Political Science 455/596: Gender Politics and Mass Media

Fall 2015                  Thursday, 12:30 - 3:20 pm               Location: Tory 10-4

Course Instructor: Professor Linda Trimble
Office: 12-26 HM Tory Bldg.
Office phone: 780 492 0957
email: ltrimble@ualberta.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays from 11 - 12, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In May, the “FHRITP” phenomenon became a hot topic in local and national news when a fed-up CityNews reporter, Shauna Hunt, confronted her harassers during a live taping. One of the offenders was fired from his job, and a media feeding frenzy ensued. (Check it out at http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/fhrtp-phenomenon-cbc-journalists-share-mortifying-experiences-1.3072191). Why was this event a media sensation? How is it political? What does it reveal about gender and power relations? And why should we care about media coverage? These are the sorts of questions we will address as we examine the ways in which media products socially construct and politicize gender. Readings, in-class exercises, presentations and assignments are designed to analyze the complex and often intersecting meanings communicated about politics, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation by the mass media. We’ll focus on news, especially political news, but because other media texts convey ideological messages, construct identities, and reinforce (and sometimes contest) power relations, we’ll also look at photographs, TV ads, and reality TV shows.

HOW IT WORKS

The class is designed as a seminar for senior undergraduate and graduate students. Applied learning is emphasized, as you will design and carry out media analysis projects through in-class presentations and research assignments. The course is research intensive and requires students to engage with, gather, and analyze original media texts.

Prerequisite: Any one of the POLS 200-level core courses (210, 220, 230, 240 or 260); or WGST.

WHAT YOU’LL GAIN FROM THE COURSE

The goals of this course are to:

- Offer an introduction to the political role played by mass media;
- Develop awareness and understanding of the gender politics of media (especially news) production;
- Introduce research methods for media analysis;
- Facilitate the critical understanding and evaluation of media messages; and
- Provide a forum for debate and discussion of alternative viewpoints.
In addition to gaining knowledge of media criticism and analyses of media treatment of gender, you will acquire several skills as a result of completing the requirements for this class. These include the ability to:

- Access relevant original and secondary source material from electronic databases and journals;
- Define and apply key media analysis concepts;
- Critically analyze media texts;
- Design and conduct an original research project; and
- Present research findings in a supportive environment.

COURSE READINGS

The reading requirements are reasonable: two 15-20 page scholarly articles or equivalent per week. So I expect you to peruse them, take notes, reflect, examine and critique them, and be prepared to thoroughly dissect them in class. I’ve chosen these articles because they are topical, relevant, well crafted and engaging. Also, they demonstrate how to do original research, which is a core requirement of this course. You’ll learn a lot about theory and methods from this selection of readings.

All course readings are electronic journal articles available from the University of Alberta library in PDF format. I’ve provided links to the course readings on e-class, which is quickly accessed via the U of A homepage (https://eclass.srv.ualberta.ca/portal/). See the class schedule below for a list of readings, by week & topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There’s more information about the course requirements on page 5 of this course outline, and detailed instructions and grading rubrics for the presentations and project papers can be found on e-class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Due date, if applicable</th>
<th>% of course grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give an Example” Presentation</td>
<td>Timing depends on your choice of course reading</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Analysis Research project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday, October 15, by 4 pm in POLS office (10-16 Tory)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday, December 14, by 4 pm in POLS office (10-16 Tory)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Either November 26 or December 3, in class.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home final exam (in lieu of project presentation)</td>
<td>Thursday December 10, by 4 pm in POLS office (10-16 Tory)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should note that in all but exceptional situations all components of the course must be completed to receive a passing grade. Policy regarding missed term work is outlined in Section 23.4(3) of the University Calendar.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Access to Representative Course Material

Detailed instructions for the course assignments are provided in separate documents, as are grading rubrics for each presentation and written assignment. I have also posted representative examples of excellent research designs, as this assignment will be unfamiliar to most students.

Questions for the optional take-home final examination will be provided on the last class, 7 days prior to the due-date for the examination. As well, questions will be drawn from those discussed in class. In short, there will be lots of choice and no surprises.
Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.

Learning and working environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the Student Ombuds Office: (http://www.ombuds.service.ualberta.ca/). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

Learning and Writing Support

Students looking to improve their essay writing or study habits are encouraged to visit the Student Success Centre at 2-300 Students Union Building. The SSC exists to help students maximize their educational experience. The writing resources staff provide workshops and one-on-one sessions with students, for a small fee. Visit the website at: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport/writingstaff.cfm

FEELING OVERWHELMED? (In need of student, social, financial or security services?)

The Student Distress Centre listens, offers support, supplies information and provides services:

- Call: 492-HELP (492-4357)
- Drop in: 030-N in the S.U.B.
- Visit: www.su.ualberta.ca/sdc
- Chat: www.campuscrisischat.com/
GRADING AND LATE PENALTIES

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar.

Written assignments are due in the Political Science Office (10-16 HM Tory Building) by 4:00 pm on the due date. You may not submit your assignments electronically unless you have a good reason (above and beyond convenience) and have secured my permission in advance of the due date. For assignments handed in late without valid reason, there is a penalty of one letter grade per day, with weekends counting as 2 days. Thus, an A- paper that is 2 days late will receive a grade of B.

But everyone gets a grace period of two days, because stuff happens. You can use the two days for one of the papers, or give yourself one day’s grace for each of the two written assignments.

If you are scheduled to deliver a presentation on a day when you must miss class due to illness, let me know in advance of the class so that your presentation can be rescheduled.

All grading is based on the 4-point grading scheme presented below - no “curving”. For each assignment you will receive a letter grade and be informed of its point value.

