

“EXOTIC” BODIES, “COOL” CULTURES, GLOBAL FLOWS
WSS 281 (6186)/LCS 289 (8365): WOMEN AND THE MEDIA
www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/wss281/womedia2006.html

This syllabus is subject to change; such changes will be announced and reflected in the online syllabus.

Spring 2006
Tuesdays/Thursdays
Time: 1:15-2:35 pm
Place: Humanities 124

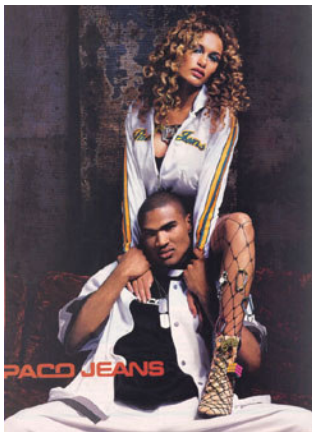
Instructor: Dr. Janell Hobson
Office: Social Science 344
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:45-4:05 pm and by appointment.
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Course Description:

This interdisciplinary course will explore how intersections of race, gender, class, nationality, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability shape representations of women in mass media and popular culture. We will especially place emphasis this semester on women of color and explore the local and global popular arenas in which they appear. We will also develop a global feminist media analysis and feminist community media.

Online Syllabus:

An online version of this syllabus has been created to enhance your information and knowledge for this course. The URL (website address) is included at the top of this page, and you are strongly encouraged to visit it on a regular basis (a hyperlink to the online syllabus is also available on our webCT home page). To access webCT, use your net ID (first and last initials followed by the last four digits of your SSN) and your password (first initial, followed by the first four digits of your SSN, and your last initial) to log on. The online syllabus provides you access to hyperlinks to relevant websites and online essays relating to this course.



Paco Jeans. In this ad, the “urban” or “hip-hop” look frames the marketing of Paco Jeans fashion. It borrows from the hip-hop aesthetic of the hyper-masculine bad-boy (young man of color, perhaps African-American or Latino, who sits in a “cool pose” with his legs spread wide open). A young woman of color – perhaps African-American, perhaps Latina – is draped over his shoulder, appearing very much like a “possession” or accessory (such as jewelry or a luxury coat), especially in the way he firmly holds her hands and in the way her leg is thrown over his shoulder as if her sexuality is completely available. Her light skin and blonde highlights in her hair cast her as a desirable woman of color in a hierarchy of bodies that prefers fairness and whiteness. Her fishnet and ankle-high boots mark her as “exotic,” while the sportswear that both she and her male partner wear indicate the mixing of class differences in which the casual and the luxurious exist simultaneously. Thus, the heterosexual romance in this ad equates urban cool and luxury with the bodies of people of color.

Women’s Studies Department Goals and Learning Outcomes: www.albany.edu/ws

Students will demonstrate that they:

1. understand and can use intersectional feminist analysis to explore the bases of social inequalities.
2. understand what it means to place women at the center of knowledge-making and of discourse across disciplinary boundaries.
3. understand how feminist pedagogy may be different from other forms of teaching and learning.

4. understand the dynamic relationship between Women's Studies scholarship and feminist social action.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

This course will parallel departmental goals and objectives in that students will:

1. dismantle intersecting ideologies of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, etc.
2. conceptualize social justice beyond gender equity and towards community and human rights.
3. fully participate in the teaching process as active learners, peer teachers, and public scholars.
4. apply scholarship in the classroom to activism beyond these walls.

Required Texts (available at the Book House in Stuyvesant Plaza)

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*.

Course Packet – available at Shipmates (also in Stuyvesant Plaza; hereafter abbreviated in course schedule as CP).

Recommended Text: Strunk et al. 2000 edition. *The Elements of Style*.

