

WS 1140: Gender, Social Movements and the Media

Tu/Th 4:00-5:15

Spring 2004

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:30 and by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the role of gender and the media in social movements. Many social movements organize themselves through or against gendered norms – using the media to shape, publicize and mobilize their politics. In this course, we will study social movement actors’ use of the media, and the role of media coverage in social issues, within a number of explicitly gendered, sexed, racial and class movements, including: the religious right, civil rights, gay and lesbian liberation, HIV and AIDS activism, “third wave” feminism, anti-globalization and anti-sweat shop organizing, among others. The course aims to help us think about the connections between social movements’ construction and mobilization of social difference and their strategic use of the media. How, for instance, do social movements use the media to politicize norms of gender, sexuality, race and class? How do they also challenge these norms? What role do alternative media play in new social movements? How successful has “culture jamming” been in recent movement politics? Do new media technologies enable more or less access to social movement activism for women, people of color, the working class and working poor? In what ways are young people – young women in particular -- using the media to politicize the conditions of the lives? These and other questions will orient our reading and thinking in the course over the semester.

Course Readings

A packet of required readings has been prepared for this course. It can be purchased at the Pitt Bookstore on 5th Avenue, or checked out from reserves at Hillman Library. Additionally, there is one book that is required reading: Marguerite Guzman Bouvard (2004). *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc. It can be purchased at the Pitt Bookstore, or the 1994 edition can be checked out from reserves at Hillman Library.

Readings are due on the date in which they are listed in the course schedule.

Assignments and Grading

Below is a general outline of assignments for the semester. The specifics of each major assignment will be explained over the duration of the course. The numbers in brackets indicate the cumulative weight of each category toward the semester grade. Please note: students must turn in all assignments to pass the course.

Participation [10%]: As a discussion class, your professor encourages participation! Participation means attending *all* class meetings, being prepared and attentive, having something relevant to ask or tell, and being respectful and courteous to your classmates and your professor. Students are expected to read course materials closely, and be prepared to substantively discuss and argue about ideas. Take notes and mark key passages in the texts we read to help stimulate discussion questions. Note that no participation means 0% (regular absences, have not done the reading, not prepared for discussion, does not speak in class), moderate/adequate participation means 5% (no absences, have done the reading, ready for discussion, will speak in class) and exceptional participation means 10% (no absences, have carefully done the reading, regularly speaks in class and routinely adds important material and insight to the discussion, asks excellent questions). **To help facilitate open discussion, students are required to prepare a discussion question on the reading for each class day.**

Class Presentations [20%]: Student-led discussions will comprise a good portion of our in-class work over the semester. Each student will lead class discussion one time during the semester by presenting a **2-3 page discussion paper** on the assigned reading. The paper should not summarize the reading, but instead should indicate specific ideas and particular passages from the text that shaped your response to it. What interested you? What perplexed you? What seemed right on? What seemed wrong? Why? At the end of your paper, you must pose two to three questions for the class to discuss. You are responsible for bringing enough copies of your paper for each class member. To begin our sessions, you will read your paper aloud to the class. Then you will be in charge, ready to initiate the discussion. Our collective goals in each session will be to have open and respectful conversation, become aware of the concerns and assumptions underlying each reading, and engage in the process of synthesizing ideas and questions across readings.

Preliminary Project Proposal [5%]: Early in the semester, you will turn in a short, 1-2 page proposal for your semester project on a social movement and its media activism, broadly conceived. The purpose of this assignment is to get you started in the research process early in the semester, and to encourage you to carefully choose your object of study for the term. In addition to me, you will receive feedback on this proposal from two of your colleagues. This assignment will be graded lightly.