Grading scheme

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“Political Science Department Grading Scale”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Grade Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Strong evidence of original thinking; clear capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base; superb writing and organizational skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Good to very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Evidence of strong grasp of subject matter; indication of critical capacity and analytic ability; understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature; strong writing and organizational skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Minimally satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Illustrates partial understanding of the subject matter; demonstrates an ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; writing and organization skills need improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Marginally satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Limited familiarity with the subject matter; insufficiently developed critical and analytic skills; writing and organizational skills are weak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature; poor writing and organization skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED

Seminar Attendance/Participation (15% of course grade)

Your performance in the seminar will be evaluated based on attendance and class participation. All unexcused absences will result in a grade of 0, thus if you are ill and must miss a class, please inform me as soon as possible so you won’t be penalized.

Participation grades are based on the amount and quality of participation. Arriving on time, being attentive to what your classmates have to say, and offering insightful comments will boost your grade.

• If you are absent without a valid excuse, you will receive an F (0) for that seminar.
• If you attend, your grade will range from D (1.0) for attendance with no participation to A (4.0) for respectful participation demonstrating that you have completed, comprehended and thoughtfully critiqued the assigned readings, pondered the discussion questions and prepared answers to them, and listened attentively to class presentations.

I will present each student with a mid-term participation mark after 7 weeks of class.

“Give an Example” Presentation (20% of course grade)

Each student will give a 15-minute presentation designed to illustrate an important concept, theory, argument or finding from in one of the course readings. You will choose an artifact or artifacts, such as news stories, photographs, images like cartoons, advertisements, tweets, etc., and elaborate how the example reflects (or challenges) a “big point” in the reading. More detail about this assignment, including a grading rubric, can be found on e-class, in a file titled Give an Example Presentation Instructions. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your example with me, and to consult me about your approach to the assignment.

Media Analysis Research Project (45% of course grade; 65% if you choose to present your research findings in class)

The primary research assignment for the course is an original media analysis research project. By original research I mean content and/or discourse analysis of selected media texts, designed to answer a precise research question about some aspect of gender politics and mass media. This assignment will be done in two stages: first a research design (worth 25% of your course grade) and secondly a research paper that reports your findings (worth 25% of your course grade). You have a choice between presenting the results of your research project, worth 20% of your course grade, and writing a take-home final examination (ditto).

Detailed information and advice is provided in a document titled Media Analysis Research Project Instructions, posted on e-class, along with two documents offering methodological tips (“how to” manuals for qualitative and quantitative analysis).

Optional Take Home Final Exam (20% of course grade)

Timing: To be handed out on the last day of class (3 December)
Due Date: Thursday, 10 December, by 4:00 p.m.

The take-home final exam is based on the required readings, though you may refer to information and points of analysis provided by the “give an example” presentations. I will offer you a choice of 6-7 essay-style questions, drawn from the readings. Students will answer any three of these questions, writing no more than 4 double-spaced typewritten pages per question. Answers will be assessed according to their demonstrated knowledge of, and ability to critically evaluate, the readings.
## Class Schedule: Overview of Topics and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 September</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10 September| *Women in News Industries and News Reports*  
Ross, Karen. 2014. “Women in Media Industries in Europe: What’s Wrong with This Picture?” *Feminist Media Studies* 14 (2): 326-330. (Note - Dr. Ross will give a guest presentation on this subject.)  
| 17 September| *News About Feminism*                                                                     |

| 24 September| *The Gender Politics of Advertising*                                                      |

| 1 October  | *Gender(ed) Identities and Violence*                                                      |

| 8 October  | *Personalization and Body Politics*                                                      |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 November</td>
<td><strong>No class - Fall term reading week</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 November</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” Students in language courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process.

EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
(UPDATED EFFECTIVE APRIL, 2008)

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism
No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6 (4).

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts
No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2)b, c, d and e.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence
No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

The Truth In Education (T*IE) project is a campus wide educational campaign on Academic Honesty. This program was created to let people know the limits and consequences of inappropriate academic behavior. There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students.

Please take the time to visit the website at:
http://www.ualberta.ca/tie
Amendments to the Code of Student Behaviour occur throughout the year. For the most recent version of the Code, visit http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/

NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENCE

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

At the beginning of each term, we ask you to review with your students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating. We are now also asking you to review with your students the definition of Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence. Your co-operation and assistance in this matter are much appreciated.

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

Cheating (Continued)

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

More information can be found at: http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx
**Excerpts from the Code of Student Behaviour**

**For Review with Each Class at the Beginning of Every Term**

**Procedures for Instructors Regarding**

**Plagiarism, Cheating, Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence**

The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. If you have questions about these guidelines, or about the policies, please talk with the senior administrator in your Faculty responsible for dealing with student discipline—usually an Associate Dean or the Appeals and Compliance Officer (Appeals Coordinator), University Governance (2-2655).

### 30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

#### 30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted.

#### 30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction.

### Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts:

- 30.4.3(2) a.i a mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour
- 30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iii a grade of F for a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iv a remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour, in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii or 30.4.3(2)a.iii
- 30.4.3(3) b Expulsion
- 30.4.3(3) c Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases:

- 30.4.3(3) e Suspension of a Degree already awarded
- 30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded

### 30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

#### 30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour, whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Coordinator in University Governance within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB.

---

**Professor Steven Penney**

Chair, Campus Law Review Committee

**Dr Steven Dew**

Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

---

* The Campus Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Faculties Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the Code of Student Behaviour and of student disciplinary procedures.

Updated: 27/08/2015