questions, to displaying critical engagement with the readings, to acting as a discussion leader on assigned days.

WebCT- Because I know that some students think best outside of class, and because I have always found it to be a useful pedagogical tool, I include in your participation evaluation contributions to WebCT. Students must check WebCT *daily* for updated course information and assignments. Also, students are encouraged to make and respond to posts on WebCT in addition to the required five news reports and five discussion leader posts. Acceptable extra posts include (but are not limited to) ruminations on the day's lecture, critical-thinking comments about the reading, thoughts about current events related to the course, or analytical reactions to another student's post. Be aware that WebCT is a University-sanctioned program and therefore falls under its jurisdiction. As in the classroom, you will be expected to adhere to all UGA policies when using WebCT.

POLICIES:

- **Attendance-** Attendance is not mandatory. However, because this is an upper-level course that for various reasons demands your attendance every day, failure to attend will directly influence your participation grade and will likely impact your grades on other assignments. Note that you will also receive zero points for a discussion leader post and news report if you do not provide documentation of an authorized absence on your leadership and news report day. Such excused absences include university-sanctioned activities, illnesses verified in writing from a medical provider or a parental guardian, and emergencies identified by student affairs. Recognize that if you should miss class any day, it is *your responsibility* to obtain missed materials from a classmate, not the instructor. Tardiness is not appropriate and will not be tolerated. Additionally, leaving class early is not allowed.
- **Turning in assignments-** I only accept assignments that are double spaced, include proper headings and appropriate citation styles (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.), and are stapled and paper clipped. All assignments should be turned into me in hard copy form *no later than the start of class on their due dates*. Each day an assignment is late, 10% of the grade is deducted. Overdue starts at the end of the class period the assignment is due.
- **Quizzes, exams-** Pop quizzes might be given depending upon the level of student participation, attendance, and performance throughout the semester. There will be no exams in this course.
- **Academic honesty-** "Academic honesty is — defined broadly and simply — the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed," says the Preamble to 'A Culture of Honesty.' The University, the Department of Speech Communication. Every student at the University of Georgia should be familiar with the booklet, 'A Culture of Honesty: Policies and Procedures on Academic Dishonesty.' If you are not, please obtain one and read it carefully. This document has a thorough presentation of four types of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, lying/tampering, and theft, as well as

the procedures that are in place to adjudicate alleged incidents of academic dishonesty. The policies and procedures described there will be strictly enforced.

- **Learning accommodations-** Any student who needs special accommodations for learning, or who has particular needs due to an emergency or other legitimate reasons, is invited to share these concerns or requests with me as soon as possible. For instance, the Office of Disability Services in Clark Howell Hall (706.542.8719) provides written documentation that specifies the needed modifications — such as a note taker or extra time for assignments — to the instructor. On the first day of the semester, athletes are also encouraged to see me to discuss their schedules.
- **Electronic devices-** All cell phones and electronic devices (except for laptop computers being used for note taking) must be turned off before the start of class and remain off until the end of the period.
- **Grievance/grade appeal procedure-** If you have a concern with any dimension of the course at anytime over the semester, please speak to me. If you want to appeal a grade, you must make the grade appeal in hardcopy to me only *after 24 hours has passed* since receiving the grade and *within one week* of the grade being returned. Prepare and submit a typed argument indicating what your specific appeal is and what grade you believe you deserved.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading due</i>
Week 1: Course introduction		
F 6/5	Introduction to course	Syllabus; WebCT
Week 2: General, and on photography		
M 6/8	Why visual media?	Mitchell 1; Mitchell 2
T 6/9	Why gender and sexuality?	Valenti 1; Kramer
W 6/10	Visual mediated rhetoric overview	Olson et al.
R 6/11	On photography	Sontag; McLuhan 1
F 6/12	The gaze	Berger; hooks
Week 3: On photography cont.		
M 6/15	Rhetorical case study	Cloud
T 6/16	Public intellectualism	Guerrilla Girls
W 6/17	Analysis application	women's/men's mags
R 6/18	Icons	Hariman & Lucaites
F 6/19	Rhetorical case study	Kimble & Olson
Week 4: On photography cont., and television		
M 6/22	Public intellectualism	nocaptionneeded.com
T 6/23	Analysis application	leinnartnilsson.com
W 6/24	Image events	Delcath & DeLuca
R 6/25	Rhetorical case study	Morris & Sloop
F 6/26	Team project meetings	
Week 5: On television cont.		
M 6/29	Public intellectualism	Harmon; letters to editor
T 6/30	Analysis application	Proposition 8 protests
W 7/1	On television	Newcomb; McLuhan 2
R 7/2	Team project meetings	Project proposal due
F 7/3	No class- July 4 holiday	

Week 6: On television cont.

M 7/6	Media reps of gays and lesbians	Fejes & Petrich
T 7/7	Rhetorical case study	Shugart
W 7/8	Public intellectualism	Landau; glaad.org
R 7/9	Analysis application	"Sex & the City"
F 7/10	Television production, consumption	Lotz

Week 7: On television cont., and the internet

M 7/13	Rhetorical case study	Parry-Giles
T 7/14	Public intellectualism	McMurria
W 7/15	Analysis application Short paper due	Victoria's Secret; LimitedBrands.com
R 7/16	On the internet	Bolter & Grusin
F 7/17	Rhetorical case study	Everett

Week 8: On the internet cont.

M 7/20	Public intellectualism	Guest speaker Barnett from gayinathens.com
T 7/21	Analysis application	feministing.com
W 7/22	Cyborg	Haraway
R 7/23	Rhetorical case study	Jordan
F 7/24	Public intellectualism	<i>Wired</i> on playborgs

Week 9: On the internet cont., and course summary

M 7/27	Analysis application	"Dollhouse"
T 7/28	Call to action, evaluations	Benson; Baumgardner & Richards; Valenti 2;
W 7/29	Team project meetings	Jervis; Barcella
F 7/31	Final team project presentations	3:30-6:30 p.m.