



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
COMMUNICATION 326-50/312-50
AFRICAN AMERICANS in AMERICAN MEDIA
Spring 2017

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PURPOSE of the COURSE: Both research and casual observation have provided evidence that African Americans, like women, other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans), and other minority groups (e.g., those with disabilities, members of the Queer community) are regularly marginalized by society and the mass media. Therefore, this course focuses on the evolution of the popular image of African Americans as reflected in the visual media of television and the cinema. Other media examined include print (e.g., magazines and newspapers), the Internet, and advertising. The course is particularly concerned with the media's impact on African Americans as a cultural minority, keeping in mind issues of representation (e.g., representations of whom? by whom, for whom?) and power.

COURSE OUTCOMES: Through description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of historical and contemporary trends, you will develop a deeper understanding of the portrayals of African Americans in our media. At the conclusion of this course, students should:

- Become informed and critical users of mass media, particularly as they relate to African Americans
- Develop an understanding of the historical evolution of African Americans from non-recognition to regulation (Clark, 1969) and from assimilationist texts to multiculturalist texts (Gray, 1995)
- Develop and nurture a cultural approach to the study of media that can be utilized to analyze the portrayals of African Americans and their agency in these portrayals
- Consider how the media impact others' perceptions, including African Americans' understandings of themselves
- Broaden their perspectives regarding minority (and majority!) portrayals in as they relate to other minority groups

These outcomes align with the University's Cultural Diversity course guidelines:

Understanding Cultural Diversity means students will have a broad exposure to a variety of social systems, cultures, and subcultures, both within the United States and the rest of the world. This portion of the curriculum encourages an appreciation of the realities of a racially and culturally diverse world. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Recognize that social and cultural systems develop out of adaptation to environmental and historical circumstances;
2. Communicate an understanding of the ways in which race, ethnicity, and/or gender are socially constructed;
3. Communicate an understanding that different cultures may hold different views of the same issues;
4. Evaluate pertinent information and assertions for relevance, bias, stereotyping, manipulation, and completeness.

REQUIRED MATERIALS (The textbooks are mandatory. No exceptions. Shop around.):

1. Entman, R.M. & Rojecki, A. (2000). *The Black Image in the White Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (ISBN 0-226-21076-6)- available at the University Bookstore (and the affiliates). New: \$26.00; Used: \$19.50; eBook: \$26.00
2. Squires, C.R. (2009). *African Americans in the Media*. (ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-4036-5 pb)- available at the University Bookstore (and the affiliates). New: \$49.10; Rent new: \$39.30; Used: \$36.85; Rent used: \$22.10
3. The readings available on Blackboard.
4. Access to the media, including newspapers, magazines, movies, television, the Internet, etc.!

Blackboard:

We will use Blackboard for this course. The Delphi Center offers an online help page for Blackboard at <http://delphi.louisville.edu/help/student/>. You can also access the Blackboard student manual at <http://library.blackboard.com/ref/ac6a8266-81c9-423f-a187-6cf4f7a505b7/index.htm>. The University of Louisville completes regular system maintenance on the Blackboard servers. Therefore, Blackboard @ UofL is unavailable during these times: Fridays 10 PM - 2 AM EST, Sundays 1:30 AM - 5:30 AM EST. **NO** assignments will be given due dates with these time requirements.

Operating systems go there may be mishaps. It is your responsibility to alert me in a timely manner, if you have problems with the system. A few suggestions, include going to the library or accessing a computer outside of your home. System suggestions are as follows:

1. Contact the IT HelpDesk (<http://louisville.edu/it/support/helpdesk>). The HelpDesk is available 365 days a year around the clock at (502)-852-7997 helpdesk@louisville.edu. Do you need help quickly? You can use the **Live Online Support** button (on the left) and receive the help you're looking for in just minutes.

2. You may contact Linda Leake in the Delphi Center at (502) 852-4332, Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm, as a last resort. Her e-mail address is Linda.Leake@louisville.edu. If you contact her, you will also want to send me a note letting me know you are experiencing problems.

