

Racism in the U.S. Media

Wheaton College

Spring 2020

Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Laura Garbes ([she/her](#))

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs, 2pm-3:30pm or by appointment, Knapton Hall room 304.

Course Objectives

This course provides an introduction to media production, media content, and media reception in the U.S. context, and the role of U.S. media production/consumption in shaping racial representations in society.

Learning Objectives

- Advanced media literacy: a deep understanding on how to interpret messages from news and entertainment sources, evaluating the validity of their claims, the assumptions that underlie the claims made.
- Identify how the media and social media are constantly involved in a conversation about racial representations.
- Understand how race and ethnicity intersects with class/gender/sexuality/religion/etc. in the social construction of stereotypes.
- Think critically about how media shapes our worldviews.
- Explore the major intellectual concerns and political debates that shape sociological approaches to the media.
- Develop a complex way of thinking, writing, and speaking about:
 - a. the social construction of race
 - b. how race and racism intersect with other systems of oppression (misogyny, sexism, islamophobia, classism, etc.)
 - c. how racial representations are influenced by processes of media production and consumption
- Develop basic audio production skills: creating story pitches, planning narratives through storyboards, recording interviews, collecting sound archives, and audio editing.

What is Required for this Course?

Each course requirement is meant to help students succeed in achieving the desired learning outcomes.

Assignment	Description
Attendance, Participation and Online Posts	<p>You will be expected to attend at least 24 of the 26 meeting dates of the semester. Please do send me an email at garbes_laura@wheatoncollege.edu if you are unable to attend a class meeting, so we can make sure you are on track to catch up with what you have missed.</p> <p>There are no required purchases for this course. All readings are available via PDF and will be posted online for you to access. We will complete all assigned reading and listening before class, and we will come prepared to engage in class discussions by thinking critically and creatively about the assigned texts and the issues they raise.</p> <p>Your preparation: You will use the reading guides to scaffold your readings. Bring to class, your notes and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one question you had after completing your reading and listening assignments • one quote from the reading or listening assignments you would like to discuss in class <p>My preparation: As the instructor, I prepare each session with a brief lecture that provides an overview of the concepts we will discuss, in-class activities, and a reading guide for each of our meetings that will guide our in-class discussions.</p> <p>If you have any questions about these expectations, I am happy to answer them before, during, or after class, or during office hours.</p>
Two Media Journal Entries	<p>We will take time in class to discuss the racial representations you are exposed to in the media. These written entries will not be graded; rather, you will get credit for sharing them in class. Rubric to follow.</p> <p>We will have two collective reflection sessions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. February 13, 2020: Reflection on the media and sports debates 2. March 24, 2020: Reflection on the media and political debate
Discussion Leader	<p>Each student in the classroom will serve as discussion leader for one class meeting. This simply means you will give a five-minute introduction of the readings, including the additional reading, and provide discussion questions for the rest of the class to consider together. Students will indicate the date and additional reading they are responsible for on an online sign-up sheet after the first class.</p>
Podcast Elements	<p>Your final assignment will be a podcast, or audio story, 10-15 minutes in length. This is a time intensive process, and we will work together step by step through five different assignments before your final submission of the podcast. You will receive a rubric with clear guidelines for each of these five assignments.</p>

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1. Podcast Pitch: Four paragraphs that describe your proposed audio story, what sources you plan to use, who the main characters are, and what the larger point of the piece will be.
 2. Story Plan: After receiving feedback on the pitch, you will turn your concept into a two-page plan.
 3. Field Notes: You will take field notes each week on the tasks you completed (e.g. the background research you completed, the interviews you secured, the transcriptions, the sound archives you found)
 4. Script: transcription of the audio piece you produced
 5. Final Audio Draft: mp3 file of the audio story for review

Final Submission: rubric to follow.

Wheaton Honor Code

As members of the Wheaton community, we commit ourselves to act honestly, responsibly, and above all, with honor and integrity in all areas of campus life.

We are accountable for all that we say and write. We are responsible for the academic integrity of our work. We pledge that we will not misrepresent our work nor give or receive unauthorized aid. We commit ourselves to behave in a manner which demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights and freedoms of all members of the community. We are respectful of college property and the property of others. We will not tolerate a lack of respect for these values.

I accept responsibility to maintain the Honor Code at all times. It's who we are.

