COURSE OBJECTIVE:
This course will explore the theory of racialism in various genres of mass communication, specifically - radio/music, television/cable, film, Internet, and print media. We will analyze and discuss contemporary images and messages in the media related to African-American culture paying close attention to the impact of insensitivity, stereotypes, myths, stigmas, problematic representations, biased framing and traditional racism.

TEXT:
The weekly readings can be found on the class ICON site. Readings are listed in the course outline below for each week. Every student is required to complete all assigned readings and reading responses. This reading material will be synthesized, debated, and critically evaluated through class discussions, critiques and presentations. Additional readings may also be assigned throughout the semester.

NOTES:
ADMINISTRATIVE HOME - The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml

DISABILITY - I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may need some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

EMAIL - Make sure your email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

ATTENDANCE - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don’t ask my permission to miss a class. Missing 30 minutes of any one class can be considered an absence. If you must miss a class you will need to provide a written explanation and adequate documentation for me to consider suspending the penalty. An attendance sheet will be passed around in class. It is your responsibility to sign it. You are allowed to miss two classes without penalty.

DEADLINES - Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments must be pre-approved. NO assignment will be extended more than one week past the deadline – NO exceptions. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments directly to the professor when they are due. If you turn in an assignment in some other way (under office door or in box), at some other time (before or after due date), the professor is not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.

RESOURCES – The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences offers a number of resources for student success. For example: The Writing Center, The Speaking Center and Tutor Iowa. The School of Journalism Resource Center (E350 Adler) also offers a broad range of help including computer access, writing assistance and relevant journalism materials.
UNIVERSITY EXAM POLICY - **Final Examinations.** An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the published deadline at the Registrar’s Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4:30 M-F, (384-4300). **Missed exam policy.** University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available at the Registrar web site: [http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf](http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf)

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, videos, and assignments flow throughout the semester. A number of new videos have been ordered. A currently listed video in the syllabus may be replaced by a new one depending on arrival date.

WARNING - If any of the videos shown in class are offensive to you talk to the professor. You are not required to stay and view them. However, each video has been selected because of its appropriateness to the particular section studied. And all are available on television, on video or YouTube.

SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS - Student complaints concerning the professor - first attempt to resolve the matter with the the professor, if you are not able to settle it, go to department executive officer, Dr. Horace Porter. Next, you may take your complaint to the Dean if it is not addressed by the Department Head. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5)

COLLABORATION – In a group project each student is expected to contribute equally. If, the professor receives a complaint, each student will be required to complete a self-evaluation describing the equality or the lack of it during the group’s work. Students who misrepresent themselves as equal partners in this collaborative project but who are actually letting others do the bulk of the work will be reported to the College for academic dishonesty.

SEVERE WEATHER OR OTHER CRISIS – If there is a weather or other crisis members of the class should seek appropriate shelter and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather like an ice storm, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible. *(Operations Manual, Part IV, 16. items e, h, and i.)*

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - Plagiarism and misconduct happens when students present work that is not their own. It is academic fraud. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions - the professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. If found guilty you will definitely receive an F on the assignment, you may also receive an F in the entire course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on consequences at the departmental level while CLAS may enforce additional consequences at the collegiate level. [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities means that you will respect the other members of the class, including the professor, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return. Students have the right to a classroom environment that encourages learning. The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior - arguing with or distracting others; such behavior also is a violation of the Code of Student Life. When disruptive activity occurs, the professor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and/or to request that a student exit the classroom, laboratory, or other area used for instruction immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students).

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER OR CELL PHONE - Once class starts you may not use the computer to check your email, go on Facebook or any other computer activity outside of class work. You will lose 5 points each time the professor discovers an inappropriate use of the computer. It is rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting to the class or while a video is playing. Please be respectful at all times.
COLLABORATION – If a group project is assigned, each group member is expected to contribute equally. If, the professor receives a complaint, each student will be required to complete a self-evaluation describing the equality or the lack of it during the group’s project. Students who misrepresent themselves as equal partners in this collaborative project but who are actually letting others do the bulk of the work will be reported to the College for academic dishonesty.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu for definitions, assistance, and the full University policy.