Some helpful hints about Blackboard that you won't find in the help files or FAQs:

1. While you are taking a Blackboard quiz, do NOT open a new web browser window or tab. If you do open a new web browser window or tab while taking a quiz, Blackboard will automatically submit your quiz as is. If quizzes are assigned from your readings you will only get one (1) opportunity to take the quiz (with exceptions for internet connection problems, Blackboard server problems, etc. as spelled out in the syllabus). Therefore, you do not want to shut yourself out of the quiz accidentally by opening a new window/tab for facebook or Twitter.
2. If you are using Internet Explorer 8, Blackboard may not allow you to correctly submit your quizzes. Please download Mozilla Firefox @ <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/upgrade.html?from=getfirefox> and use this browser instead. Firefox is a free browser and has no known issues with Blackboard.

Announcements:

Each **Monday** I will post an announcement letting you know what will be available for the week under the Assignment, and Discussion Board tabs. I will also flag this announcement, so it is emailed to you on the same day. Other announcements or e-mails may be posted and sent through the week as needed. Again it is vitally important that you check these announcements regularly. **You will want to check the class a minimum of twice weekly. Recommendations: DO NOT let a week go by without checking our class site. Do not wait until the last two weeks of class to play catch up. You will have enough advance notice for all assignments, so pace yourself.**

Assignments:

Create a folder, on your computer, for the course and label it African American Communication Assignments. Save all assignments in this folder in case you need to go back and retrieve and resubmit. All assignments will be located under the Assignment tab in Blackboard. Within the tab, you will find a folder for the week's assignment and within there will be instructions. You will need to click on the link which says, "View/Complete" and there you may attach your WORD formatted assignment (You may also use the Rich

Text Format). For your convenience there is a comment box provided for those who wish to send me a note regarding their assignment. **Note:** This box is not to be used to type your assignment.

When submitting your assignments, please be sure to name (label) your saved document (ex. **Jillian Introduction Essay**). **All assignments need to include your name, date and assignment name or title. After the first two weeks of class students will lose points if they do not include the above.** You will need to use **Times Roman font and double space with pages numbered.** Your **margins need to be 1 inches on all sides.** If assignments are submitted without the above information you will lose points. If you have general questions regarding assignments, please submit them through the “Comment and Question” forum in the discussion board.

E-MAIL ACCOUNTS (E-MAIL CHECK 5 extra credit points)

Each student has a U of L e-mail account. We will use this account to communicate in our course. If you have a preferred e-mail account students should contact the Information Technology (IT) help desk (852-7997) for assistance with syncing your U of L account to your preferred account (e.g. If you prefer your Yahoo account, then your U of L e-mails will automatically go to that account).

To ensure we are all up and running, everyone needs to send me an e-mail by **11:00 pm, Tuesday, 1/17**, letting me know you are connected to the U of L e-mail system. Students will receive 5 extra credit points once I have responded to your email. No late work will be accepted due to your failure to access this account.

Email etiquette means I will not respond to emails or discussion post that are in texting language, all caps or varied color. Black is the only color used to submit emails and assignments. When using exclamation points, please be advised of the appropriate use of this punctuation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS (610 points total): All written assignments must be in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, stapled. Late assignments will be accepted only with a documented excuse. Late assignments will lose a letter grade (10%) per day past the day that they are due. **Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted.**

Discussion Board (150 points): You are required to participate in weekly discussion board forums at a minimum of twice weekly. You are expected to complete all assigned readings and **offer informed contributions to class discussion.** If you are not prepared, then extreme measures will be used. (READ: pop quiz!)

Quizzes/Reading Summaries: If needed, at various times during the semester, you will be given quizzes to assure that you are engaging w/ the course material. They will be in the form of multiple choice, T/F, and short answer questions, or you will be asked to write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the day's readings. To be prepared, you must **READ!**

Due to the nature of this course participation in the discussion board forums is **Mandatory**. Each Monday you will find a question prompt or thought for the week.

The discussion boards are used for four main reasons: 1) to assess your understanding of the course material, to include ability to identify concepts and strategies and use each effectively 2) to allow you and other students to communicate and interact with each other since we do not have the luxury of meeting face-to-face; 3) to challenge students to think critically about concepts covered in our readings, video and audio materials, 4) to develop communication skills by articulating thoughts through writing about concepts and ideas and 5) to challenge students to assess their own limitations in the readings or other course material by utilizing means of inquiry (i.e., Comments and Questions).

