



CIEE Global Institute – Berlin

Course name:	Media, Gender and Identity
Course number:	(GI) COMM 3009 BRGE
Programs offering course:	Berlin Open Campus (Communications, Journalism and New Media Track)
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2018

Course Description

In this course, students will apply a critical lens to representations of gender and identity in contemporary media. Taking gender and sexuality as a critical starting point, we will examine the construction of identities under the simultaneous influence of race, class, and nationality. By focusing on popular representations in both the US and the European country where the course is taking place, we will gain a deeper understanding of identities as both culturally specific and influenced by global media. Instead of suggesting that contemporary identities are determined by what we see on TV screens, computers, and in local movie theaters, the course seeks to describe the complex interactions between national audiences and concrete media productions, and analyzes how different audiences reproduce or challenge traditional concepts and stereotypes of gender, race, sexuality, and class. By combining the study of theoretical texts with examples from the advertisement industry, television, the movies, and other forms of contemporary cultural expression, it offers a comprehensive and thorough introduction to contemporary studies of the media and identity.

Learning Objectives



The learning objectives of this course include:

- To develop a comprehension of how the media impact contemporary conceptions of identities as gendered, raced, and classed, and how these conceptions are also always culturally specific.
- To gain a basic understanding of what we mean by “the media” and how we can “read” them.
- To learn about how “identities”—especially but not only gendered ones—are not stable but the result of complex interactions with a whole network of factors, among them the media.
- To apply these approaches to various representations of identities in movies, advertisements, newspapers, YouTube clips, etc.
- To deepen the understanding of how contemporary media representations cannot be severed entirely from the media apparatus of a particular country (in this case the US on the one hand, and the European country where you study in on the other) and its organization.
- To learn how historically and culturally specific concepts of education, democracy, and the suggested role of the media themselves have contributed to the evolution of particular media images over time.
- To understand that the meaning of a particular media representation is not fixed but depends on audience, historical context, and cultural environment.

Course Prerequisites

None—but come prepared and be alert. This course is highly interactive and introduces a broad scope of media. It is not suitable for students with no sincere interest in media studies, history, and theories of identity.

Methods of Instruction



The course combines discussions (about the texts read, films watched, etc.), in-class (silent) readings, group work, short in-class presentations and group moderations. The more theoretical parts of class sessions will sometimes consist of short lectures as well. Students will be asked to do their own fieldwork (e.g. taking photos, interviewing locals or other students) that will also be discussed in class. Since this course is designed to be highly interactive, students are expected to take part in discussions and debates, which will in most cases not be about 'right' or 'wrong' but rather about describing media phenomena and using plausible arguments to analyze and evaluate representational strategies. The overall aim of the course is to learn how to think critically. In order to encourage enquiry-based learning, students will be asked, beyond the reading itself, to answer questions, either individually or in groups, about an assigned text, film, etc. The instructor will use a broad selection of teaching methods including PowerPoint, audio-visual material, guest lectures, fieldtrips, but also personal narrative, group work, and traditional teaching units.

Assessment and Final Grade

Evaluation will be based on conceptual clarity, self-critical skills, and the skill to relate disparate concepts, but equally to creative thinking and original critique. This applies to written as well as oral-based components of the grade.

Attendance, preparation, participation	20%
Moderation	20%
Field research and presentation	10%
Writing assignments	10%
Written exam	20%
RPO	20%

Course Requirements



Attendance, preparation, participation

Students are expected to come to every class prepared with the reading (please bring a print-out of the respective text(s)). Reacting to, understanding, and interpreting the various texts, films, and other forms of cultural expression will be the central focus of this class. Film screenings and visits to cultural (campus and/or community) events will be obligatory for all students. Participants will be asked to take notes during visits or screenings. The grade for preparation and participation is comprised of the quantity and quality of your contributions to discussions as well as of the performance on in-class writing exercises and classroom activities (writing exercises are designed to sharpen the student's writing skills and to promote the student's engagement with course concepts and texts).

Moderations

This format proves particularly well-suited for students who do not speak much in larger groups but who warm up to smaller ones. Each student is expected (together with one or two other students) to prepare a 60-minute discussion of one particular text, topic, or media example. He/she prepares a main question that will be discussed among his/her group and thinks of additional questions/input to inspire the conversation. After 20 minutes each group shares its results with the rest of the class. There should also be room for questions from the audience and a wrap-up of all the results. It is important that you see your instructor at least one week before your moderation to discuss possible lead questions, topics, and possible pitfalls. The grade results from the quality of the preparation (10%) and the way the moderation is carried out by each individual student (10%). While the first part of the grade will be the same for all in the group, the second may vary, depending on the individual student's performance.