“Pass the Courvoisier.” As indicated in P. Diddy’s hip-hop jingle, the liqueur, Courvoisier, is a product of the elite classes, and the luxury of this beverage requires a similar association of sophistication with the right kind of woman. In this ad, a svelte, extremely thin blonde woman drapes her arms and legs sexually around a bottle of Courvoisier. Her well-coiffed hair, expensive jewelry, stiletto heels, and perfectly applied cosmetics equate the whiteness and slenderness of her objectified body with this marker of upper-class elegance, as if to suggest that anyone who is luxurious enough to buy and drink this beverage would also possess such a woman on his (we presume) arms.



Course Requirements:

Class Participation (30 points)

- Discussions: You are expected to contribute regularly to class discussions, to listen effectively to lectures and to others, and to bring reading materials to class. Due to the contents of this course, sensitivity and respect for all are a must.
- WebCT: You are expected to post “talking points” (highlighted themes and topics from readings and films) on our webCT discussion forum at least once a week and to also submit your assignments on our discussion board when they are due in class the same day.
- Attendance: This will officially be taken immediately after the drop/add period. You are allowed **3 unexcused absences**; however, if you go over this number, you stand to **lose 5 points for each additional absence** from your final grade. **Two bonus points toward your final grade for perfect attendance!!** Perfect attendance means that you have never missed a single class (whether this is excused or not – including for illnesses and emergencies), nor have you ever arrived late nor left early for any reason. If you attend every single session, from the beginning of class time to the end, and if you are respectful in class and contribute to discussions, **then and only then** will you receive bonus points for perfect attendance.
- Lateness: You will be penalized for tardiness and, therefore, you stand to **lose 1 point for each additional lateness** that exceeds three. Excused tardiness will only be granted in cases of documented illness and emergencies.
- Pop Quizzes: These will be scheduled throughout the semester and unannounced; you will have as many or as few quizzes, depending on how regularly everyone in class keeps up with their reading assignments.



River. Routinely, advertisers recognize the effectiveness of using “ordinary” female models in their ads to target women and other marginalized groups, such as communities of color who fuel the music industry as consumers. In this ad, a young, plump Black woman reclines on a bed, presumably, while listening to music on her headphones. It suggests that such women can also be sexy and viewed for their desirability, although the association between the product of this ad (music) and the Black female body is one of coolness and funky beats, not too much of a stretch when one considers that blackness is often used to sell music. We also see the way in which the woman’s body is positioned to emphasize part of her behind – an anatomical part of Black women’s bodies that has been regularly fetishized – and her voluptuous chest.

Media Watch (50 points)

- *Tutorials.* Free media/technology tutorials are provided at the Interactive Media Center (basement of main library), and you are required to attend at least two workshops to enhance your information and communications technology skills. Highly recommended: workshops on *Dreamweaver*, *Flash*, *Photoshop*, and *imovie*. See hyperlink on our online syllabus. (10 points)
- *Annotated Bibliography:* Present 5 secondary sources. In your annotations, provide a paragraph-length analysis of each source; list citations in Chicago style (see hyperlink on online syllabus). Your sources must include: 2 articles or book/anthology chapters referenced in the endnotes of a course reading and 3 academic journal articles (searched in either the **EBSCO**, **WORLDCAT**, **Project Muse**, or **Women’s Studies International** databases). Your sources must relate to a specific topic of interest that will shape the theme of your media watch collection (see below). This assignment is due in class on Thursday, **February 16**. (10 points)
- *The Collection:* Your media watch could include a survey of advertisements (collected in a scrapbook of 15-20 magazine/newspaper/Internet clippings), or TV commercials, program segments, video game segments, movie segments, or music videos (15-20 video-clips assembled on a videotape, CD, or DVD), or a series of 15-20 original photographs that you’ve taken of public media (billboards, transit ads, posters, flyers, etc.) assembled in an album. Another choice is to create a music playlist (10-12 selections) burned on a CD. Your media items must be arranged in a way that flows smoothly from one item to the next (thematically, visually, or aurally). You are expected to provide a 1-2 page (typed and double-spaced) introduction to your media watch collection (e.g. explain where you found your media items, how you chose to assemble each item in your collection, and why you chose certain themes in your collection), as well as a 1-2 page (typed and double-spaced) conclusion that reflects on how your media watch highlights certain cultural and societal attitudes toward women (be sure to cite references from your annotated bibliography). Be sure to also include a paragraph-length (3-6 sentences, also typed and double-spaced) abstract for each media image/item, as well as the source for each item (including date of source). Your abstract must analyze representations of women (and men if they are included in the same item) and examine how race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and nationality shape the image. You are also expected to focus your media watch either on a certain group of women (e.g. – Asian women, blondes and whiteness, etc.) or on a certain topic in media (e.g. – violence against women, such as surveying the number of female corpses on TV programs on a weekly basis, feminist consciousness, etc.). This assignment is due in class on Tuesday, **March 7**. (30 points)