You are required to submit at least a 100 to 200 word initial response/comment. In addition, each week you will be required to give a thoughtful and substantive response to at least one of your classmates during that week's discussion for full credit. Comments such as "I agree," "I was thinking the same thing" or some variation of the two do not make for a thoughtful or substantive response. You may include these statements with your response, but they are not sufficient responses to a classmate's post. You may respond to a classmate as many times as you prefer, however there is a two post minimum for each week which includes include your initial response and a response to your classmate.

Your initial response/comment is to be posted no later than Friday at 10:00pm and you may respond to your classmates anytime after Friday at 10:00pm and before Monday at 11:00pm.

You will receive up to 10 points for your responses. A rubric with grading criteria has been provided in this discussion forum for your convenience.

My presence in the discussion boards may appear sporadic, I am reading each post. I read individual discussion posts several times a week and will provide personal feedback from time to time. I will chime in on the discussion forums if they go off in a direction that is not constructive or related to our course. I will also respond if I think that an essential point has been missed by the class or if any student is attacked by another student (which thankfully has not happened and I encourage every student to remain civil or I will take away points for that chapter). Refer to the ground rules for the discussion board located under the **Course Documents** tab.

Discussion Board Participation, Rules, and Guidelines:

Please adhere to proper English (no IM or text messaging speak) and keep netiquette in mind. *Flaming* (negative, inflammatory language designed to influence opinion) will not be tolerated. For more helpful information regarding netiquette refer to www.onlinenetiquette.com.

Participation in the forums is mandatory and counts as class

participation and attendance, therefore the following will be enforced: Those missing 2 weekly forums (initial post and response to your classmate) will lose a letter grade on their final grade for the course. Those missing 3 will lose (2) letter grades off their final grade and those missing 4 discussion board forums will fail the course.

It is also important for you to keep in mind that discussion forums are DISCUSSION forums. Do not submit questions to the instructor through the discussion forum. **To reiterate, it is vitally important that each student aim to provide more substantive post that reflect to your instructor that you have read the material and are making connections between the material and the discussion topic for that week.** The Weekly Discussion Forums can be a fun educational tool if everyone will participate and provide thoughtful discussion.

On-going Discussion Board Forums:

“Comments and Questions”

This forum is to post general questions about the course. Please send all personal emails about your assignment, grades and other concerns of a personal nature by email. I will not respond to post in this forum that are of a personal nature. I reserve the right as Instructor to remove all post that fall under the category of personal assignments, grades and other individual issues. When posting in this forum, please give at least 48 hours for a response to be posted.

Exams (400 points @ 100 points each): You will have three exams during the course of the semester and a final exam at the end of the semester. The dates for these exams are listed on the following pages. They will be multiple choice, T/F, and essay and will be based upon readings, lectures, discussions, and topics in our class meetings. The exam dates are non-negotiable and a make-up will be given only in documented extenuating circumstances. A make-up exam must be completed within a week of the original test date. Please see me prior to the exams if you anticipate a problem. No student will be allowed to leave the room once an exam or information exchange is in process.

MLK Commemorations Comparison Participation Assignment (10 points): You are to read/watch two different media outlets’ coverage of MLK Birthday commemorations. Feel free to mix and match as you please. The idea is that you want to be able to see the differences between two different media outlets’ coverage of the celebrations. **The goal of this activity is to encourage you to critically analyze news media (including broadcast and print).** Type up your findings

into a half-to-one-page summary, answering the questions provided. More information will be provided about this assignment at a later date.

African Americans in American Media Reflection Paper (50 points): The point of this paper is to pick a topic that we covered in class and reflect on how it impacts your understanding of the media with regard to African Americans. This is your chance to demonstrate what you have learned from taking this course. I expect some complexity of thought and some maturity of ideas presented. This is an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned and present your ideas in a logical and persuasive manner.