Field research

Students are required to compose a short photo-essay (both in the form of a 7-8 slide PowerPoint or Keynote presentation and as a printed copy to be handed to the instructor). The photo-essay is to be presented in 10 minutes during class time.

Writing assignments



During the course of the semester students will write 2 short essay topics or summary arguments –at least one of them must be based on the readings (max. 500 words); the second one may include observations about site visits (max 500 words). Due dates are indicated in the schedule below.

Final exam

The exam will give students a chance to present what they have learned during this course by answering multiple choice, matching-, and short discussion-questions. Questions will refer to the concepts discussed and include a few examples from visual culture e.g. advertisements to be analyzed briefly.

RPO

Each student is required to compose a five-page research paper outline (RPO); it should give an idea of what you would do had you to write a multi-page academic paper. The RPO consists of a cover page, a list / table of contents, an introduction (which serves to lead into and explain the topic, to outline and legitimize the choice of primary material to be analyzed, to explicate the method(s), to elaborate on the research question/thesis statement and the line of argumentation to be pursued, and to formulate the aim(s)), and an annotated bibliography (with proper citations according to MLA). The topic must relate to the issues addressed in the course. The instructor had to approve the topic (due date is indicated in the schedule below).

Participation

As part of your work in this course, students should demonstrate learning beyond the submission of written assignments or presentations. As such, all students receive grades based upon participation.

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students receive grades based upon their contributions both in the classroom and in the Canvas course.

Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed by the Instructor, in advance of each class session. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged



with the materials where directed.

This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course sessions will also result in a lower final grade.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

An absence in a CIEE course will only be considered excused if:

- a doctor's note is provided
- a CIEE staff member verifies that the student was too ill to attend class
- satisfactory evidence is provided of a family emergency

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:



<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1	No academic penalty
10 – 20%	2	Reduction of final grade
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 4 language classes	Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion

Weekly Schedule

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

Week 1

Introduction

During this first week of class we will talk about the structure and aims of the course, relate our dreams of gender and gender relations in an ideal world, and discuss some examples taken from US and German media. Taking a very general definition of “the media” as a starting point we will discuss how race, class, and other identity categories tie in with these idea(l)s and explore our immediate surroundings with these categories in mind.

Required Reading

- Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Chapter 3



Possible Additional Reading:

- David Gauntlett. *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. Chapters 6+7.

Optional activity:

- Schwules Museum: <http://www.schwulesmuseum.de/>
- Museum für Kommunikation: <http://www.mfk-berlin.de/>

Week 2

The Historicity of Gender and Race

During this week, students will gain an understanding of gender and race as historically constructed concepts as opposed to something that is “naturally” given. Starting with the 19th century “one drop” rule we will focus on Germany with a focus on Magnus Hirschfeld, the “father of transgenderism” and the Nuremberg Laws. We will also look at the legal situation for LGBTQ in Germany and discuss the notion of “German-ness” in current discussions about citizenship rights. We will also discuss how in *Anders als die Anderen* (1919; produced with the help of Hirschfeld) the new medium of film was used to educate Germans about homosexuality.

Required Reading:

- Thomas Laqueur. *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990. 1-24

Possible Additional Reading(s)

- Robert Beachy, “The First Homosexual Rights Movement and the Struggle to Shape Identity.” 85–120, and, “The German Invention of Homosexuality.” Ibid. 3–41

Optional Site Visit:

- Visit the neighborhood of Schöneberg (book a walking tour with Finn Ballard that starts at Nollendorfplatz where there is a triangle



monument for the murdered homosexuals), take a look at the gay and lesbian magazine *Siegessäule*, pay attention to how race and class intersect with the category of gender in that magazine and in other media representations.

Deadline:

- Your first *short* writing assignment is due on the first class this week. Topic: The Historicity of gender and race in Berlin

Week 3

Sex, Discourse, and the Media

How are sex, gender, sexualities, race, and class discursively produced, and what's the role of the media in this process?

Required Reading:

- Michael Kimmel. *Guyland*, Chapters 2, 3, 5, and 7

Possible Additional Reading:

- Foucault, Michel. "Incitement of Discourse." *The Discourse Reader*. Eds. Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 491-498. Print.

