

MEJO 442.001: Gender, Race, Class and Media
Spring 2021
T/Th 3:30-4:45 p.m. Online/Synchronous*

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Friedman (she/her/hers)
Graduate Teaching Assistant: Andrea Nenque (she/her/hers)
Contact: Via Sakai Messages

Office Hours: [Drop-in Wednesdays, 10-11 a.m. via zoom](#), and by appointment

***To join: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/97909157146?pwd=MGd0S09iVFFuU0Q1emswMmVnMCtoUT09>**
Password: 442



*"The anger we have as women is an act of radical imagination.
Angry women burn brighter than the sun."
Soraya Chemaly, Rage Becomes Her (2018)*

Course Description & Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to explore the relationship between gender, race, class and media—with a focus this semester on *women's anger*. From *Real Housewives* to superheroes to cyborgs and everything in between, media images of feminine rage pose new ways to consider significant political shifts in women's lives and models of women's power as media producers, consumers and as activists. In this upper-level undergraduate course, we will explore the roots and representation of women's anger in a range of media, and plumb the limits of expression. Taking a cultural studies approach, we will apply concepts and methods to critique representations of and responses to women's anger in media industry, content and consumption. We will conclude by identifying points of intervention in the circuit of communication that offer the promise of meaningful change.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize media as a source of cultural pedagogy that contribute to educating us about the world, ourselves and others
- Situate media culture historically in the context of its societal origins and impacts
- Identify the ways that media structures and content constitute and afford power, especially as it applies to gender, race, sexuality, and class

- Critique media materials using a multi-perspectival approach that examines political economy/production, textual analysis, and audience reception/consumption
- Assess the ways that media have represented women's anger to communicate ideas and ideals about gender, race, sexuality, class (and relatedly, how women have harnessed media to channel anger as a communicative tool regarding conditions of gender, race, sexuality, and class)
- Commit to exploring and modifying your consumption and production of media in an effort to resist media manipulation and increase your autonomy and individuality

Course Reading:

This is a seminar-style course and thus you can expect to do a good amount of reading. We will read and view a range of scholarly and popular materials this semester, including content from the required texts listed below. Additional readings will be posted online or linked to UNC Libraries for online access.

Required Texts:

- Brittney Cooper, *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018)
- Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018)

Strongly Recommended:

- Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018)

Note: These texts are available through UNC Student Stores, massive online retailers and [independent booksellers](#). In the earliest weeks of class, I will make the content available on Sakai as you await arrival of your book order.

Content Notice:

Some of the material we will read, view and discuss includes [profanity](#) ("swearing is a complex social signal that is laden with emotional and cultural significance," writes Byrne) and/or content that relates to sex, violence, etc. You can expect that there will be material in this course that pushes you outside your comfort zone and even challenges your current beliefs and your understandings of contemporary phenomena. This is part of the learning experience; I encourage you to keep an open mind, and I expect us to collectively foster an atmosphere of curiosity, kindness, generosity, and respect toward all members of our learning community and in all communications. Animated discussion is welcome as long as inquiries are genuine and relevant to the course, and as long as opinions are supported with evidence; behavior that disrupts the classroom will not be tolerated.

Contacting Dr. Friedman:

Please email me (and/or my graduate teaching assistant) through Sakai Messages – this way your email will stand out among the dozens of non-class-related correspondence that I receive daily. I will respond on weekdays as soon as possible. If a day goes by and you've not heard from me (again, *weekdays*), email again. Please address me as [Dr. or Professor](#) Friedman.

Participation and Engagement:

You must commit to (and a portion of your grade depends on) being an active participant if you, your classmates and the course are to succeed. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day; that means completing the readings before you arrive to class. Have the readings in front of you, if possible, so that you can refer to and cite specific content—the course depends on your ability to discuss and critique the reading and apply concepts to media content. We each have media preferences that will extend beyond those offered in course content—when there's something outside class that you find relevant, please tell us about it to help advance our discussion.

I understand that your ability to engage in online learning may be challenged by things that are not necessarily within your control: access to technology, hardware and software; work/family responsibilities; food insecurity and physical/mental well-being of yourself or family members, to name a few. Should you encounter obstacles to accessing resources or to completing your work, it is your responsibility to communicate with me *as soon as possible*. If you know in advance that internet connectivity will likely be a challenge, please communicate this at the start of the semester. Do not wait until the end of the semester or after grades are submitted to tell me about a hardship you've been experiencing—it will be too late for me to provide accommodations. Instead, own your power and advocate for yourself. I will work with you to find a solution so that your grades are not adversely affected by things beyond your control.