Midterm Project Proposal [20%]: At mid-semester, students will turn in a developed, well-crafted proposal on their final semester project. The proposal should be 5 pages in length (you can write more if you need it), and it must include the following: 1) a description of your object of study – e.g. a social movement of your choice and their media activism and/or interaction with mass and/or network media, and/or public demonstrations; 2) a discussion of the analytical framework you will use to analyze your object of study, based on the readings we have covered thus far in the course and your own preliminary research; 3) a brief discussion of what you have discovered in your preliminary research up to this point; and 4) a discussion of the significance of your project. Why is it important and/or interesting? What will it tell us? Proposals will be graded according to the clarity of your description, your understanding of the analytical

framework you use, and the coherence of the project as a whole. The specifics of the assignment will be explained in more detail in a handout.

Annotated Bibliography [5%]: Two weeks after you have turned in your proposal, you will turn in an annotated bibliography of texts you have found in your research that you will use in your project. Each annotation must include the full bibliographic citation for the “text” (e.g. book, article, website, video, etc.) and a short paragraph that summarizes its key point(s). These texts can include secondary source material, methodological pieces, other people’s interviews with movement actors, movement-produced material, among other things. This document should be 3-5 single-spaced pages.

Final Research Project [40%] The course will end with a final research project on a social movement and its media activism. The movement can be local, regional, national or international. An analysis of media practices must be at the heart of the project. Included in this project is a short class presentation you will make during the final week of classes. Each part of the assignment will be explained in further detail over the course of the semester.

Ground Rules for Class Discussion

Discussion will make up a great percentage of our time in class. Following a few basic discussion guidelines will help insure that this time is productive, enlightening and fun.

1. Follow the golden rule. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. Wait your turn – do not interrupt others.
3. You do not have to express your own opinion on a subject. You are also free to change your mind on any topic at any time.
4. Disagreements are natural and welcome in scholarly discussion. So are arguments. But arguments are not contests. You should grant the same courtesy and respect to the people with whom you disagree that you would want for yourself.
5. Students bring lots of interesting experiences to the classroom, and you are encouraged to bring up your experience when it is relevant to class discussion (and when you feel comfortable doing so). Everyone’s personal experience deserves respect. But if you bring up your own experience in class, please recognize that it becomes a public topic for discussion. Others may interpret your experience differently than you do, and they are free to respectfully disagree with your interpretation.

Course Policies

1. **Attendance: VERY IMPORTANT**

This course is run on a seminar model, which means that your attendance and participation at every meeting is very important. You are also paying for an opportunity to learn. Absences hurt your ability to learn and they hurt your grade. Signing up for this class indicates that you are committed to being here for the full class period each class meeting. **For the purposes of this policy, you are either present for an entire class meeting or not. Late arrivals and early departures will count as absences — really.**

You are allowed two unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Save them up and use them for sick days, when you are feeling too awful to drag yourself to class. For each absence above two, students will have their semester grade reduced by 1/3 grade. Further, in-class assignments and quizzes cannot be made up. If you miss class, you are still responsible for whatever was covered in lecture and discussion that day. YOUR PROFESSOR IS VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS POLICY, AND SHE ENFORCES IT.

Unexcused absences in excess of two will be excused only under exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. **Requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing, with documentation, and immediately upon a student's return to class.** Students who enroll late are not exempt from this policy.

2. **Assignments and Extensions**

Assignments (except for in-class work and the like) will be announced well in advance of due dates. If you know in advance that you can't make a due date, please discuss it with me beforehand. In all other cases, late assignments will not be accepted.

3. **Grades**

I am eager to help you do well on assignments before they are due. Please visit me during office hours to ask me questions when you are working on an assignment or reviewing material.

Grades are final. I grade assignments and quizzes on performance, not effort. Here are the circumstances under which I would change a grade: (a) if I have made an error, or (b) if I have failed to hold you to the same standard as everyone else. In the event that you feel you received an undeserved grade, you should make your case in writing to me within two weeks of receiving the grade. Under no circumstance will I award a grade of "incomplete" for the course.

Final grades will be based on the standard university scale:

90-100% = A range

80-89% = B range

70-79% = C range

60-69% = D range

0-59% = F

The professor reserves the right to adjust students' semester grades based upon her evaluation of their overall performance. Grades are not given out over email or the telephone.