Any of the topic areas we explored this semester are appropriate for this reflection. Think about one thing that you learned from this semester about one of these topics that you found particularly surprising and/or interesting. Your assignment should be 3 pages. More information will be provided about this assignment at a later date.

Extra Credit: Extra credit opportunities may arise over the course of the semester. I will provide you with the necessary information if such an opportunity becomes available for you.

PLEASE NOTE:

Assignments: When submitting assignments, create a folder, on your computer, for the course and label it African American Communication Assignments. Save all assignments in this folder in case you need to go back and retrieve and resubmit. All assignments will be located under the Assignment tab in Blackboard. Within the tab, you will find a folder for the week's assignment and within there will be instructions. You will need to click on the link which says, "View/Complete" and there you may attach your WORD formatted assignment (You may also use the Rich Text Format). For your convenience there is a comment box provided for those who wish to send me a note regarding their assignment. **Note**: This box is not to be used to type your assignment.

When submitting your assignments, please be sure to name (label) your saved document (ex. **Jillian Introduction Essay**). **All assignments need to include your name, date and assignment name or title. After the first two weeks of class students will lose points if they do not include the above.** You will need to use **Times Roman font and double space with pages numbered**. Your **margins need to be 1 inches on all sides**. If assignments are submitted without the above information you will lose points. If you have general questions regarding assignments, please submit them through the "Comment and Question" forum in the discussion board.

COURSE POLICIES:

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. The University of Louisville regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult me. Simply put, cheating and/or academic dishonesty on any assignment or exam will not be tolerated: any student caught cheating in any way will receive **a zero for the semester**.

Disabilities: If you have any disabilities that require adjustment by the course instructor, please talk to me at the beginning of the semester so necessary actions can be taken. If you have any disabilities, or think you might have one, you will find the Disability Resource Center (Stevenson Hall, Room 119; 852-6938) a helpful resource.

Office Hours: I hold office hours for a reason: to give you an opportunity to speak with me one-on-one via Skype, phone, or face to face about your questions and concerns. I am very interested in your thoughts about the course and about media in general. Please make note of my office hours and **please use them!**

Email: Please feel free to email me when questions or concerns arise. I am happy to help you. Keep these things in mind:

1. Life happens! If something is going on with you, please let me know sooner than later.
2. Even though I am a notorious night owl, please do not wait until a ridiculous time in the morning to email me regarding an assignment due that day. It's not fair to either one of us.
3. If you have questions regarding an exam, you **MUST** email me 24-48 hours before the exam. If you don't, you risk not getting the info you need.
4. Remember email etiquette. Being polite goes a long way!
5. If I discern that an email discussion isn't the best format for us, I'll set up a time for us to meet face to face.
6. Be careful about confusing your classmates and/or yourselves. When in doubt, consult me.

Civility: Please make sure you are

Respect your classmates, instructor, and yourselves. As this class will often be the forum for debate, you might (will probably!) encounter views, morals, etc. that are not the same as yours. Take it in stride.

Title IX/Clery Act Notification

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain **confidential** support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to **University faculty or instructors** of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is **not**

confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide (<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>).

Be positive. You are perfectly capable of learning the material and performing well in all of your classes. This class will be no exception.

A = Achievement significantly above requirements (A+=97-100%; A=93-96%; A-=90-92%)

B = Achievement over and above requirements (B+=87-89%; B=83-86%; B-=80-82%)

C = Meets basic course requirements (C+=77-79%; C=73-76%; C-=70-72%)

D = Does not meet requirements, but effort is worthy of credit (D+=67-69%; D=63-66%; D-=60-62%)

F = Work neither meets requirements, nor is worthy of credit (59% and below)

Weekly Topic Calendar

Week 1: January 9-January 16

Introduction Readings & Laying the Ground Work

Introductions, Discussion Board Introductions, E-mail Checks

Selected Readings and Viewings

Squires: Introduction and Chapter 1

Entman & Rojecki: Preface to the paperback edition and Preface

McIntosh (Weekly Readings)

*Due by 11:00pm *Tuesday 1/17/17 (Email check, Syllabus Quiz, Discussion Forum and Introduction Essay)*

