



MEJO 841: Issues in Media and Society

Righteous Furies: Women's Anger as Communicative Injustice and Resistance

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. (*online*)

Dr. Barbara Friedman bfriedman@unc.edu

Join: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/95130153447?pwd=dFRndlM3ai9QQVlrL1FTc1daUEJYUT09>

Meeting ID: 951 3015 3447

Passcode: Angry

877-853-5257 US Toll-free

Course Description & Objectives:

Anger is a constant in media production, content and reception, though it is neither represented nor read equally across social identities. In news coverage of the recent election cycle, angry women voters have been caricatured as “rage moms” and witches, rather than represented as the political actors they are. In entertainment media, anger defines and animates women characters in ways that have perpetuated, but increasingly subvert, racist and sexist stereotypes. Some scholars have noticed that media culture seems ready, finally, to accommodate feminine rage, whether in recognition of #MeToo, other political shifts or its marketability.

In this graduate seminar, we will explore women's anger in popular and commercial cultural forms as both explicit and implicit political expression. What are the sources of women's anger, and how has it manifested in a range of media content? For what groups of women are mediated expressions of anger read more or less charitably? How are contemporary media producers making space for women's anger? What media platforms offer women room to organize around common sources of anger and amplify their collective power? How has women's anger been, "a powerful source of energy serving progress and change," as Audre Lorde put it, and how can we assure it remains so?

For this work, we will draw on a range of media, including news, TV/film and music. Scholarly literature and popular work on women's anger and activism post-2016 will provide us with the theories and concepts helpful for viewing women's anger as communicative injustice and resistance. Students will produce cultural analysis and criticism through research, writing and dialogue.

Required Texts:

- Jilly Boyce Kay, *Gender, Media, and Voice: Communicative Injustice and Public Speech* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)
- Brittney Cooper, *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower* (St. Martin's Press, 2018)
- Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* (Simon & Schuster, 2018)
- Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* (Simon & Schuster, 2018)

Content Notice: Some of the material you will encounter in this class addresses themes of gender violence, graphic violence, sex, and uses profanity.

Grades & Grading Policy: This course will be conducted as a graduate seminar. This means that you are expected to be prepared to discuss/critique assigned readings, as well as your own research in progress; and to help peers as they develop their research. Each student is expected to produce an original research paper by the end of the semester using methods of textual analysis and suitable for scholarly presentation. The final paper should be suited to your level of study (e.g., journal article, book chapter, thesis/dissertation chapter), determined in consultation with the instructor.

Course grades will be determined *using this general scheme*, with consideration given to the conditions under which we're operating this semester. What's most important is that you engage with the reading, seek deeper understanding together with me and your colleagues, accept and incorporate feedback and make relatively steady progress in your writing. I am here to support and encourage your learning, so don't hesitate to ask for assistance when you need it.

<i>Participation (e.g., reading discussion/leadership, presentations)</i>	<i>25 percent</i>
<i>Written assignments (work in progress)</i>	<i>25 percent</i>
<i>Final Paper</i>	<i>50 percent</i>

Student grades will be determined this way:

H - Student reads and critically engages with all of the assigned material. Participation in discussion and written assignments exhibit the ability not only to apply the material, but also to extrapolate ideas, expand into new areas, and contribute to the body of scholarship in the area. Reserved for truly outstanding work.

P - Student usually reads and engages critically with the assigned material. Able to apply material and extrapolate ideas. Consistently good work completed on deadline.

L - Student reads and engages critically with only some of the assigned material. Able to apply the material and extrapolate ideas in only some instances.

F - Student occasionally misses class, does not always read the material, fails to critically engage with it, and is unable or unwilling to apply the material.

Honor Code: Students must adhere to the letter and spirit of the [University honor system](#).

AEJMC Values & Competencies: The School'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 at the following link, under the heading "Professional Values & Competencies."

<http://www.journalism.ku.edu/acejmc-professional-values-competencies>

Special Needs: If you have any disability or other special situation that may make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact [Accessibility Resources & Service](#) (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

Safe@UNC. The University's [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Other Misconduct](#) states that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject by federal law to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources [here](#).

Week-by-Week Schedule: This course uses a cultural studies approach, and encourages a multi-perspectival approach to media analysis that scrutinizes political economy/production, text, and audience reception/consumption. No single lens will work in all situations, thus content is arranged so that you gain exposure to a range of concepts and frameworks, with each unit including examples of the perspective under discussion. Students will take responsibility for leading discussions of the assigned material and their work in progress. Be sure to check Sakai for changes to our schedule and, importantly, reading assignments, which may be modified based on availability and on students' areas of focus in the course.



