
Media and Prejudice
Comm 494XI
Spring 2019

Instructor: Professor Seth Goldman
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Meeting Times: Tuesday/Thursday 1-2:15pm, Integrative Learning Center S415
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2:30pm-4pm (or by appointment)
Credits: 4 (fulfills Integrative Experience requirement)

Overview

The way social groups are portrayed in the media is widely assumed to have consequences for levels of prejudice and stereotyping in the mass public. Moreover, the vast majority of speculations assume negative consequences, that is, exposure causing increases in levels of stereotyping and prejudice. We will critically evaluate both assumptions, with a particular emphasis on furthering understanding about the psychological processes through which media exposure may not only increase but also decrease stereotyping and prejudice. In sum, this course has two goals: 1) to understand how *existing* media portrayals impact intergroup attitudes as well as 2) to formulate strategies for *changing* media portrayals to reduce prejudice and promote more positive intergroup relations.

Learning Outcomes

This course aims to further understanding about:

- The various forms of prejudice in society, the causes of prejudice, and its consequences;
- The ways in which existing media portrayals may influence prejudicial attitudes;
- How scientific theories can inform efforts to reduce prejudice using the media;
- Practical challenges in the design of anti-prejudice information campaigns; and
- The use of concepts and methods from the social sciences as well as other disciplines to further understanding of these topics.

Integrative Experience Objectives (from Gen Ed website):

This is a 4-credit course that fulfills the upper division Integrative Experience (IE) requirement. As such, the course addresses each of the three IE criteria in the following ways:

Commented [A1]: This section is a model of how to build off of the template language for the IE requirement. The instructor provides specific examples of *how* the course supports each criterion by describing the assignments and activities throughout the course. This approach makes a clear connection between the course content and material and the objectives of the IE.

- “Providing a structured, credited context for students to reflect on and to integrate their learning and experience from the broad exposure in their General Education courses and the focus in their major.” To fulfill this IE objective, you will complete a series of 2-3 page reflection papers. For each paper, I will provide a prompt based on that week’s topic, and you will investigate it using the course materials, your own personal experiences, and knowledge gained from one or more General Education courses. One assignment, for example, asks you to interrogate the contours of prejudice toward a social group using both the course materials (a documentary case study and the assigned readings) as well as explicitly employing knowledge gained from one or more Gen Ed courses, such as those taken in anthropology, journalism, political science, psychology, or sociology. Another assignment asks you to engage with one of the most widely employed prejudice reduction strategies around the world: face-to-face contact between members of different groups. For this paper, you will consider not only contact’s potential benefits, but also its limitations, by critically examining the quantity and quality of your own intergroup contact experiences, and then assessing contact’s broader usefulness. Your reflection should draw from the course materials as well as knowledge gained from one or more Gen Ed courses (e.g., anthropology, history, political science, psychology, or sociology). A third assignment asks you to watch the documentary, *More than a Word: Native American-Based Sports Mascots*, and assess both the nature of prejudice toward Native Americans as well as the role of documentary films as an intervention tool for reducing prejudice and inciting social change. Your reflection should incorporate knowledge you have gained from the course readings as well as one or more Gen Ed courses (e.g., anthropology, economics, history, journalism, psychology, or sociology).
- “Providing students with the opportunity to practice General Education learning objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspective-taking, at a more advanced level.” In this class, you will collaborate on a team presentation, deliver an individual presentation of a media intervention proposal, and write a final paper elaborating on the intervention that forces you to think independently, incorporate insights from multiple disciplines, and understand the perspectives of others. You will draw on theories from social psychology, communication, and other disciplines to design an original media intervention aimed at reducing prejudicial attitudes and/or behaviors toward a social group of your choice. Perspective-taking is central to this assignment. Understanding the nature of prejudice toward a group to which you do not belong requires thinking about the perspectives of others and trying to see the ways in which power is exercised and reproduced in society – often through the media – in ways that are not always obvious. Moreover, as the goal of the intervention is to change the minds of audience members, you must put yourself in the shoes of those who have prejudiced beliefs and feelings but who rarely think of themselves as having bias. Finally, perspective-taking (also known as empathy) is explicitly discussed in the course as strategy for reducing prejudice.
- “Offering students a shared learning experience for applying their prior learning to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.” This is the central focus of

Commented [A2]: In this assignment example, students are asked to respond to a particular course topic by drawing from not only course materials, but also their own personal experiences and prior General Education courses. In this example, reflection on General Education is woven throughout the course.

the course. You will take your knowledge of media and prejudice and see how this knowledge can be used to make the world a better place by proposing concrete media interventions that have the potential to lessen prejudice toward particular groups. To do so, you will draw upon all you have learned in your studies in Communication – and other courses from across the university – and apply it to real-world problems involving prejudice and discrimination in society. Each day’s class is organized around small-group and class discussions about different types of prejudice, how it is reproduced through the media, and what can and should be done to promote more positive representations.