More on Respect

The course will cover how racial representations get perpetuated or disrupted in media production, content, and consumption. This topic is a contested one, and as we will learn, there are many ways to interpret a single text or audio piece. The course is also deeply relevant to current debates *about race* featured in the media and current contestations *about media outlets themselves*. To facilitate good discussion, please keep in mind that we are debating ideas, not each other as individuals.

This classroom will serve as a space to learn and grow, and as such, I value students bringing their different experiences into the classroom. Relating the content back to other media you may have consumed is encouraged.

That said, no knowledges will be assumed in class discussion. So, if you intend to bring in references from outside the syllabus, please be ready to break them down for me and for your classmates.

More on Academic Integrity

Be certain to give credit to others when you borrow from their work in your assignments for this class, providing references for all sources used. I have no strong preference for citation style, (APA, ASA, Chicago style), as long as you are consistent and thorough. If you use a direct quote, use quotation marks around the work cited directly and provide a page number. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are unsure about how document your work appropriately, please consult the writing center or talk with me directly.

Accommodations from Wheaton’s Accessibility Services Office

Wheaton is committed to ensuring equitable access to programs and services and to prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, admission, and education of students with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations or information on accessibility should contact Autumn Grant, Associate Director for Accessibility Services at the Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services, accessibility@wheatoncollege.edu, or (508) 286-8215. Accessibility Services is located in Kollett Hall, Room 107, at the Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. I will update a digital copy of the syllabus and email it to you any time there is a change.

In-Class Schedule

We will meet 26 times throughout the semester. Under each meeting date you will find:

1. The week’s theme underneath the date along with a brief description.
2. The reading and listening assignments to complete *in advance of that day’s class*. We will be going over the listed readings or audio stories on the day listed.
3. Any other assignments due on that day will be indicated.

I. Key Concepts

“I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory; I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialised”

— Stuart Hall

Thursday, January 23, 2020 | Complete survey

Introductions and Expectations: we will introduce ourselves, setting individual and collective goals for the semester, and reviewing the syllabus.

In advance, please fill out the survey at this link: <https://forms.gle/uUTtcwPxZmVtk3B8>

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 | 48 pages of reading

The role of U.S. media in racial (in)justice: we will discuss “representations,” “hegemony,” and “social constructionism,” key phrases for understanding racism and media in U.S. society.

American Anthropological Association. 1998. “AAA Statement on Race.” Retrieved December 14, 2019 (<https://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>).

Hall, Stuart. "Chapter 1: The work of representation." ** PLEASE COMPLETE ACTIVITIES IN TEXT. We will review them in class.**

Hooks, Bell. "The oppositional gaze: Black female spectators." *The feminism and visual culture reader* (2003): 94-105.

Race, the Floating Signifier: Featuring Stuart Hall (2006). <https://youtu.be/7cxBOdBoxpg>

Thursday, January 30, 2020 | 46 pages of reading

The role of U.S. media in racial (in)justice: we will discuss “ideology” as a key concept for understanding racism and media in U.S. society.

Ferguson, Robert. 1998. “On Theories of Ideology.” Pp 10-45 in *Representing "race": ideology, identity, and the media*. London: Arnold.

The Spread of Ideology: "Controlling Images" and Racism in the Media Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria. *Race & racisms: A critical approach*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 92-116 ** PLEASE COMPLETE ACTIVITIES IN TEXT. We will review them in class.**

Additional Readings:

Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2016. “A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(2):129–41.

Tuesday, February 4, 2020 | 40 minutes of listening, 37 pages of reading
From Raising a fist to Taking a Knee: Sports, Activism, and Media Coverage: we will discuss controversies in American sports leagues and how media outlets cover race in the Olympics, NFL, and NBA.

REFLECTION 1 DUE

Peterson, Jason. A “Race” for Equality: Print Media Coverage of the 1968 Olympic Protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos. pp. 332-356.

Farrington, Neil, Daniel Kilvington, Amir Saeed, and John Price. *Race, racism and sports journalism*. Routledge, 2012. Pp. 12-31

Demby, Gene and Meraji, Shereen Marisol. *Codeswitch*: “On the Shoulders of Giants.” <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/27/698102193/on-the-shoulders-of-giants>. 40mins.

Additional Readings:

Hall, Stuart. "The whites of their eyes: Racist ideologies and the media." In Rodman, Gilbert B., ed. 2013. *The Race and Media Reader*. 1 edition. New York: Routledge. pp 37-54.

Thursday, February 6, 2020 | 35 minutes of listening, 39 pages of reading
“Objectivity” and “representation,” and how such ideals work when we take power into account.