Deadline:

- The printed copy of your photo essay is due on the last day of class during this week. The topic is: Berlin/Germany Guyland. You may want to think of the latter as raced, classed etc. as well. You may also consider the role of the media in the creation of Berlin Guyland. The photo essay must be handed in before the class starts. Don't forget to also bring your PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.



Optional activity

- Check out the website of Joliba, an Afro-German initiative, and visit one of their events. <http://www.joliba-online.de/index.php?/Medien-allgemein/medien-bei-joliba.html>. Let us know if you wish to do a screening of the documentary about Audrey Lorde, *The Litany of Survival* (we can get the film for you from Joliba).

Week 4

Gender and Race as Performance

We will use excerpts from the documentary *Man for a Day* (2012) and the movie *White Chicks* (2004) as a starting point for this week's sessions. Students will be asked to think about how media images have influenced the everyday activity of "doing gender" and "doing race" that starts with one's birth or even earlier. We will then take a critical look at advertisements from different time periods to discuss whether and to what extent the idea of "doing gender" and "doing race" has impacted the way products are now advertised in Western societies.

Required Reading:

- Candace West and John H. Zimmermann. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1 (2): June 1987. 125-151
- Malik, Kenan. 2008. "The Race Debate: Nothing to Do with Race." *The Times*. July 2, 2008.

Possible Additional Reading:

- Judith Butler. "Performative Acts and Gender Construction." *Theater Journal* 40:4 (1988): 519-531.

Possible Site Visit:

- We will visit drag king Bridge Markland in her Neukölln Salon and ask her about her memories of Berlin and its club scene since the 1970s.



Deadline

- The second written assignment is due on the first day of the class this week

Week 5 **Postgender in a Postracial Age?**

We will explore one of the most recent phenomena in contemporary debates about gender and race: postfeminism and the postracial society. While both terms are frequently used, it remains unclear what they actually mean, especially in relation to the more recent trend toward a global feminism and a new race consciousness, and how they are employed in today's media culture.

Required Reading:

- Rosalind Gill. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10:2. 147-166.

Possible Additional Reading

- Margaret. Hunter 2007. "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality." *Sociology Compass* 2007 (1:1): 237-254.

Deadline: Final Exam (60 mins).

Optional online viewing:

- Chimamanda Adichie: "All of these stories make me who I am."
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en



Week 6

Queering It!

During this week, we will take queer theory as our starting point and ask about the place of race and other categories in this context. We will discuss the possibilities and limits within contemporary media culture to move from “tolerant” representations of non-heteronormative and multiracial figures to “queer” forms of representation.

Required Reading:

- Yvonne Anderson. “Queer Media?” *Media Research in Progress*. E. Kingsepp, ed., Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 2003. 27-41.

Possible Additional Reading:

- Guillermo Avila-Saavedra. “Nothing Queer About Queer Television: Televised Construction of Gay Masculinities.” *Media, Culture, and Society* 31:1 (2009): 5-21.

Deadline:

- The research paper outline (RPO) is due on the last day of class. Please send it as a pdf or word attachment. Maximum file size: 5MB

Possible site visit:

- We will meet with Jonas Hamm from *Queer Leben*, a counseling center for Berlin’s inter*, trans*, and queer community and relatives. <https://queer-leben.de/english/>

Readings



Anderson, Yvonne. "Queer Media?" *Media Research in Progress*. Ed. Eva Kingsepp, Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 2003. 27-41. Print.

Avila-Saavedra, Guillermo. "Nothing Queer About Queer Television: Televised Construction of Gay Masculinities." *Media, Culture, and Society* 31:1 (2009): 5-21. Print.

Beachy, Robert. *Gay Berlin. Birthplace of a Modern Identity*. New York: Knopf, 2014. Print.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Construction." *Theater Journal* 40:4 (1988): 519-531. Print.

Foucault, Michel. "Incitement of Discourse." *The Discourse Reader*. Eds. Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 491-498. Print.

Gauntlett, David. *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Gill, Rosalind. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10:2. 147-166. Print.

Hunter, Margaret. 2007. "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality." *Sociology Compass* 1:1. (2007): 237-254. Print.

Kenan, Malik. 2008. "The Race Debate: Nothing to Do with Race." *The Times*. July 2, 2008. Online at http://www.kenanmalik.com/essays/times_racial_science.html.

Kimmel, Michael. *Guyland, The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008. Print.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990. Print.

Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.



West, Candace, and John H. Zimmermann. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1:2
(June 1987): 125-151. Print.