Course Requirements

1. *Reflection Papers (40%)*: In order to promote a broad-based understanding of the nature of prejudice and media’s impact on these beliefs, during the first two-thirds of the semester you will complete a series of 2-3 page reflection papers. For each assignment, I will provide a prompt based on that week’s topic, and you will investigate it using the course materials, your own personal experiences, and knowledge gained from one or more General Education courses, which must be referenced in your paper.
 - a. *Grading Criteria*: For each of the eight reflection papers, you can earn up to five points; this means that the papers total 40 points. For the full five points, you must clearly engage with the questions raised in the prompt, explicitly employ the course materials and one or more Gen Ed courses, and provide a write-up that is coherent, organized, and grammatically correct. Each paper must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm on the day that it is due. Papers passed in late will be penalized half a letter grade per day.
2. *8-Page Paper (25%)*: For this paper, you will design a theory-based media intervention aimed at reducing prejudice toward a social group. The paper is due on **May 7** by midnight. Papers passed in late will be penalized half a letter grade per day. The structure of the paper is as follows:
 - a. *Introduction*: describes the prejudicial attitudes or behaviors that the proposed intervention aims to address.
 - b. *Theory*: describes the theory or theories of influence employed in the development of your intervention; these ideas should come from both the materials for this course as well as your previous Gen Eds courses.
 - c. *Description of the Media Product*: provides a detailed description of the original media intervention, including both an overview of the intervention and specifics of individual portrayals.
 - d. *Why It Should Work*: explains why the intervention is likely to reduce prejudice based on the theory or theories of influence employed; clearly denotes which beliefs, feelings, or attitudes are expected to change.

Commented [A3]: By including this statement in the assessment criteria, the instructor emphasizes the importance of reflecting on prior General Education learning experiences and drawing connections between those experiences and learning in the major.

Commented [A4]: Although this assignment serves as a final course wrap-up paper, students are asked to continue drawing from their previous GenEd courses. This creates an opportunity for students to see more clearly the relationship between their GenEd and major learning experiences.

- e. Discussion: addresses potential limitations of the intervention strategy, summarizes the overall argument of the paper, and discusses implications for future efforts to understand and ameliorate societal prejudice and discrimination.
3. *Team Presentation* (15%): Once during the semester, each student in teams of three will make an in-class powerpoint presentation based on that day's reading. Your presentation should include 1) clear definitions of the key concepts; 2) three real-world applications of the concepts that do **NOT** come from the reading; and 3) two discussion questions, which you will use to lead a class discussion. Grading will be based on an average of individual and team performance. The dates and readings for the team presentations are shown in the course calendar. Early-on in the semester students in each team should explicitly agree on their respective duties for the presentation; self/peer evaluation forms that detail each person's contributions to the presentation will be required in order to receive a grade; and any indication that a team member has not fulfilled their responsibilities may result in a reduced or failing grade for the presentation.
4. *Individual Presentation of Media Intervention Proposal* (10%): During the last two weeks of class, each student will make a 5-minute powerpoint presentation about their media intervention and engage in Q&A with the class for an additional 5 minutes. The presentation should include each of the following three elements:
- A description of the prejudicial attitudes or behaviors that the intervention aims to change;
 - A detailed description of the original media product that you have designed; and
 - An explanation of why the intervention is likely to be effective in reducing prejudice based on one or more of the theories of influence.
5. *Class Participation* (10%): High marks in participation require attending class; regular engagement in both full-class and small-group discussions; demonstration that you have completed the required readings or viewings; and completion of in-class activities. **Nonacademic use of electronic devices will result in a substantial reduction to your participation grade.** I look forward to spirited discussion, and fully expect students to challenge the readings, each other, and myself, albeit with civility and mutual respect. At any point during the semester, you may ask me for a general assessment of your participation to that point.