4. **Accommodations**

If you require special accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services by the end of the first week of the term. The office of Disability Resources and Services is located in 216 William Pitt Union (648-7890 [voice or TDD]), and their website is at: [<http://www.drs.pitt.edu>]. If you have a physical disability, please let me know as early as you can so that I can accommodate you. If you have a learning disability that affects the amount of time you need to complete assignments, please let me know as early as possible so I can understand your limitations. If you have an emotional disability (which may limit your ability to effectively discuss particular topics), you need only disclose this to me if you are requesting particular accommodations.

5. **Nondiscrimination Statement**

As a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, I value equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. Be assured that I will promote a safe and conducive environment for learning. In accordance with University policy, I will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. In addition to the University's policy, and within the bounds of the course, I do not discriminate on the basis of political creed. This means that you do not have to agree with me in order to do well in this course. So long as you demonstrate an understanding of the course material, you are under no obligation to agree with it. I also make every effort to avoid discrimination on the basis of class or income. If there is something I can do to make the class more hospitable, please let me know.

6. **Other Policies You Should Know**

Student Code of Conduct: [<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/usjs/code.html>]

Academic Integrity: [<http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>]

Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas as your own. If you use someone else's ideas, you are expected to cite them. If you use someone else's exact words, even if it is part of a sentence, you should put quotation marks around them and cite them. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and can result in failure of the assignment, the course, and other serious sanctions. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please see me.

Semester Schedule of Readings

Tuesday January 6: Introduction to the course.

Introduction to Social Movements and the Media

Thursday January 8: The Right to be Heard

Duemler, David. (Winter 2000). "The Right to be Heard: Creating a Social Movement for the 21st Century" *Social Policy*, 45-51.

Tuesday January 13: The Iran Contra Hearings and the Mobilization of Everyday Citizens

Thelen, David. (1996). "Introduction" and "The Participatory Moment" In *Becoming Citizens in the Age of Television*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1-25.

Thursday January 15: A Utopic Vision of Social Movements

Taylor, Verta. (January 2000). "Mobilizing for Change in a Social Movement Society" *Contemporary Sociology*, 219-230.

Social Movement Mobilization through Media

Tuesday January 20: The Media as Battlefield

Ryan, Charlotte. (Fall 1991). "Media Battlefronts: Political Action and Coverage in the Press" *Social Policy* 22:2, 8-16 (acquired from EBSCOHOST database Academic Search Elite).

Thursday January 22: The Role of Story-Telling in Politics

Bennett, W. Lance and Murray Edelman (August 1985). "Homo Narrans: Toward a New Political Narrative" *Journal of Communication*, 156-171.

Tuesday January 27: Radical Media and Media Activism

Benton Foundation (1991). "Media Advocacy Defined" *Media Advocacy: Reframing Public Debate*, Washington, D.C.: Benton Foundation, 3.

Downing, John (1995). "Alternative Media and the Boston Tea Party" In John Downing, Ali Muhammadi, and Annabelle Sreberny-Muhammadi (Eds.). *Questioning the Media: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 238-252.

Thursday January 29: Ida B. Wells and the Anti-Lynching Movement

Moreau, Shannon (February 2001) "Crusader for Justice" *American History*, 18.

Brown, Mary Jane (July 2003). "Advocates in the Age of Jazz: Women and the Campaign for the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill" *Peace & Change* 28:3, 378-419.

Tuesday February 3: Wars of Position Vs. Wars of Maneuver

Carroll, William and R.S. Ratner (1999). "Media Strategies and Political Projects: A Comparative Study of Social Movements" *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24(1), 1-34.

Media and the Women's Movement

Thursday February 5: Feminism and Media Backlash

Rhode, Deborah (Spring 1995). "Media Images, Feminist Issues" *Signs* 20:3, 685-710.