Media Project (40 points)

As a follow-up to your media watch collection assignment, you are expected to develop your collection through one of the following options:

- Option A (E-Journal Submission). Submit one of the following multimedia projects to the undergraduate e-journal, **transcending silence...**. You will need to follow submission guidelines (turn in 3 hard copies – including written transcript of any audio/visuals – and a CD/disk copy: e-journal deadline – **March 31, 2006**). The first draft is due in class Tuesday, **March 28**. Your submission must include a personal statement and an abstract (200 words, or 4-6 sentences) describing your submission. Your name should only appear on a cover sheet (including project title and contact information - email, phone, and mailing address). Be sure to number subsequent pages, beginning with the first page of your manuscript, in the top right hand corner. Citations must be in Chicago style. Projects that do not follow e-journal submission guidelines will lose 10 points. Also, only projects that receive 35 points or higher will be forwarded to the editorial board. **Bonus 5 points if the project is accepted for resubmission; bonus 10 points if the project is accepted for publication.** In the case of resubmissions, the revised electronic draft is due in the *transcending silence...* mailbox, 4 pm in Soc. Science 341, on Monday, **May 1**, on CD or DVD, along with a letter, describing your revisions, and reader-reports from the e-journal editors. Choose one of the following genres:
 - Media Essay: Develop a critical essay (8-12 pages, typed and double-spaced) which provides in-depth analysis of your media watch assignment, selecting 6-8 media items for close analysis (option for print media collection or music playlist): your electronic version may incorporate multimedia and illustrations.
 - Movie Montage: Create a (max. 5-minute) movie montage of your selected media watch moving images (video clips), using the *imovie* software program, available at the main library's Interactive Media Center. The idea for your movie montage is to educate audiences about mainstream representations of women from different races and to provide a resource for feminist organizations combating problematic media messages. You will also be expected to produce a written transcript of your "movie" (option for electronic media collection).
 - Audio Slide-Show: Develop a slide-show of the print media collected or of the original photographs that you have taken for your media watch assignment and blend it with an audio narrative (critical or creative: poetic/spoken-word: include written transcript of the audio). See free software, Photo Story (hyperlink online).
- Option B (Annotated Bibliography): You may opt to expand on your annotated bibliography – including 15 additional secondary sources on a topic relating to your media watch collection, for a total of 20 sources. Of these sources, 5 must be academic journal articles, 3 academic book or anthology chapters, 2 critically reliable websites, 3 film/video sources, and 2 course texts. Your annotated bibliography is due on Monday, **May 15**, in my mailbox (SS 341) or in my office (SS 344) by 4 pm.

To prepare for this assignment, you will need to choose Option A or B by Thursday, **February**

2. Explain your choice in a 1-2 page proposal (typed and double-spaced): 5 points out of 40. Fair usage laws and policy limit you to the use of a 30-second segment of any motion picture (or 10 seconds from a TV commercial) or audio recording included in your e-journal submission (include complete media item for your collection). *All ideas that are not your own must be cited!*

Feminist Community Media (50 points)