Week 1, Jan. 21 – Welcome and Introductions

To Read:

- Syllabus
- O'Sullivan, "To Detox from the News, I Binge-Watched 'Dallas'"

To Do:

- *By Monday 5 p.m.*, please submit to Sakai Forums (Week 1 – Idea Board) a list of several topics you'd like to explore this semester in your writing.

Week 2, Jan. 28 – What About Women's Anger?

To Read:

- Daalen-Smith, "Adaptation"
- Gill, "It's Time to Get Angry Again"
- Chemaly, Introduction, and chapters 1-5
- Cooper, "Bag Lady" and "Orchestrated Fury"

To Do:

- Discuss research ideas

Week 3, Feb. 4 – Anger and Epistemology

To Read:

- Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology”
- Collins, “Controlling Images and Black Women’s Oppression”
- Cooper, *Eloquent Rage*, pp. 1-146
- Weiss, [“The Limits of ‘Believe All Women’”](#) (skim reader comments, too)
- Valenti, “Our Words Alone”
- Friedman, “The Costs of Disbelieving”

Week 4, Feb. 11 – The Personal is Political/Sisterhood is Powerful

To Read:

- Traister, *Good and Mad*
- Norman, “The Consciousness-Raising Document”

To Do:

Watch “Mrs. America” (episodes 1-2), Hulu Original

If you are not familiar with second-wave feminism, you may also want to watch the documentary “She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry” (dir. Mary Dore, 2014, 1 hr. 32 mins.). Stream for free [here](#) via UNC Libraries.

WELLNESS DAYS – NO CLASSES HELD FEB. 15-16

Week 5, Feb. 18 – Individual meetings with instructor

To Do:

- Sign-up on Sakai

Week 6, Feb. 25 – Communicative Injustice and Righteous Anger

To Read:

- Kay, *Gender, Media and Voice*, “Feminism and Communicative Injustice” and “Feminism, Anger and Voice in the #MeToo Era”
- Lorde, “The Uses of Anger”
- Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger”

> **DUE:** Introduction and literature review due (or equivalent material)

Week 7, March 4 – Cultural Scripts and the Limits of Expression

To Read:

- Gay, “Who Gets to Be Angry”
- Cooper, “White Girl Tears”
- [“Miya Ponsetto Apologizes”](#)
- Negra and Leyda, “Querying ‘Karen’: The Rise of the Angry White Woman”

To Do:

Talk about the methods and/or theory you might use in your research

Week 8 – WELLNESS DAYS – NO CLASSES HELD MARCH 11-12

(Optional: Rage-Stitching Session – Join via Zoom Thurs. during class time for subversive cross-stitching and conversation)

Week 9, March 18 – Who Run the (Media) World?

To Read:

- Kay, “Out of Place”
- Listen (~36 mins.) “‘She Said’ Reveals the People and Practices that Protected Weinstein,” Fresh Air, WHYY
- Friedman, “Fauxpowerment Will Be Televised”

To Do:

- *Screen in class:* “This Changes Everything”



Week 10, March 25 – Unlocking Anger

(or, everything I learned about women’s anger I learned from HBO)

To Read:

- Cooper, “Never Scared”
- Listen (~52:47): “I Am,” Ep. 7, Lovecraft Country Radio (podcast)
- Belton, “Metaphors of Patriarchy in ‘Orphan Black’ and Westworld”

To Do:

Screen in Class: “I Am,” Season 1/Episode 7, “Lovecraft Country” (HBO)
Selected scenes, “Westworld”

> ***DUE:*** Methods (or equivalent material)

Week 11, April 1 – Anger as Comedy

Guest: Michelle Robinson, UNC American Studies

To Read:

- Kay, “Damaged Goods: The Gender Politics of the ‘Traumatized Voice’”
- Krefting, “Hannah Gadsby and the Limits of Satire”
- Wood, “F*ck the Patriarchy: Towards an Intersectional Politics of Irreverent Rage”

To Do:

- *Watch:* “Hannah Gadsby: Nanette” (Netflix)
 - (if you do not have Netflix access, watch: [Hannah Gadsby, “Three Ideas. Three Contradictions. Or Not,” TED Talk](#))

Week 12, April 8 – Revenge and the Monstrous Feminine

To Read:

- Lentz, “The Popular Pleasures of Female Revenge”
- Bromley and Hewitt, “Fatal Attraction”
- Syme, [“Getting Even”](#)
- Bailey, “A Radical Reckoning”

Week 13 – Optional Meetings with Instructor***To Do:***

- *Sign-up on Sakai*

Week 14

- **Presentations of final papers**

Week 15

- **Presentations of final papers**

> ***DUE:*** Final Paper to Sakai Friday, May 7 by 5 p.m.