GRADING:

You must earn 60% of the available points in order to pass this class. This means there are rigorous expectations. **Assignments will be graded with these guidelines in mind: A = Exceptional work, B = Very good work, C = Average work, D = Poor work, F = Unacceptable work. Grades are not based on percentages, but on points. The final grade will be based on the total points earned for all class assignments and activities (see grade scale below). Plus/minus grading will only be allocated for the final grade if the total points are on the cut off. (Example: 200 points = A+/ 185 points = A-). You should plan to put sufficient time and attention into this class. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences suggests that students work at least two hours outside class per week for each semester hour of course credit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Scale:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>50pts.</td>
<td>200-185 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>22pts.</td>
<td>184-164 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading essays (18)</td>
<td>2pts each</td>
<td>163-138 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30pts.</td>
<td>137-125 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>2pts each</td>
<td>below 125 = F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Diary (15pts. Midterm/Final)</td>
<td>30pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200pts.</td>
<td>Graduate Student Critique 100pts.</td>
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ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

**Critique** – a maximum 5 pages, plus footnotes and/or bibliography. You will write a critique examining a contemporary issue focusing on African Americans and the media. This is a critical evaluation that requires extensive research. It is not a personal essay (see attached critique handout below for details). Wikipedia and other unreliable Internet sources will not be accepted as documentation for this assignment.

**Graduate Student Critique** – Instead of a five-page critique, graduate students are required to write a 12 page critique/research paper. It will be an in-depth critical analysis of a major area of interest related to an issue concerning African-Americans and the media. **All graduate students must set up an appointment to meet with the professor outside of class to discuss their proposed final paper no later than October 16th.

**Reading essays** – There are 18 assigned readings (2 each week). You will write a 1page reaction essay combining both readings together. For your reaction, specifically focus on something you relate to, something you don’t agree with or something that is interesting in both papers. Make sure you clearly include something from both readings in your essay otherwise you will get credit for only one. Must be submitted in normal typeface (12/14 Times) and double-spaced. These will not be graded but in order to receive the points it must be a well thought out response. Essays must be submitted during the class where the readings are discussed - NO exceptions!!!!! Essays should not be sent through email unless approved by the professor.

**Participation** – This is a discussion class, therefore, class discussion is essential. Points will be distributed based on your contribution to class discussions. Minimum contribution/rarely speak 10pts. –average contribution/sometimes speak 20pts. – exceptional contribution/always speak 30pts. All members of the class must be respectful when speaking or responding. **No exceptions!!!!!**
Media diary – You will keep a weekly diary throughout the semester identifying and documenting specific examples of racialism in the media. Briefly, in one paragraph, discuss what you read, watched or listened to, and explain the connection to racialism. A six-week midterm and six-week final diary submission is required. For both the midterm and final diaries - hand in your typed diary notes, plus pull out three specific racialism samples to discuss in a more detailed. This should be a 1 page evaluation, also including a copy of the newspaper article, magazine ad and/or address of video. The midterm and final diaries should be no more than 6 pages, plus samples. Your media diary should include a minimum of three entries each week (minimum total entries - 18). Entries must focus on a critique of the media as it presents race NOT a racial issue in general (for example - how a news article discusses black youth and education NOT how the educational system is failing black youth in general).

Presentation - Each student will prepare a 12 minute final presentation for the class on a topic of interest that relates to African Americans and media. About 2 minutes should be allotted for questions-answers-discussion. Have one or two questions for the class ready at the end to get the discussion started. A ½ page abstract that highlights the key issues on your topic must be prepared and distributed to all class members (35 copies). Audio, video, or print examples must be included in presentation but they should be no longer than 3 minutes. Your final critique can be used as the basis for this presentation.

Extra Credit – You can receive extra credit by participating in the Midwest Cultural Think Tank - Racialism Blog weekly when it is completed. Post an image with a brief analysis and/or respond to an image already posted on the blog site. There may be other extra credit opportunities announced during the class such as attending certain related events.