**In observance of MLKing holiday the assignments will be due on Tuesday 1/17 by 11:00pm.*

Week 2: January 16-January 23

Laying the Ground work cont'd & African American Stereotypes

Film: Ethnic Notions

Bogle (Blackboard)

Assignment MLKing holiday paper (*Located under the Assignment tab*)

Read King's I Have a Dream Speech (*Blackboard along with a link to the audio*)

Week 3: January 23-January 30

African American Stereotypes Cont'd

Hill Collins (Blackboard)

Discuss MLKing Assignment

MLKing Assignment due by 11:00 pm, Monday 1/23

Week 4: January 30-February 6

African American Streotypes Cont'd

Exam Review Sheet

Stephens & Phillips (Blackboard)

Exam 1 (Laying the Groundwork & African American Stereotypes)

You will have one week to complete your exam. Exam due by 11:00 pm

Monday 2/6.

Week 5: February 6-February 13

African Americans in Print

1835-1945

1945-present

Squires Chapters 3 & 4

Recommended: Wilson et al., Chapter 5 (Blackboard)

Week 6: February 13-February 20

African Americans in the Recording Industry

Film: *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

Squires 9 & 10

Perry (Blackboard)

Recommended: Barlow (Blackboard)

Week 7: February 20-February 27

African Americans in Cinema

Film excerpts from Birth of a Nation, Imitation of Life, Micheaux films

Entman & Rojecki, Chapter 11

Squires, Chapters 5 & 6 (try hard to at least outline these chapters)

Squires, Chapter 7 (read)

Recommended: Cripps (Blackboard)

Week 8: February 27-March 6

African American in Cinema Cont'd

Films: Selections from Tyler Perry films

Hannaham (link on Blackboard)

Week 9: March 6-March 13

Exam Review Sheet

Finish discussion of readings from weeks 7 & 8

Exam 2 (African Americans in Print, Recording Industry, & Cinema)

You will have one week to complete your exam. Exam due by

11:00 pm Monday 3/13

Last Day to Withdraw: Monday 3/9

Week 10: March 13-March 20

SPRING BREAK!!!! ENJOY!!!! MEDIA BLITZ!!!

Week 11: March 20-March 27

African Americans in Television and Advertising

Film: Color Adjustment

Gray (Blackboard)

Entman & Rojecki Chapter 9

Squires, Chapters 11-13 (Outline the chapters, use your skimming skills! ☺)

Recommended: Zook (Blackboard); Mastro & Greenberg (Blackboard)

Merritt, Matabane (Blackboard)

Dixon & Maddox (Blackboard)

Week 12: March 27-April 3

African Americans in Television Cont'd

Viewing: Excerpts from multiculturalist television series (e.g., The Cosby Show, In Living Color, Blackish, Atlanta, Roc, etc.)

Entman & Rojecki, Chapter 10

Hunt (Blackboard)

Frisby (Blackboard)

Recommended: **Fujioka (Blackboard); Dates (Blackboard)**

Week 13: April 3-April 10

African Americans in Advertising

Review Exam 3

Recommended: **Dates (Blackboard)**

Exam 3 (African Americans in Television and Advertising

You will have one week to complete your exam. Exam due by

11:00 pm Monday 4/10

Week 14: April 10-April 17

Media Reflection Paper Assigned due by 11:00 pm, Monday, 4/24

Special Topics African Americans (You get to choose! More forthcoming!)

Viewings and Readings TBA

Week 15: April 17-April 24

Exam Review Sheet

Special Topic: African Americans (You get to choose!! More forthcoming!!!!)

Week 16: April 24

Last Day of Classes

Exam 4 (Cumulative Final Exam)

**You will have one week to complete your exam. Exam due by
11:00 pm Wednesday 4/25**

Reading Day Tuesday 4/25

NOTE: Assignment due dates may vary. You will be given sufficient notice of due dates to allow ample time for completion of all assignments. The above information may be modified at the discretion of the Instructor. Unless revised, it will be followed as written. To compliment the information listed, there will be material covered that is not listed above or in your text. You will be given prior information and notice regarding this information.