Cameras:

Barring technical problems, I will have my camera on when we are together in class (and during office hours). I encourage you to have your cameras turned on during class, but I do not require it. I ask that you post a current photo of yourself to Zoom and to Sakai so that at least we can picture to whom we're speaking (and who is speaking). For a layer of privacy, you should feel free to adopt a Zoom background when your camera is on—[here](#) are some Carolina backgrounds, for example, and instructions for use.

Note: Some of our sessions might be recorded for accessibility. By enrolling in this class, you consent to being recorded and to release the rights to any recorded content produced for this class, including images and video, to me for future instructional or research use.

Important UNC Policies and Procedures:

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the letter and spirit of the [university honor system](#). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated – this includes plagiarism, cheating or any false means of obtaining a grade – and may result in failure of the course, and suspension or expulsion from the university. If I suspect academic dishonesty, I have a duty to report it to the MJ-School's senior associate dean for undergraduate studies, the Student Attorney General, or the judicial programs officer in the Dean of Students' office for further action. For information on how to avoid plagiarism, go to The Writing Center's [plagiarism](#) site.

Disability/Accommodations

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please notify and make arrangements through the Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>. If you need immediate accommodations as you and I wait on ARS documentation, please email me or come to office hours to make a plan.

Diversity

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is [here](#). 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/SAFE at UNC

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 at safe.unc.edu. For confidential help, you can contact UNC's [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#) (GVSC). Due to COVID-19, these services are available remotely.

ACEJMC Values

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values that our majors should be

aware of and competencies our majors should be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate from our program. You can learn more about them here under the heading “Professional values and competencies”

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

In this class, we will focus on the following values:

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Grading and assessments will be divided into two categories: command of course content (e.g., understanding concepts/theories and explaining them to others, conducting media analyses), and acquisition/demonstration of professional skills (e.g., working collaboratively, engagement and participation), which will be useful well beyond MEJO 442. Your assignment and cumulative course grade will always be visible to you in Sakai, but you are welcome to check in with me at any time to discuss your progress in the class.

Grade Scale

A = 95.0 and above	B+ = 87.0-89.99	C+ = 77.0-79.99	D = 66.0-69.99
A- = 90.0-94.99	B = 84.0-86.99	C = 74.0-76.99	F = 65.99 and below
	B- = 80.0-83.99	C- = 70.0-73.99	

Note: Grades are assigned according to criteria established by a UNC-CH Committee on Grading. For example, an “A” grade indicates superior work, whereas a “C” grade indicates sufficient performance, and an “F” indicates an unacceptable performance. For an understanding of what the various grades mean, see the UNC Registrar’s page [here](#).

Grades are not negotiable, but I will discuss with you any substantive concerns you have about them, and you can check Sakai or ask me any time how you’re doing in the class if you’re unsure. If you want to discuss an assignment grade, I encourage you take 24 hours to reflect upon the work before coming to virtual office hours or contacting me for an appointment. You must contact me with your concerns within (1) one week of receiving the grade.

Assignments and Weighting:

- **Participation/Engagement** (15%): Demonstration will take a range of forms—details in class, including a brief presentation with a partner of the key takeaways for one day’s reading and questions for discussion.
- **Curiosity Questions** (5%): During the first eight weeks of the semester, make at least two posts to “Curiosity Questions” Forum and answer two of your classmates’ posts (and any on your own thread). Extra posts/responses welcomed and credited.
- **Writing Assignments** (50%): Details for each provided in class or via Sakai.
 - *Forum posts*: (Weekly questions related to reading, through week 8)
 - *Media Self-Reflection*: An essay providing a brief autoethnography of yourself as a media consumer/producer student/worker (3-5 pages). Due: Thursday, Feb. 11, by 4:45 p.m. (Week 4)
 - *Critical Review*: A substantive review of media material suitable for publication in popular press (4-5 double-spaced pages). Due: Thursday, Feb. 25, by 4:45 p.m. (Week 7)
 - *Media Analysis*: A substantive analysis of a media artifact that applies a concept or concepts covered in

class and reading (6-8 double-spaced pages). Due: Thursday, April 8, by 4:45 p.m. (Week 12)

- **Final Exam/Project (30%)** Scheduled: Saturday, May 8, 4-6 p.m.

Special information for graduate students taking this course:

To receive graduate credit for taking MEJO 442, students are required to participate/engage regularly in discussions, complete all reading/viewing/listening assignments (read Cooper/Traister/Chemaly in their entirety) and write graduate-level appropriate papers *in lieu of Forums posts*. Your written work and schedule of deadlines must be negotiated with me at the beginning of the semester (message me for an appointment to meet) and will be commensurate with your position in the graduate program, e.g., an extended literature review, a chapter of a thesis or dissertation, a project/research proposal. The work must have gender/race/class/media as its focus and use a qualitative approach. Final course grades for graduate students are H, P, L, and F.