Grading (out of 100 points)

- Reflection Papers: 40 points
- 8-Page Paper: 25 points
- Team Presentation: 15 points
- Individual Presentation: 10 points
- Class Participation: 10 points

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|---------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Final Grades: | 93+ A | 90-92 A- | 87-89 B+ |
| | 83-86 B | 80-82 B- | 77-79 C+ |
| | 73-76 C | 70-72 C- | 67-69 D+ |
| | 63-66 D | 60-62 D- | 0-59 F |

Course Readings

All of the readings are available on Moodle. Links to films are also available on Moodle and/or through Kanopy, which can be accessed through the UMass library website.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to follow the University of Massachusetts Amherst Code of Conduct (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/). This means that all graded work should be your own. Using the words or intellectual contributions of others *without proper citation* is plagiarism. If you are unsure about what is acceptable practice, please ask me for clarification. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade and/or will be reported to the Academic Honesty Office. Paper assignments may be assessed for plagiarism using Turnitin.

Students with Disabilities

Many accommodations and services are available at UMass to ensure that students with disabilities participate fully in academic and student life. For accommodations to be timely, they must be arranged well in advance. Students are responsible for contacting Disability Services (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/>) at the beginning of each semester (first two weeks of classes, or first week of summer or winter session). I am also a resource for students.

Center for Counseling and Psychological Health

The Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) provides confidential services to aid students in addressing personal, social, career, and study problems that can interfere with your academic progress and success. Location, hours of operation, and services can be found on center’s website: <http://www.umass.edu/counseling/>. If you or anyone you know is contemplating suicide, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free, confidential services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call toll-free, 1-800-273-8255. Learn more at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

Names and Pronouns

Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, including the use of non-binary pronouns. Class rosters have a student’s legal first name, unless they have entered a preferred/chosen first name on SPIRE. Students may

also indicate the pronouns that they use for themselves in SPIRE and/or when they are asked to share their names in class, though at no time will anyone be required to do so. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.

Laptop, Tablet, and Cell Phone Policy

Silence your cell phones (including both the ringer and vibration functions) before class to avoid interrupting me and, more importantly, other students. Cell phone use in class will impact your participation grade. **Each instance of cell phone use in class will result in a 1-point deduction in your participation grade.** Use of laptops and tablets is strongly discouraged and may only be used if students submit a written request explaining their specific need to do so. Research indicates that use of laptops in class hinders student learning and reduces engagement. Moreover, electronic devices are also often a source of distraction to me and other students.

Course Calendar

Part I: The Nature of Prejudice

January 22: Introduction to the Course

January 24: What is Prejudice?

- In-Class Film: *A Class Divided* (27:10)
- Allport, G. W. (1979/1954). *The nature of prejudice*. New York, NY: Basic Books. Chapter 2: The normality of prejudice. Pages 17-27.
- Sniderman, P. M., P. Peri, R. J. P. De Figueiredo, Jr., & T. Piazza. (2000). *The outsider: prejudice and politics in Italy*. Pages 16-25.

January 29: What is Prejudice? (continued)

- **CLASSROOM CHANGE:** today we are meeting in Morrill III 212
- Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink: The power of thinking without thinking*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co. Pages 72-88.
- Take the Implicit Association Test (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>)
- **Reflection paper #1 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

Part II: Media as a Point of Intergroup Contact

January 31: Media Portrayals of Social Groups

- Mutz, D. C., & Goldman, Seth K. (2010). Mass media. In J. F. Dovidio, M. Hewstone, P. Glick, & V. M. Esses (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pages 242-245.
- Gamson, J. (1994). Chapter 49: Do ask, do tell: Freak talk on tv. In *The Columbia reader on lesbians and gay men in media, society, and politics*, L. Gross and J. D. Woods (Eds), New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Entman, R. M., & A. Rojecki. (2000). *The black image in the white mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 9: Prime-time television: White and whiter.

February 5: No Class – Attend Polarization Symposium

- Attend at least one session of the UMass Symposium, “Understanding the Forces that Drive Us Apart: A Symposium on Polarization”
 - The symposium schedule, which runs 9:30am-7:30pm, can be found [here](#)
 - Please register for the symposium [here](#)
 - The symposium will take place in the Campus Center
- Reflection paper #2, due Thursday, asks you to reflect on what you learned at the symposium, what left you confused or uncertain, and what the symposium suggested to you about ways to reduce polarization and intergroup conflict.

February 7: Intergroup Contact Theory

- **Team 1 Presentation** on Tausch and Hewstone (2010)
- Tausch, N., & M. Hewstone. (2010). Intergroup contact (Ch. 33, p. 544-556). In J. F. Dovidio, M. Hewstone, P. Glick, & V. M. Esses (Eds), *The Sage handbook of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- **Reflection paper #2 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

February 12: Intergroup Contact Theory (continued)

- Enos, Ryan D. (2014). Causal effect of intergroup contact on exclusionary attitudes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111, 3699-3704.
- **Reflection paper #3 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

February 14: Mass Media as the Real World

- **Team 2 Presentation** on Reeves & Nass (1996), Chapters 1 and 14
- Lippmann, W. 1922. Chapter 1: The world outside and the pictures in our heads. In *Public opinion* (p. 3-20). New York, NY: Free Press
- Reeves, B., & C. Nass. 1996. *The media equation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (p. 3-15) and Chapter 14 (p. 161-70).

