



CIEE Global Institute – Berlin

Course name:	Media, Gender and Identity
Course number:	(GI) COMM 3009 BRGE
Programs offering course:	Berlin Open Campus, Berlin Global Architecture and Design
Open Campus Track:	Communications, Journalism and New Media
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

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.

1. Participation: 20%



2. Moderation:	20%
3. Field Research and Presentation:	10%
4. Writing Assignments:	10%
5. Final Exam:	20%
6. RPO:	20%
TOTAL:	100%

Course Requirements

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 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 10 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 and Presentation

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 2,500-word 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

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. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

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).

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 will result in a written warning.

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, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

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 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 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

Class 1.1

We will use this first day of class to get to know each other, understand who we are in the context of the larger gender/race/nationality etc. constellation we live in, talk about our dreams about human relations in an ideal world. Taking this as a starting point we will go on a stroll to a nearby park to visit a little-known memorial and discuss how various identity categories are displayed here.

First Site Visit: nearby park (surprise!)

Please don't forget to bring a camera and take a picture to document the event. See deadline next week.

Please note:

- you are not permitted to go online during this site visit!
- 2 volunteers needed for next session's moderation! Please send me a message over Canvas if you are interested!

Optional weekend activity (warm-up for next week's topic):

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

Week 2 Selfie Culture

This week will be dedicated to the self—or, as some would put it today, our obsession with identity. We will use last week's mini excursion as a starting point to better understand how far we have moved from the postwar struggle between conformity and individuality to then explore a (no so) contemporary phenomenon: the somewhat paradoxical desire to both belong and differ from anybody else. For this we will briefly go back in history and discuss how the invention of the photograph inspired the desire to document the self. The week will end with a lecture and discussion about fan fiction—a creative mode of self-fashioning that would not be possible without both the book and the internet...



Class 2.1

From Sculpture to Smartphone: From Public to Private?

Field research and presentation: hand in (before class, online) a pdf with documentation / bullet points about last week's field trip.

Moderation 1 (2 students): Jean M. Twenge. "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?"

The Atlantic Sept. 17 (2017). www.theatlantic.com.

Reading:

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. "Practices of Looking" and "The World-Wide Web as Private and Public Sphere." *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford UP, 2009. 10-30 and 338-342.

Optional Reading:

John Berger. *About Looking*. Vintage 1992.

Class 2.2

Regarding the Self

Moderation 2 (3 students). Text: Will Storr. *Selfie. How we Became so self-obsessed and what it's doing to us*. Picador, 2017. 243-297.

Reading:

David Gauntlett. "Michel Foucault. Discourses and Lifestyles." *Media, Gender and Identity*. 114-133.

First short writing assignment is due.

Topic: How I see myself. Take a few selfies, choose one that you find the most interesting, and analyze it. You may also want to swap your picture with another student's selfie. Consider how the medium itself drives the performance; how media images impact the image of one's self, and analyze how gender, race, class, and other identity categories play into your/the other student's self-fashioning. You may want to use personal pronouns like he/she to create distance between the selfies and the self...If you don't object, the selfies—and some of your texts--will be used for our pin board exhibition in the lobby!



Please note: we will prepare that exhibition in class, so do print them out separately!

Optional Reading:

Ezarik, Justine. I, Justine. *An Analog Memoir*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.

Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility." 1935.

Class 2.3 Workshop session with Bettina Soller: Fan Fiction!
We will prepare the selfie exhibition in class today!

Reading:

Anne Jamison. *Fic. Why Fan Fiction is taking over the World*. 2013. Xi-24.

Optional Reading:

Mark Duffet. *Understanding Fandom*. 2013.

Possible weekend activity (warm-up for next week's topic):

• Gay Museum: <http://www.schhwulesmuseum.de/>

Week 3 Gender, Nation, and the Media

After our tour de force through contemporary "selfie" culture, that is often associated with phenomena of diffusion that lead to anxiety and breakdown, we will now turn to a very different notion of identity as stable, collective, reassuring: national identity.