PROPOSED WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Note: This weekly schedule (= readings, assignments, due dates) is subject to change based on University operations, current events, publications and student interests. Changes/updates will be posted to Sakai and communicated via Announcements and Messages—it is your responsibility to check Sakai regularly.)

For each session, “required reading” is material that should be read/viewed/listened to before arriving to class. “Required tasks” are assignments that use the day’s reading or related material, but are due at a later date.

Part I: Comprehending Women’s Anger

<i>Week 1: Introduction to Assumptions, Key Concepts and Research</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums post to “Introductions” (due Friday, 1/22, 5 p.m.) • Upload a current picture of yourself to Sakai and Zoom (asap)
Th, 1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duhig, “The Real Roots of American Rage” • Kellner, “Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Studies” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums post “Week 1 question” (due Tuesday 3:30 p.m.)

<i>Week 2: Sources of and Attitudes About Women’s Anger</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daalen-Smith, “Adaptation” • Chemaly, “Nice to Meet You, Rage,” and “Women ≠ Toasters” • Cooper, “Bag Lady” and “Orchestrated Fury” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch online (stream via UNC Libraries the documentary, “She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry,” dir. Mary Dore, 2014, 1 hr. 32 mins.), and then answer “Week 2 question” Forums <u>due Tuesday, 2/2, 3:30 p.m.</u>
Th, 1/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to “Hysterical: Women and Rage” (all 4 episodes, ~40 mins total), The Takeaway, WNYC • Traister, Introduction and Part I (pp. xvi-43) 	

Part II: Frameworks for Studying Women's Anger in Media

Week 3: Communicative Injustice and Righteous Anger		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kay, "Feminism and Communicative Injustice" and "Feminism, Anger and Voice in the #MeToo Era" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forums post "Week 3 Question" (due Tuesday, 2/9, by 3:30 p.m.)
Th, 2/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorde, "The Uses of Anger" Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger" 	

Week 4: Cultural Scripts and the Limits of Expression		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooper, "Orchestrated Fury" Gay, "Who Gets to Be Angry" Ford, "It's Okay to Be Angry" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional: Do you have a favorite rage song? Check out this Playlist for Angry Women compiled by the authors of <i>Burn It Down</i>
Th, 2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooper, "White Girl Tears" Brown, "Going to War with Myself" Calderón, "Why Latinas Are Not Allowed to Get Angry" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Self-Reflection due to Sakai by 4:45

Part III: Women's Anger in Media Industry, Content and Reception

Week 5: Who Run the (Media) World?		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 2/16	Wellness Day – No Classes 2/15-2/16 ☺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional: Chill to Taylor Swift's "The Man" and "Mad Woman" for thinking about inequity in media structures—see links in stories; or bliss out to Lizzo's Tiny Desk Concert and/or interview)
Th, 2/18	<i>Screening:</i> "This Changes Everything" (dir. Tom Donahue, 2018) (We will screen this 97-minute documentary in its entirety. If you cannot stay to the end, or if you prefer, you may stream and watch on your own via the <i>Course Reserves</i> link on Sakai or here .)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forums: Week 5 Question (due Tuesday, 2/23 by 3:30)

Week 6: Conflict in the Newsroom		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Listen</i> (~ 36 mins) "She Said' Reveals the People and Practices that Protected Weinstein." Fresh Air, WHYY Malone & Demme, "I'm No Longer Afraid" 	<< Content Warning: This material includes descriptions of sexual assault.
Th 2/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Status of Women in the US Media, 2019" (skim) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forums: Week 6 Question (due Tuesday, 3/2 by 3:30)

Week 7: Sublimated Rage		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemaly, "There are No Words" Traister, Part 2, "Medusas," pp. 44-133. 	
Th, 3/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Day (instructor available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Review due to Sakai by 4:45 p.m.