As a class, we will collaborate on community media events, free and open to the public, creating and/or sharing media in a community-based setting (whether the "community" constitutes this class, UAlbany, or the local region). In groups of 2-4, propose a 1-hour "media education" workshop that promotes media awareness and exploration of women's representations in popular culture (10 points). The workshop could be anything from a screening of a video or film short (see film resources page), followed by discussion, a roundtable, an organized debate, an activity or exercise featuring audience participation, a formal presentation, or a performance (such as a spoof beauty

pageant or sweatshop awareness fashion show). These proposals are due in class on Thursday, **March 16**, and the conference/festival will take place the week of May 1. Bonus 2 points if accepted for presentation. To prepare for this project, join one of the following groups (40 points), which will work on the following:

- Conference Organizers: select the top three media education workshop proposals and schedule accordingly (see conference schedule below). Your group will also be responsible for scheduling requested equipment, providing refreshments if group agrees on this, and publicizing the event. The conference will be launched during our class time on Tuesday, **May 2**, continuing on Thursday, **May 4**, and concluding Tuesday, **May 9**. Submit a 2-3 page proposal (typed and double-spaced) with selected workshops by Tuesday, **April 4**.
- Women's Film Festival: Select 4 similarly-themed films, featured on our Film Resources page, to present in a "film festival," beginning after Spring Break on Tuesday evening, **April 18**, at 7:30 pm in LC 19, and continuing each consecutive Tuesday, same time and place, until **May 9**, last day of class. Submit your proposal (2-3 pages typed and double-spaced) of film selections and film festival title by Tuesday, **April 4**. Select panels of speakers to introduce each film and provide discussion following each screening. You may also wish to contact the Spectrum Theatre, local movie house, which can provide the film festival with free popcorn in exchange for promoting the theater's recent movie listings. Schedule: April 18, 25, May 2, 9.
- Feminist Radio: collaborate with local radio, WAMC, and their feminist program, 51%, this semester. Plan to broadcast a special 30-minute radio program relating to our course subject, to be aired on Wednesday, **May 3**, at 3 pm. Submit your proposed broadcast (2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced) by Thursday, **April 20**.
- "Take Back the Mike" Feminist Poets: organize a special night of "open mike" feminist poetry and music through the student poetry group, Spread the Word, which holds open mike nights every first and third Wednesdays at the Ritazza Café. Select a "DJ" among yourselves to remix your music selections for your original poetry/spoken word performances. To be held on Wednesday, **May 3**, 8 pm. Submit your proposed program (2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced) by Thursday, **April 20**.
- Class E-Newsletter: collaborate on the creation of an e-newsletter featuring reports of the above community media projects and other campus/local events relating to the theme of this course, as well as current movie, music or TV reviews. Present on Tuesday, **May 9**. Due: Thursday, **May 11**, 4 pm in my mailbox (SS 341).

No more than 8 students per group (sign up by Thursday, **February 2**; submit publicity flyers with your group's proposal).

Course Exam (30 points)

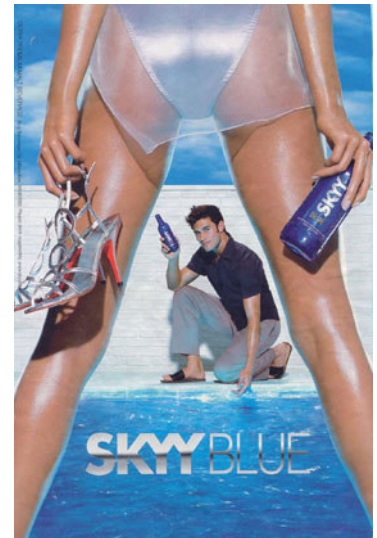
An exam will be given in class on Thursday, **April 6**. It will consist of three parts – short answers; quote/image analysis; and current movie review (for submission to campus/local newspaper). Bring your review (4-5 pages, typed and double-spaced) to class on the day of the exam. You will be expected to staple this review to parts 1 and 2.