Wallace, Raven Lewis. “The View from Nowhere” podcast episode 1 of *The View from Somewhere*. 20 minutes. <https://fanlink.to/tvfs>

Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism
“Introduction: Objectivity” 1-14 and “Balance: A "Slanderous and Nasty-Minded Mulatress," Ida B. Wells, Confronts "Objectivity" in the 1890s.” 113-137

Peruse this website for discussion: <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/>

Garbes, Laura. *Immigrants All?* <https://soundcloud.com/lauragarbes/immigrants-all>.

**** Use *Hearing a Story Structure Worksheet* to break down the elements of the two podcasts.

We will use the final 20 minutes of class to discuss the podcast pitch and brainstorm potential topics.

Tuesday, February 11, 2020 | Bring list of ideas to this training

Library Training on Sound Archives

Thursday, February 13, 2020 | NO CLASS

PODCAST PITCH DUE

II. U.S. Media Institutions and the Ideals of Liberal Democracies

“All paradises, all utopias are designed by who is not there, by the people who are not allowed in.”

— **Toni Morrison**

Tuesday, February 18, 2020 | 46 pages of reading

The Public Sphere

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy." *Social text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

Squires, Catherine R. "Rethinking the black public sphere: An alternative vocabulary for multiple public spheres." *Communication theory* 12, no. 4 (2002): 446-468.

Additional Readings:

Littlefield, Marci Bounds. "The media as a system of racialization: Exploring images of African American women and the new racism." *American Behavioral Scientist* 51, no. 5 (2008): 675-685.

Thursday, February 20, 2020 | 43 pages of reading

On Whiteness and Why Media Ownership Matters

hooks, bell. 1995. "Marketing blackness: Class and commodification" in *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*. Pp 172-183.

Walker, Darren. "Five decades after Kerner Report, representation remains an issue in media." *Columbia Journalism Review*.
<<https://www.cjr.org/analysis/race-media.php>>

Gabriel, John. *Whitewash: Racialized Politics and the Media*. Pp 11-38

Dyer, Richard. 2008. "The matter of whiteness." *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*. Pp 9-14.

Additional Readings:

Jacobs, Ronald N. 2000. *Race, media, and the crisis of civil society: From Watts to Rodney King*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. Pp 1-30.

III. The Imagined Others

“Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people.”

— Audre Lorde

Tuesday, February 25, 2020 | 70 pages of reading

Intersectionality: we will discuss “controlling images” in the media and how racial representations shift over time.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2004. “Get your Freak On; Booty Call” in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. p119-181.

Murphy, Carla. “Why We Need a Working-Class Media.” *Dissent Magazine*. Retrieved December 4, 2019 (<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/why-we-need-a-working-class-media>).

Additional Readings:

Katz, Jackson. 2011. "Advertising and the construction of violent white masculinity: From BMWs to Bud Light." *G. Dines and JM Humez, eds.* Pp 261-269.

Thursday, February 27, 2020 | 44 pages of reading

Forever foreign: we will discuss U.S. Empire’s Gaze in Asian representations.

Ferguson, Robert. 1998. “Otherness, Eurocentrism and the representation of ‘race.’” in *Representing "race": ideology, identity, and the media*. London: Arnold.

“Media Yellowface ‘Logics,’” p. 45-62 in *Asian Americans and the Media*

Ghosh, Sanjukta. "Con-fusing" exotica: Producing India in US advertising." *Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Text-Reader* (2003): 274-282.

Additional Readings:

Wang, Grace. "A shot at half-exposure: Asian Americans in reality TV shows." *Television & New Media* 11, no. 5 (2010): 404-427.

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 | 55 minutes of listening, 44 pages of reading

On Controlling Images of Criminality

Rose, Tricia. "Fear of a black planet": Rap music and black cultural politics in the 1990s.

Binder, Amy. 1993. "Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music." *American Sociological Review* 58(6):753–67.

"3: Nothing Is Voluntary When You Have Handcuffs On." *Headlong: Running from COPS*. Retrieved December 15, 2019 (<https://www.stitcher.com/s?eid=60355089>).

Additional Readings:

Dean, Aria. 2016. "'Can't C Me': Surveillance and Rap Music," *Journal of Black Studies*.

Thursday, March 5, 2020 | ~70 pages of reading
On the Impact of Controlling Images

STORY PLAN DUE

Ferguson, Robert. 1998. "Representations of history: case studies in children's television." in *Representing "race": ideology, identity, and the media*. London: Arnold.