February 19: No Class (Monday Schedule)

February 21: Mass Media as the Real World (continued)

□ **Reflection paper #4 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

Part III: Theory and Evidence of Media Impact

February 26: The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis

- **Team 3 Presentation** on Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes (2005)
- Schiappa, E., Gregg, P. B., & Hewes, D. E. (2005). The parasocial contact hypothesis. *Communication Monographs*, 72, 92-115.

February 28: Narrative Persuasion

- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2002). In the mind's eye: Transportation-imagery model of narrative persuasion. In M. C. Green, J. J. Strange, & T. C. Brock (Eds), *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations* (p. 315-42). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- **Reflection paper #5 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

March 5: Emotional Contagion and Empathy

- **Team 4 Presentation** on Small & Verrochi (2009)
- Small, D. A., & N. M. Verrochi. (2009). The face of need: Facial emotion expression on charity advertisements. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XLVI, 777-87.
- Batson, C. D., M. P. Polycarpou, E. Harmon-Jones, H. J. Imhoff, E. C. Mitchener, L. L. Bednar, T. R. Klein, & L. Highberger. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72, 105-18.

March 7: Emotional Contagion and Empathy (continued)

□ **Reflection paper #6 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

March 12 and 14: No Class – Spring Break!

March 19: Individuals as Positive Outgroup Exemplars

- **Team 5 Presentation** on Ramasubramanian (2015)
- Ramasubramanian, S. (2015). Using celebrity news stories to effectively reduce racial/ethnic prejudice. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71, 123-38.

- Bodenhausen, G. V., Schwarz, N., Bless, H., & Wanke, M. (1995). Effects of atypical exemplars on racial beliefs: Enlightened racism or generalized appraisals? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 31, 48-63.

March 21: Individuals as Positive Outgroup Exemplars (continued)

- **Reflection paper #7 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

March 26: Modeling Intergroup Interactions

- **Team 6 Presentation** on Harwood, Qadar, & Chen (2016) (Oct. 30)
- Harwood, J., Qadar, F., & Chen, C.Y. (2016). Harmonious contact: Stories about intergroup musical collaboration improve intergroup attitudes. *Journal of Communication*, 66, 937-59.
- Ortiz, M., & Harwood, J. (2007). A social cognitive theory approach to the effects of mediated intergroup contact on intergroup attitudes. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 51, 615-31.

March 28: Integrating Theories of Media Influence

Part IV: Designing Media Interventions to Reduce Prejudice

April 2: Approaches, Strategies, and Targets of Change

- Paluck, E. L. (2012). Chapter 17: Media as an instrument for reconstructing communities following conflict. In K. J. Jonas and T. A. Morton (Eds), *Restoring civil societies: The psychology of intervention and engagement following crisis* (p.284-298). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Slater, M. D. (2002). Entertainment education and the persuasive impact of narratives. In M. C. Green, J. J. Strange, & T. C. Brock (Eds), *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations* (p. 157-181). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

April 4: No Class – Seth Away at Midwest Political Science Association Conference

April 9: Approaches, Strategies, and Targets of Change (continued)

- **Reflection paper #8 must be uploaded to moodle by 1pm**

April 11: Selective Perception and Exposure as Impediments to Change

- **Team 7 Presentation** on Vidmar & Rokeach (1974)
- Vidmar, N., & Rokeach, M. (1974). Archie Bunker's bigotry: A study in selective perception and exposure. *Journal of Communication*, 24, 36-47.

- Cooper, E., & Jahoda, M. (1947). The evasion of propaganda: How prejudiced people respond to anti-prejudice propaganda. *Journal of Psychology*, 23, 15-25.

April 16: Selective Perception and Exposure as Impediments to Change (continued)

- No assignments for today ☺

April 18: Applications to Digital Media

- **Team 8 Presentation** on Amichai-Hamburger et al. (2015)
- Amichai-Hamburger, Y., Hasler, B. S., & Shani-Sherman, T. (2015). Structured and unstructured intergroup contact in the digital age. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 515-522.

April 23: Final Project Presentations

April 25: Final Project Presentations

April 30: Final Project Presentations

*****MAY 7: UPLOAD FINAL PAPER TO MOODLE BY MIDNIGHT*****