Expectations, Format, and Grading Policies:

- This course will be structured primarily around discussions and occasional lectures.
- If you engage in disruptive behavior (i.e., delivering insults, using vulgar expressions, doing work or having conversations not related to this class, not turning off cell phones, beepers and pagers, walking out in a way that disrupts class, arriving late, or leaving early without first consulting me when this is unavoidable), then **3 such incidences = 1 unexcused absence**. (Please see Attendance Policy)

- Films and videos will be screened on the dates listed in the schedule; you have the option of viewing these ahead of time, but it is not required. We will discuss films/videos after viewing them in class.
- Whenever you have concerns over a grade assigned, please contact me at least 24 hours after receipt of your grade. Please only send emails to schedule an appointment, not to discuss concerns with the course.
- Late assignments will result in 10 points deducted from your grade for each day late; no extensions will be granted with the exception of documented emergencies. In addition, plagiarism (see hyperlink online) is a violation of university policy; any errors in citations and use of work that is not your own will result in a failing grade for assignments.
- Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify Nancy Belowich-Negron, Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations

Skyy Blue. In this ad for Vodka, a white woman's fragmented body frames the heterosexual romance suggested in the way her body is made available to the casually-dressed white man, whose body is positioned between her open legs. He holds the product bottle so that it aims toward the space between her legs, suggesting that it functions as a phallic symbol. All we see of the woman is her buttocks, legs, and arms; she holds stylish heels in one hand while the other holds the product bottle. The pool and silvery swimsuit and heels suggest her upper-class status. Both the vodka and the female body suggest their luxurious availability to the average vodka consumer, presumably the white male figure in the ad.



Due Dates

Feb. 2	Project Proposal / Sign Up for Feminist Community Media.
Feb. 16	Annotated Bibliography.
Mar. 7	Media Watch.
Mar. 16	Media Education Workshop proposal;
Mar. 28	Media Project: Option A.
Apr. 4	Conference Proposal; Proposal for Film Festival.
Apr. 6	Course Exam.
Apr. 18-May 9	Women's Film Festival.
Apr. 20	Feminist Community Media Program for Radio and Poetry groups.
May 1	Revised Draft: Option A.
May 2-9	Feminist Community Media Project Presentations.
May 11	E-Newsletter.
May 15	Annotated Bibliography: Option B.

Letter-Grade Equivalents:

A = 200 – 185	C+ = 159 – 151
A- = 184 – 180	C = 150 – 145
B+ = 179 – 171	C- = 144 – 140
B = 170 – 165	D = 139 – 135
B- = 164 – 160	E = Below 135

Course Schedule

UNIT ONE: MYTHICAL NORMS & CONSTRUCTIONS OF “DIFFERENCE”

- Jan. 24 Course overview and introduction.
Video: *Lip*.
- Jan. 26 CP: (1) Coloured White, Not Coloured.
- Jan. 31 CP: (2) Brain, Brow, and Booty; (3) Xuxa!
- Feb. 2 CP: (4) Gender and Culture of Empire.
Video: *Hollywood Harems*.
Due: Proposal / Feminist Community Media Sign-Up.
- Feb. 7 *Practices of Looking*: chapters 1-3.
- Feb. 9 Video: *The Celluloid Closet*.
- Feb. 14 CP: (5) Who’s a Sissy?
- Feb. 16 Web Design Workshop: Introduction to Dreamweaver.
Due: Annotated Bibliography.

Winter Break, February 20-24, 2006.

UNIT TWO: COMMODITY FETISHISM & BODY POLITICS

- Feb. 28 *Practices of Looking*: chapter 6; website: www.adbusters.org.
CP: (6) Naked Capitalists.
- Mar. 2 Media workshop: Introduction to Photoshop.
- Mar. 7 **Due: Media Watch Collection.**
- Mar. 9 Video: *Performing the Border*.
- Mar. 14 CP: (7) Latin Women in the Global Information Network.
Websites: “Paradigms and Perversions”; “Mythic Hybrid.”
- Mar. 16 Video: *The Darker Side of Black*.
Due: Media Education Workshop Proposal.
- Mar. 21 CP: (8) The Image and Identity of Women in Hip-Hop; (9) Racializing the Puerto Rican Day Parade.
Online Essay: From Sweatshop to Hip-Hop.
- Mar. 23 CP: (10) The Butt; (11) My Jewish Nose; (12) Finding My Eye-identity.
Video: *Hair Piece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People*.