Tuesday February 10: "Bra Burning" and other Media Constructs of Feminism

Douglas, Susan (1995). "I am Woman, Hear Me Roar" In *Where the Girls Are*. New York: Random House, 163-191.

***Preliminary Project Proposals due in class* (bring three copies: DO NOT FORGET!)**

Thursday February 12: Feminists Use the Media

Barker-Plummer, Bernadette (1995). "News as a Political Resource: Media Strategies and Political Identity in the U.S. Women's Movement, 1966-1975" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, 306-324.

***Robyn Spencer talk on women in the Black Panther Party, Women's Studies Program**

Tuesday February 17: Discussion of Preliminary Project Proposals

Movements and Alternative Media

Thursday February 19: Girls Re-Do Feminism

Garrison, Ednie Kaeh (Spring 2000). "U.S. Feminism-Grrrl Style! Youth (Sub)Cultures and the Technologies of the Third Wave" *Feminist Studies* 26:1, 141-170.

Tuesday February 24: The Christian Right and New Media Technologies

Berlet, Chip (1997). "Who is Mediating the Storm? Right-Wing Alternative Information Networks" In Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage (Eds.). *Media, Culture and the Religious Right*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 249-273.

Thursday February 26: The Frontiers of Media Activism

"Witness," Guerilla News Network and Digital Storytelling Projects (read websites associated with each – see below)

Witness can be found online at <http://www.witness.org>.

The Guerilla News Network can be found online at www.guerillanews.org.

Digital Storytelling Projects can be found online at three locations:

<http://web.mit.edu/tsound/digital%storytelling.html>, the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, CA and the website of Third World Majority.

**Queer Movements, Radical Media, Radical Tactics,
Radical Ideas**

Tuesday March 2: Radical Media and the Birth of Gay Liberation Movements

Gross, Larry (2001) "Preface," "Coming Out and Coming Together," and "Stonewall and Beyond" In *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

***Midterm Project Proposals Due in Class* (bring three copies: DO NOT FORGET!)**

Thursday March 4: Movements for Sexual Pleasure

Schwartz, Pepper (January 2000). "Creating Sexual Pleasure and Sexual Justice in the Twenty-First Century" *Contemporary Sociology*, 213-219.

Tuesday March 9-Thursday March 11: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday March 16: Queer Nation

Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman (1997). "Queer Nationality" in Berlant's *The Queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 145-174.

Responses to Midterm Project Proposals due in class

Politics and the Battleground of Culture

Thursday March 18: Women's Magazines and the Political Identification of AIDS

Treichler, Paula (1999). "Beyond *Cosmo*: AIDS, Identity and Inscriptions of Gender" In *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 235-277.

Tuesday March 23: Not by Politics Alone

Diamond, Sara. (1998). "Preface" and "Staying Tuned" In *Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right*. New York: Guilford Press, vii-xi, 18-40.

***Annotated Bibliographies due in class* (bring one copy for Prof. Rentschler)**

Politicizing Motherhood

Thursday March 25: "Sacred Intimacy" and the Right-wing Mobilization of Motherhood

Kintz, Linda (1997). "Introduction" and "The Heart of the Matter" In *Between Jesus and the Market: The Emotions that Matter in Right-Wing America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1-10, 55-76.

Tuesday March 30: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Marguerite Guzman Bouvard (2004, new edition). *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.

Thursday April 1: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, day 2

Marguerite Guzman Bouvard (2004, new edition). *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.

Politics by Other Means: Theater, Infiltration

Tuesday April 6: Studying the Right

Saponara, Laura (1999) "Confronting the Logic of the New Right" *Peace Review* 11(1), 69-76.

Thursday April 8: Youth, Street Theater, and the Anti-Globalization Movement

Klein, Naomi (1999). "Bad Mood Rising: The New Anti-Corporate Activism" In *No Logo*. New York: Picador, 325-343.

Tuesday April 13: Final Project Presentations

Thursday April 15: Final Project Presentations

Tuesday April 20: Final Projects Due by 4pm