Byfield, Natalie. 2014. *Savage Portrayals: Race, Media and the Central Park Jogger Story*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Pp 75-105

hooks, bell. "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance." (<https://genius.com/Bell-hooks-eating-the-other-desire-and-resistance-annotated>).

Marketplace. 2019. "The Uncertain Hour - George Bush's Infamous Crack Speech, 30 Years Later." *Google Podcasts*. Retrieved December 15, 2019 (<https://podcasts.google.com?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubWFya2V0cGxhY2Uub3JnL2ZlZWQvcG9kY2FzdC90aGUtdW5jZXJ0YWluLWhvdXI&episode=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubWFya2V0cGxhY2Uub3JnL3Nob3dzL3RoZS11bmNlcnRhaW4taG91ci9nZW9yZ2UtYnVzaHMtaW5mYW1vdXMtY3JhY2stc3BlZWNoLTMwLXllYXJzLWxhdGVy>).

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – NO CLASS

Thursday, March 12, 2020 – NO CLASS

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 | 30 minutes of listening, 20 pages of reading
On Latinx Media

"Dora's Lasting Magic : NPR." Retrieved December 4, 2019 (<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/14/750878177/doras-lasting-magic>).

Immigrant Criminalization in Law and the Media: Effects on Latino Immigrant Workers' Identities in Arizona Cecilia Menjivar 597–616

IN CLASS: Watching a portion of *Latinos Beyond Reel*

Additional Readings:

Noriega, Chon. 1991. "Citizen Chicano: The Trials and Titillations of Ethnicity in the American Cinema, 1935-1962," *Social Research*

Thursday, March 19, 2020 | 31 minutes of listening, 31 pages of reading
On Women, Anger, and Electability

Traister, Rebecca. *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger*. Simon and Schuster, 2018. pp 239-270.

"President Trump's (Anti-)Social Media." Codeswitch. *NPR.Org*.
(<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/14/770073501/president-trumps-anti-social-media>).

Additional Readings:

Shimakawa, Karen. "Mind Yourself: On Soundwalking, Race and Gender." In *Staging International Feminisms*, pp. 23-36. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2007.

IV. The Oppositional Gaze in Action

"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

— Audre Lorde

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 | 28 minutes of listening, 35 pages of reading
On self-formation within a racialized media

REFLECTION 2 DUE

Itzigsohn, José, and Karida Brown. "Sociology and the theory of double consciousness: WEB Du Bois's phenomenology of racialized subjectivity." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 12, no. 2 (2015): 231-248.

Alcoff, Linda. "The Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment" in Alcoff, Linda. 2006. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kumanyika, Chenjerai. "Vocal Color Manifesto."

Gloria Anzaldúa. How to tame a wild tongue. RMR
<https://www.everettsd.org/cms/lib07/WA01920133/Centricity/Domain/965/Anzaldua-Wild-Tongue.pdf>

“The Past, Present and Future of Nikole Hannah-Jones | On the Media.” *WNYC Studios*. (<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/episodes/nikole-hannah-jones-past-future>).

Additional Readings:

Bird, S. Elizabeth. 2014. “Imagining Indians: Negotiating identity in a media world.” From Rodman, Gilbert B. *The Race and Media Reader*. 190-212.

Thursday, March 26, 2020 | 40 minutes of listening, 40 pages of reading
Queering the Media

“Stonewall 50: Whose Movement Is It Anyway?” *Intersectionality Matters Podcast*. <<http://aapf.org/ep-5-stonewall-50>>.

“Portrait Of: 80s Ball Subculture in FX’s ‘Pose.’” *Latino USA*. <<https://www.latinousa.org/2018/07/17/pose/>>.

Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader: Popular Culture and Queer Representation

Additional Readings:

Visions of History: Queerness and Race in Hollywood Cinema from the Production Code to X-Men

Tuesday, March 31, 2020 | 25 minutes of listening, 3 minutes of watching, 49 pages of reading
On Calling Racism... Racism

“Oh, so now it’s racist?” Codeswitch. *NPR*. <<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/17/742448398/oh-so-now-its-racist>>.

“Reverse Racism.” Fear of a brown planet standup
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dw_mRaIHb-M

Fields, Karen E., and Barbara Jeanne Fields. *Racecraft: The soul of inequality in American life*. Verso Trade, 2014. pp. 25-74

Additional Readings:

Ferguson, Robert. 1998. *Racism and Normality*. 154-175.

