MEJO 841  
MASS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES SEMINAR  
*Portrayals and Framing of Gendered Violence*  
SPRING 2018

9:05 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. Mondays  
338 Carroll Hall

Dr. Anne Johnston  
356 Carroll Hall  
962-4286  
amjohnst@email.unc.edu  
Office hours: by appointment and  
2 p.m. – 4 p.m. on Mondays (starting in February).

The purpose of this course is to explore the roles and responsibilities of the mass media in society and culture. During the Spring 2018 semester we will be reading and critiquing research on how mainstream media and social media cover gendered violence as well as exploring how audiences use social media to provide counter narratives to the predominant images in media. Additional specific topics related to the main area of construction and framing of gendered violence will come from the individual interests and research/projects of the seminar participants. The final paper for the course will be an original research paper (Ph.D. students and research track MA students) or a more professionally oriented paper or project (option available to professional track MA students). There is no restriction on the theoretical perspective or methodological approach taken in the papers.

In addition to the purpose listed above, The School of Media and Journalism’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here:  
[http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps](http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps)

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.

In this 841 graduate level seminar focusing on constructions of gendered violence, we will focus on the following values and competencies:

- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

**Important UNC policies and procedures:**

**The Honor Code**  
The Honor Code is, as always, in effect at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You are expected to uphold all aspects of the Honor Code. If you have questions about the Honor Code, please see me. Read more at [https://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system](https://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system)

**Special Accommodations:**  
If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at [https://accessibility.unc.edu/](https://accessibility.unc.edu/)

**Diversity:**  
The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Bulletin [http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/](http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/)  
UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis
of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Title IX**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here [http://campusconversation.web.unc.edu/resources/](http://campusconversation.web.unc.edu/resources/)

**Required Readings**

You will find the assigned readings for the course in the Sakai site. You should feel free to suggest other readings or add to these readings. Most of the readings included on the syllabus are scholarly or research based because of the level of the course. I have included some other types of readings in a particular day’s folder, but, I encourage you to be on the look-out for, find and share with the class professional or non-scholarly discussions of these issues. I will be doing that also! During the semester, all students will share some of the important works related to their own research and projects.

**Requirements and Grades**

The course will be conducted as a graduate seminar – this means students are expected to participate in discussions on assigned readings and on their own research interests or projects, to provide critiques of and comments on course readings, and to produce a final original research paper or project by the end of the semester. Graduate grades are H, P, L, and F.

If you are still trying to understand what graduate grades mean, here’s a general description.

- **H** means a truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments.
- **P** is a good, solid performance overall in the class and on assignments.
- **L** is a performance in the class and on assignments that is below the acceptable level for graduate students. It means the student does not understand the course material very well, does not have a grasp of what is required in this area at the graduate level, and is not participating in the class at the level expected of graduate students.
- **F** is the same as it is for undergraduates. It’s failing.

Below, I’ve tried to give you a general idea of how different requirements will be weighted in this course. Your grade, generally, is determined by: active participation in class, grades on assignments and papers, and your work in class in relation to others.

- **Attendance & general participation** – 10%
- **Leading class discussion on course reading(s)** – 10%
- **Proposal** – 30%
- **Final paper/project** – 45%
- **Presentation of final paper/project** – 5%
Assignments and Course Responsibilities

**Attendance & general participation (10%)**: As you know, attendance and participation in graduate classes are critically important. Skipping class or missing class for travel is not an option at the graduate level. However, if you have an emergency and need to miss class, please email me beforehand and tell me the day you plan to miss and the reason. You are also expected to be in class when the class starts and to come prepared to participate in class discussions. That is, you are expected to be familiar with all of the readings and prepared to discuss them.

**Leading class discussion on course readings (10%)**: An important part of your participation in the seminar is your ability to lead our discussions on some of the assigned readings. Each student will select a total of 3 readings listed on the syllabus and will lead our conversation about that reading. Everyone in the seminar will have read all of the pieces, but our discussion leaders will help focus our critique and understanding of the readings through questions and comments they have about the readings. You are not meant to summarize the reading for us, but rather to call our attention to some important points about the reading and provide some questions for us to discuss. **You may substitute a reading of your choice (scholarly or professional) for one of the readings you report on.**

**Proposal (30%)**: You will write a proposal for the final research study or project you will be doing in the class. The proposal should be approximately 10 (double-spaced) pages or approximately 3000 words. For students doing the research paper, your proposal should include a literature review and research methods for carrying out your study. For students doing the more professional oriented project, your proposal should include a literature review of the conceptual area that will guide your project and an outline of the procedures (and availability of resources) for your project. We will talk about proposal writing during the semester.

**Final paper (45%)**: Ph.D. students and research track MA students will write an original research paper, approximately 25 (double-spaced) pages or approximately 7,500 words for their final paper in the course. You should decide on a general area of interest early in the semester. Students will also need to investigate possible conventions and publications to which they could submit their papers or how their papers might be used in future projects. There is no restriction on the theoretical perspective or methodological approach taken in the papers. Professional track MA students may write a traditional research paper or may do a more professionally oriented paper or a project.

**Presentation of final paper (5%)**: Papers will be presented the last day of class, and each student will have approximately 25 minutes to present the findings or results of his/her research or to show his/her final project.
## Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 22 | Guest: Dr. Barbara Friedman  
Feminist approaches to media representations:  
What reporters get right and wrong when reporting on gendered violence. |  
**Readings** (foundations old and new)  
Feminist standpoint theory. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*  
**Optional Readings**  
  
10:30-11:45  
Report on initial exploration of your areas: Foundations and your interests |
| January 29 | 9:05-10:25  
Feminist approaches to media: A quick tour of the foundations and standpoint theory. |  
**Readings**  
Mardorossian, C. M. (2014). *Framing the rape victim.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (Chapter 1: Framing the victim and Chapter 2: Rape and victimology in feminist theory.)  
  
10:30-11:45  
Report on initial exploration of your areas: Foundations and your interests |
| February 5 | Cultural contexts and conditions for understanding gendered violence portrayal: Victim’s rights, myths and narratives. |  
**Readings**  
Mardorossian, C. M. (2014). *Framing the rape victim.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (Chapter 1: Framing the victim and Chapter 2: Rape and victimology in feminist theory.)  |
| February 12 | Writing a research/project proposal  
Due: 1-2 pages on possible research or project topic. |  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Constructing the gendered violence story: What’s covered/what’s missing/activist response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Optional Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>Workshop and discussion on research/project proposals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Exploring (and changing) the narratives in domestic violence coverage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DUE</strong> 9:05 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research or project proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Optional Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Spring Break**  

| March 19 | Rape culture: Questioning our understanding and exposing the myths.  

**Readings**  

**Optional Reading**  

| March 26 | Workshop and discussion on projects and research papers  

| April 2 | Global gender violence: An introduction to coverage and to activism  

**Readings**  

**Optional Readings**  

April 9 | Gendered violence: Telling the story of sex trafficking.

**Readings**

**Optional Readings**

---

April 16 | Workshop and update on final papers
April 23 | Presentations of research projects/papers
April 30 | DUE 9 a.m. Final research papers or projects