

MCO 303 – 02: Media and Race

Spring 2022

Online asynchronous course

with one synchronous online COIL meeting

on **Monday, March 21, 11 am - 1:00 p.m. (community time - Zoom)**

Your Instructor:

Rebecca Hains, Ph.D., Professor of Media and Communication

Contact:

Email: Please use Canvas inbox (not email) to contact me about course-related matters.

Office: CC 132 (but I am not on campus this semester due to the pandemic)

Office Hours: Flexible - I am generally available by appointment M-Th 10-2, and at other times as needed. Message me and we will find a mutually agreeable time to meet.

Phone: N/A - Canvas inbox is best.

Course Description

This course explores the role the American mass media play in the social construction of racial categories. Students will study how even though biological views on race lack scientific validation, racial categories remain central social, cultural, and political issues in American life. Using various formats, the course will highlight how mediated representations have helped sustained a system of racial categorizations necessary for the survival of institutionalized racism and White privilege. The analysis is structured around four areas: fundamental definitions on race, critical analysis of media representations, audience reception and interpretation, and advocacy and activism.

Grading

The final grade in this course will be determined based on the following assignment categories.

23.5% Weekly discussions about readings/screenings -- your main mode of engagement with this course

23.5% Personal experience: letters to younger and future selves

6% Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) experience

23.5% Deconstructing media images: Racialization report

23.5% Final project: Case study on engagement and resistance

Course Goals

This course will provide students with:

- The ability to critically analyze representations of race in American mass media and popular culture.
- An understanding of race categories as arbitrary constructions and distinct from ethnic identities.
- An awareness of the mass media as a key social institution for the dissemination and survival of hierarchical ideologies of race.
- The ability to clearly articulate and defend their positions on issues such as institutionalized racism, bigotry, colorblindness and reversed racism.
- A sense of urgency to promote social change by demanding racial equality through advocacy and/or activism.
- **Through COIL:** The ability to engage in conversations with students from other cultures about U.S. mass media, race representation, and culture

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, a student will be able to:

1. Recognize the role of media representations in the social construction of racial categories.
2. Identify how media conventions help sustain social narratives that either justify or deny the structural racism that exists in every aspect of American life.
3. Understand how mass media audiences receive and interpret representations of race and how such images inform the way they themselves and others.
4. **Through COIL:** Describe differences in international perspectives regarding U.S. mass media, race representation, and culture

Required Texts

All readings will be provided by the instructor on Canvas. (Please see the class schedule and course modules for more information.)

Matrix of assessments and course learning objectives

- Weekly discussions: Objectives 1, 2, 3
- Letters to younger and future selves: Objective 3
- Racialization report: Objective 2
- Case study: Objectives 1, 2 and 3
- COIL project, including reflection: Objective 4