COURSE OUTLINE:

August 25-27th - Syllabus Overview/Racialism Issues  
Presentation: Racialism and the Media (Examples)  
Video Analysis (Ethnic Notions)

September 1-3rd – Stereotypes, Representation and Framing  
Video Analysis (Color Adjustment)

September 8-10th – Women and Beauty  
Video Analysis (The Souls of Black Girls)

September 15-17th – In the News  
Video Analysis (Examples of Black eye witnesses in news) **Critique Outline Due!

Sept 22-24th – Athletes and Sports  
Video Analysis (Third and a Mile: The Black Quarterback)
COURSE OUTLINE (continued)

Sept 29th – Oct 1st  - Film Images and Messages
Video Analysis (Reel Black Love)

*Midterm Media Diary DUE – Oct 1st! (August 26th-September 30th)

October 6-8th  – Rap Music
Video Analysis (Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhyme)

October 13-15th – Reality TV: Courtrooms, Marriage and the Good Life
Video Analysis (Judges – Joe Brown, Lynn Toler, Housewives of Atlanta, Love and Hip Hop)

October 20-22nd – Ghettofabulous
Video Analysis (Boondocks -30 min/Delicia Greene - 10 min)

October 27-29th - The First African American President
Video Analysis: (Barack Obama’s Race Speech) **Final Critique DUE!

November 3-5th  - Presentations

November 10-12th  - Presentations

November 17-19th  - Presentations

November 24-26th  – Thanksgiving Break

December 1-3rd  - Presentations

December 8-10th  - Presentations/Wrap Up ** Final Media Diary DUE December 15th! (October 2nd – December 10th)

December 15-17th  - Final Graduate Paper Due December 17th!

Bibliography


**Critique and Final Graduate Student Paper Guidelines**

Your 5 page critique/12 page graduate paper will explore a contemporary issue of interest that involves an analysis of the connection between African American culture and the media. This is a critique of the media so you can choose – radio, television, film, Internet, cable/satellite, print (books, magazines, newspapers), etc. to examine. Five pages is a small assignment, so you should select a focused topic and explore it in-depth (for example- an analysis of the stereotypes found in the movie *Bringing Down the House*) rather than choosing a broad topic and only covering the surface (like -a general analysis of stereotypes in black films over the last decade).

This is not a personal essay, but an in-depth critique, therefore you are required to include other critical viewpoints, related resources and specific examples to confirm or highlight the point(s) you want to make. In other words, this critique should be a mix of your main ideas, other critical viewpoints and relevant examples. Critiques must be typed in an average typeface such as Times 12/14 and double-spaced. They will be graded on clarity/logic, depth of critical analysis, structure/organization, grammar/other mechanics and endnotes/bibliography.
You are required to include a minimum of six citations in your text and bibliography (Be sure to use MLA structure for citations). No more than two citations can come from the assigned readings and no more than two from an Internet site (This means - if you look up a book or magazine on the Internet the bibliographic citation must still be structured in appropriate MLA style NOT www.Newsweek.com).

An example of how to organize your critique: an introduction (explain what the critique will cover), background information (your main points, ideas from outside resources/critics and reference information), an analysis section (discussion of key elements or issues from the text. Explain how they fit or don’t fit with main points, connect to outside critiques and document with examples. Finally, finish with a conclusion that briefly summarizes your most important points and findings.

You are not required to, but you can use the questions below (as many as you like) to stimulate your analysis:

1. Describe the messages and images involved in your media example.
2. Explain how the messages/images are positive, negative, biased or problematic.
3. Are the messages/images aimed at a specific audience, why or why not?
4. Have or could such messages/images influence/impact you? How?
5. Contrast how such messages/images could influence/impact the African American community specifically and/or influence/impact general mainstream society.
6. Are these messages/images reinforced/perpetuated at school, home, church, business or other entity?
7. Are these messages/images altered/contradicted at school, home, church, business or other entity?
8. Explain the historical and cultural context, especially as it may shape the messages/images discussed?
9. How does your analysis relate to the cultural messages/images of other minorities in the media or to other groups such as women, kids, elderly, disabled, gay/lesbian, etc?
10. If you had control, in what ways might you change this message/image to eliminate the issue or problem?