Class 3.1 Constructing Nations, Constructing Selves - Gender, Nation, Power: The Monument as Medium

In this session, we will explore our topic on an excursion to Treptower Park.. Please bring a camera and take a picture to document the event!

Reading:



Stephen P. Remy. Review of Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*. 1996. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=420>

Optional Reading:

Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. NY: Verso 1983.

Class 3.2

“American Identities, the Media, and the 2017 Presidential Election.”

A workshop with students from Humboldt University and high school students from Albrecht-Dürer Oberschule to discuss contemporary notions of U.S. national identity. The very particular German debate about German postwar identity will provide a transatlantic dimension to our discussion.

Moderation 3 (5 students): Fake News: what is it and how can we deal with it?

Reading:

Stephan, Alexander. “A Special German Case of Cultural Americanization.” *The Americanization of Europe*. Alexander Stephan, ed. Berghahn 2008. 69-88.

Rick Perlstein. “Peter’s Choice. I asked my student why he voted for Trump. The answer was thoughtful, smart, and terrifying.” *Mother Jones* Jan./Feb. 2017. www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/01/donald-trump

2nd short writing assignment due:

Write a one-paragraph description of the Russian Monument and add 3-5 bullet points with critical information regarding identity categories such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, class.

Submit a digital version of the assignment on Canvas but print it out as well, for your portfolio.

Optional Reading:

Gallup. 2016. “Americans’ Trust in Mass Media Sinks to New Low.” Gallup.com, September 14, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx>.

Thomas Blank and Peter Schmidt, "National Identity in a United Germany."
Political Psychology 24:2 (2003): 289-312.

Week 4 Gender as Performance

Taking our discussion of regional and national identity constructions as a starting point we will now try to better understand the mechanisms that drive the discourse of sex and gender and discuss the role of the media in this process. In a second step we will examine how "race" further complicates the notion of "identity" as a given. 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". We will 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.

Class 4.1 Doing Gender

Moderation 3 (2 students): Apostolos Lampropoulos. "Delimiting the Eurobody: Historicity, Politicization, Queerness." *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*. Dafni Tragaki, ed. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013.

Reading:

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

Optional Reading:

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

Class 4.2 Power Relations in the Media: Against Normativity?

Moderation 4 (3 students): Text: Entman, Robert M, and Andrew Rojecki. 2000. *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*. 2001. Page numbers will be announced.

Reading:

Rosalind Gill, "Gender and the Media." *Gender and the Media*. 7-41.

Optional Reading:



American Psychological Association. "Definition of Terms: Sex, Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation." <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definition.pdf>.
Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 198-208
Eric Liu. "Notes of a Native Speaker." *The Accidental Asian*. NY. Vintage, 1998. 33-56.

Class 4.3 Performing Masculinity

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.

Optional activity:

Visit the website of Joliba, an Afro-German initiative:
<http://www.jolibaonline.de/index.php?/Medien-allgemein/medien-bei-joliba.html>.

Let me 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 5 **Postfeminism 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.

Class 5.1 The Age of Postfeminism and Review Session

Moderation 5 (2 students): moderate a debrief about Bridge Markland's performance

Reading:

Rosalind Gill. "Advertising and Postfeminism," *Gender and the Media*. 73-112.

Possible Additional Reading

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

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 *Siegestäule*, pay attention to how race and class intersect with the category of gender in that magazine and in other media representations.



- Class 5.2 Film viewing and joint discussion with local high school students:
- We will get together with high school students from Albrecht-Dürer Oberschule for a round table discussion!
- Research paper outline (RPO) is due.**
- 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.
- Class 6.1 Moderation 6 (2 students): moderate a discussion of the 2007 movie *White Chicks* (Keenen Ivory Wayans)
- Reading:
- Guillermo Avila-Saavedra, *Nothing Queer About Queer Television: Televised Construction of Gay Masculinities*
- Optional Reading:
- Yvonne Anderson. “Queer Media?” *Media Research in Progress*. E. Kingsepp, ed., Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 2003. 27-41.
- Field research and presentation: hand in (before class, online) a pdf with documentation / bullet points about last week’s round table discussion.
- Class 6.2 Conclusions and Final Exam
- Final Exam**

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.