UNIT THREE: BEAUTY & THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

- Mar. 28 Video: *Miss America*.
Due: Media Project: Option A.
- Mar. 30 CP: (13) What the Miss World Pageant Can Teach About Globalization.
- Apr. 4 CP: (14) Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory.
 Video: *The Body Beautiful*.
Due: Film Festival Program (Film Festival Group)/ Conference Program
- Apr. 6 **Course Exam.**

Spring break, April 10-14, 2006

UNIT FOUR: WORLD VIEWS & CULTURE WARS

Women's Film Festival: Apr. 18, 25, May 2, 9 (LC 19 @ 7:30 pm)

- Apr. 18 *Practices of Looking*: chapters 4-5, 7, 9.
 Website: www.breakthrough.tv; Machinima: "The French Democracy."
- Apr. 20 Video: *In Whose Honor?*
Due: Feminist Community Media Program.
- Apr. 25 Video: *Color Adjustment*.
- Apr. 27 CP: (15) White Flight.

Due May 1 (E-Journal Revisions Deadline) in *transcending silence...* mailbox in SS 341, 4 pm: Media Project Final Draft (Option A).

UNIT FIVE: TAKE BACK THE MEDIA

Feminist Community Media: Schedule of Events

- May 2 Media Education Workshop #1.
- May 3 3 pm: Feminist Radio 51% broadcast on WAMC.
 8 pm: Feminist Poets @ Ritazza Café.
- May 4 Media Education Workshop #2.
- May 9 Media Education Workshop #3.
Due: Assignment Checklist and Self-Evaluation.
- May 11 **Due: Class E-Newsletter.**
- May 15 **Due: Annotated Bibliography: Option B.**

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST AND SELF-EVALUATION

Please complete the following, to be signed and turned in the last day of class.

1. Class Participation (30 points)
 - a. How often did I participate in class discussions? _____ /week ____/month.
 - b. How often did I post responses and assignments to the webCT discussion board? _____ /week ____/month.
 - c. How many absences did I accumulate? _____. How many of these were excused? _____.
 - d. How often was I late to class? _____. How many were excused? _____.
 - e. Do I qualify for the Perfect Attendance bonus 2 points? _____.
 - f. What is my Quiz grade point average (with the lowest quiz grade dropped)? _____.
2. Media Watch (50 points)
 - a. Did I attend at least two IMC tutorials? Which ones? _____.
What dates? _____.
 - b. What number of points did I receive on my annotated bibliography? _____.
Did I lose any points for lateness on this assignment? _____. If so, how many? _____.
 - c. What number of points did I receive for my Media Watch collection? _____. Did I lose any points for lateness on this assignment? _____. If so, how many? _____.
3. Media Project (40 points)
 - a. What number of points did I receive for my Proposal? _____. Did I lose any points for lateness on this assignment? _____. If so, how many? _____.
 - b. What number of points did I receive for Option A? _____. Do I qualify for bonus 5 points for resubmitting to *transcending silence...*? _____. Do I expect to qualify for bonus 10 points for being accepted for publication? _____.
 - c. Do I expect to lose any points for lateness on this assignment? _____. If so, how many? _____.
 - d. What number of points do I expect to receive for Option B? _____.
4. Course Exam (30 points)
 - a. What number of points did I receive for my Course Exam? _____.
5. Feminist Community Media (50 points)
 - a. What number of points did I receive for my media education workshop proposal? _____. Do I qualify for bonus 2 points for presenting the workshop at our class conference? _____.
 - b. How would I evaluate my group's community media project? _____.
 - c. What number of points do I expect to receive for this assignment? _____.

EXPECTED TOTAL POINTS: _____

EXPECTED GRADE: _____

Your Signature

Date