Thursday, April 2, 2020 | 30 minutes of listening, 15 minutes of watching,
20 pages of reading
On Media Activists

Ep 2: Wallace, Raven Lewis. “How Black Lives Matter changed the news”
podcast episode 2 of *The View from Somewhere*. 30 minutes.
<https://fanlink.to/tvfs>

Sargent, Antwaun. 2017. “A Journalist’s Art Project Highlights Media Bias
Against Black Men.” *Vice*.
(https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/43y3b9/journalist-art-project-media-bias-against-black-men).

Ince, Jelani, Fabio Rojas, and Clayton A. Davis. 2017. “The Social Media
Response to Black Lives Matter: How Twitter Users Interact with Black Lives
Matter through Hashtag Use.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40(11):1814–30.

Burke, Tarana. Ted. *Me Too Is a Movement, Not a Moment*. 15 minutes
https://www.ted.com/talks/tarana_burke_me_too_is_a_movement_not_a_moment

Additional Readings:

Johnson, Hayley. “#NoDAPL: Social Media, Empowerment, and Civic
Participation at Standing Rock,” *Library Trends*. 66.2 (Fall 2017): 155-175.

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 | 6 minutes of watching, 47 pages of reading
Arabs and Muslims in the Media

Reel Bad Arabs: *How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2008)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ko_N4BcaIPY

Alsutany, Evelyn. “Introduction.” *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and
Representations after 9/11*. pp 1-47.

Additional Readings:

Sharma, Sarah. “Taxicab politics and the production of brown space after 9/11.”
In Rodman, Gilbert B., ed. 2013. *The Race and Media Reader*. 1 edition. New
York: Routledge. Pp 379-389

Thursday, April 9, 2020 | Bring fieldnotes to campus

One-on-one meetings, and Fieldnotes check-in

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 | Bring Sound Recordings

Library Training on Audio Editing

V. Technologies and Media Futures

“There's nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns.” – Octavia Butler

Thursday, April 16, 2020 | 40 pages of reading

The changing speed of information

Berry, Jeffrey M., and Sarah Sobieraj. *The outrage industry: Political opinion media and the new incivility*. Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp 31-65.

Khazon, Olga. “The Tech White Power Used to Go Viral.” *The Atlantic*. Nov 12, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/11/how-whitepower-went-viral/507473/>

Additional Readings:

Fleming, Crystal Marie. “Fake Racial News” in *How to be Less Stupid about Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide*. Beacon Press, 2018. Pp. 104-121.

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 | 30 pages of reading, 34 minutes of listening

Algorithms, bubbles, and racial (in)justice

Kaminski, Margot and Andrew Selbst. 2019. The Legislation That Targets the Racist Impacts of Tech. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/opinion/tech-racism-algorithms.html>

Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press, 2018. Pp 153-170.

“You Can’t Code Your Way Out of Racism.” Still Processing.
<<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/15/podcasts/you-cant-code-your-way-out-of-racism.html>>

Additional Readings:

Ajunwa, Ijeoma. “The Rise of Platform Authoritarianism.” ACLU. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology/surveillance-technologies/rise-platform-authoritarianism>

VI. Wrapping up

Thursday, April 23, 2020 | Reading and Listening TBD

Draft of Podcast Script Due

Student Choice: Based on a class vote, we will read one final book and listen to one final podcast together to discuss on this date.

Survey link to come.

Tuesday, April 28, 2020 | Send in your draft mp3 file in advance

Listening Party!

Food preferences survey to come.

Full Draft of Podcast Due

Thursday, May 7, 2020 | Happy summer!

Edited Podcast Due by 5pm

Assignments and Grading

Date Due	Assignment	Grade out of:
Throughout	Class Participation	10
Once per semester	Discussion Leader	5
Tuesday, February 4	Media Reflection 1: On Sports and Society	10
Thursday, February 27	Podcast Pitch	10
Tuesday, March 17	Media Reflection 2: On Politics and Society	10
Thursday, March 19	Story Plan	10
Thursday, April 9	Field Notes Check-in	5
Thursday, April 23	Script Draft	5
Thursday, April 30	Podcast Draft for Listening Session	5
Thursday, May 7	Final Podcast Submission	30

Grading Scale A+ = 95-100 A = 87-95 B range = 79-87 C range = 70-78 D range = 60-69	Total Possible: 100
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