Week 8: Witches and the Monstrous Feminine		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West, "The Witches are Coming" Traister, Part 3 "Season of the Witch" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream "Attack of the 50-Ft. Woman," using the Course Reserves link on our Sakai site. Forums: Week 8 Question (due Tues., 3/16 by 3:30)
Th, 3/11	Wellness Day – No Classes 3/11-3/12 ☺	

Week 9: Awakening Anger		
<i>Required Reading & Key Concepts</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 3/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finnegan, Narrating Gender, Gendering Narrative (<i>heteronormativity, language games, friction</i>) Budowski, "Westworld is Brilliantly Capturing the Spectrum of Female Rage" (<i>sentience</i>) Okwodu, "Does Westworld Have a Woman Problem?" (<i>dystopia, android</i>) "Westworld" season 1 & 2 trailers (CW: violence) 	
Th, 3/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall, "Encoding, Decoding" (<i>encoding, decoding; dominant, negotiated, oppositional readings</i>) Tillett, "Living While Black in 'Lovecraft Country,'" <i>New York Times</i> Weldon, "Review: 'Lovecraft Country': Facing Monsters and a Monstrous History," NPR Listen (52:47): "I Am," Ep. 7, Lovecraft Country Radio (CW) Newby, "Lovecraft Country": Aunjanue Ellis on the Timeless Struggles and Triumphs of black Women," <i>Hollywood Reporter</i> 	Post to Forums, Week #9 Question (due by Tues, 3/23, 3:30)

Week 10: Misogyny/noir & Toxic Masculinity (Content Warning)		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemaly, “The Politics of Denial” (<i>misogyny, denial response, systems justification</i>) Burrell & Cohen, “Misogynoir” (<i>misogynoir</i>) Ho, “To Be An Asian Woman in America.” CNN 	<p>Discussants: Sophie R. (1), Anna Grace T. (2)</p> <p>Post to Forums, Week #10 Question (due by Tuesday, 3/30, 3:30 p.m.)</p>
Th, 3/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream (1:21) <u>on your own before class</u>: “Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood, & American Culture (<i>learned/taught behavior, cultural systems of belief</i>) Manne, “Exonerating Men” OR listen (45:00) “Interview with Kate Manne, Author of ‘Down Girl,’” Electorette (podcast) (<i>misogyny/misogynoir, ‘exonerating narratives,’ testimonial justice, himpathy</i>) 	<p>Discussants: Elizabeth Y. (Tough Guise); Reis (Manne)</p>

Week 11: Anger and Politics		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traister, Pt. 2 “Medusas, pp. 44-133. (<i>strategic containment, proximal power</i>) 	<p>Discussants: Victoria A. (1), Bailey W. (2)</p>
Th, 4/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream (1:52) <u>on your own before class</u>: “And She Could Be Next, Pt. 1: Building a Movement” PBS (stream via UNC Libraries) 	<p>Discussants: Franny L. (1), Isaac K. (2)</p> <p>Post to Forums, Week #11 Question (due by Tuesday, 4/6, by 3:30 p.m.)</p>

Week 12: Anger and Comedy		
<i>Required Reading</i>		<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willett & Willett, “Introduction” and “Fumerism” in <i>Uproarious</i> Watch (14:00): Zayid, “I’ve Got 99 Problems, Palsy is Just One,” TEDTalk Watch (18:18): Gadsby, “Three Ideas. Three Contradictions. Or Not,” TEDTalk Watch: Video clips TBD (check Sakai) 	<p>Discussants: Janet A. (1), Kristen B. (2)</p> <p>Post to Forums, Week #12 Question (due by Tuesday, 4/13)</p>
Th, 4/8	One-on-one meetings with instructor (optional; sign-up on Sakai)	

Part IV: Points of Intervention: Anger as Catalyst

<i>Week 13: Mad Girls</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilson, “What if Girls Knew They Are Allowed to Be Angry?” <i>Elle</i> Brown, <i>Raising Their Voices</i> (excerpts) Hodgson, “GOT: Arya Stark is a Very Modern Femme Fatale” 	Discussants: Aysha D. (1), Cayce C. (2)
Th, 4/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream (1:22) on your own before class: “We are the Radical Monarchs.” dir. L. G. Knowlton 	Discussants: Suzanne B. (1), Katie B. (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Analysis Due by 4:45 p.m.

<i>Week 14: Digital Activism</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jackson et al., “Visions of Black Feminism: #FastTailedGirls, #YouOKSis, #SayHerName” Jackson et al., “#GirlsLikeUs: Trans Feminist Advocacy and Community Building” 	
Th, 4/22	Guest: Morgan English, MA/JD candidate “Cancel Culture as Counterspeech” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate.” <i>Harper’s</i> Hudson Jr., “Counterspeech Doctrine” <i>Listen</i> (42:00): “Is It Time To Cancel Cancel Culture?” <i>NYT</i> The Argument (podcast) 	

<i>Week 15: Working on Final Paper</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 4/27	Optional one-on-one meetings with instructor (sign-up on Sakai)	
Th, 4/29	Presenting work/work in progress	

<i>Week 16: Wrapping Up Anger</i>		
	<i>Required Reading</i>	<i>Required Tasks</i>
T, 5/4	Presenting work/work in progress	
Sat, 5/8	Final Exam 4-6 p.m.	