**COMM 366: WOMAN: Designing Media for Social Change**

**Spring 2018, Wednesdays 2-4:50 pm ANN L101**

**Instructors:**

Professor Sarah Banet-Weiser

Professor Alison Trope

**Course Description**

COMM 366 examines media and social change at the intersection of theory and practice, and will be devoted to investigating and analyzing the way gender issues are communicated through various media platforms. With a focus on Viceland’s documentary series WOMAN, we will learn how to design and craft a communication/media project that has as a mission to elicit social change. The overall goal of the course is to help students develop as more engaged, informed and empathetic citizens who are empowered to bring resolution and shared understanding to areas of conflict and difference in their own lives and in the broader community. Students will learn theories about gender issues around the world, as well as skills to create media that addresses these issues, with the ultimate goal of producing media for social change and impact.

***WOMAN is an Emmy-nominated series of eight documentaries created by Viceland in conjunction with renowned feminist writers and activists, Gloria Steinem and Amy Richards, and with Ariel Wengroff, Chief of Staff and Executive Producer at Vice Media. Each documents violence against women in a different part of the world, from North America to Zambia. Each features a young woman correspondent asking questions as cameras record answers and on-the-ground realities in real time.  Each offers ways that viewers may act on what they have seen and create real impact.***

**GENDERED EXPERIENCES & STORIES:** This section of the course examines various images of gender in a global media context focusing on the late 20th century to the present. Using theories from cultural and media studies, film and gender studies, and communication studies, we will explore different processes and practices of gender, specifically in terms of media representations of femininity and masculinity. The purpose of this section of the course is to gain insight into the ways in which gender, and its intersections with race, ethnicity, nationality, and class, is enacted, represented and has an impact on cultural formations, communication, and the normalization of hierarchy and violence, contributing to everything from political instability to forced population growth and global warming. The media plays a major role in "constructing" gender, and “popular” views of what appropriate gendering is, in turn, shape how we communicate with each other as well as how we conceive of changing gender norms. Each week, we will watch an episode of WOMAN, and will then apply the theories we discuss to the episode.

**MEDIA AS SOCIAL CHANGE:** Equipped with a foundational understanding of the cultural roots and representations of gender identity as well as a knowledge of the various institutional structures and policies that create barriers or avenues toward social justice, this section of the course will explore various media institutions and the practices they harness as vehicles for social change. We will discuss theories of change and the role played by nonprofits, NGOs, and advocacy organizations as well as traditional media outlets in constructing narratives for particular target audiences. We will consider the value of different genres of media and visual culture used for social change (from poster art to documentary to street art to transmedia and social media) and storytelling and counter-narratives specifically in the context of local and disenfranchised communities.

**PRACTICE & IMPACT**: In this section of the course, we will combine the theoretical, storytelling and visual skills from the first two sections in order to more deeply understand the role of documentary (and other media) as a vehicle for social change. The focus in this section will be on media production, where students will learn some of the basic tools to create a documentary short, understanding what it takes to make a nonfiction program feasible. Students will evaluate and research real-world examples about gender issues to better understand how programs are pitched, shaped and subsequently constructed. This section of the course gives students time to develop and research a story that is engaging, relevant, and effective. This is not an exercise in observational filmmaking; rather we will build on concepts of visual literacy – the interpretation of a visual setting, the translation into visual sequences, and the story that can be told as a result. It becomes the research basis for the project and teaches core values related to the making of long-form stories.

**Course Requirements and Attendance:**

Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. Attendance in lecture is important: there is significant material covered in lecture that is not in the reading and you cannot pass the course if you do not attend most of the lectures. In addition, there will be frequent screenings and guests in lecture for which you will be responsible. Students who miss **more than three lectures** will have their grades reduced and risk failing the course. Simply showing up to class does not guarantee a perfect attendance/participation score. Other factors, including promptness and level of attention during class lecture and section, will impact your grade. If circumstances prevent you from attending class, the instructor and/or TA should be informed by email or phone. Participation grades will start at 85—the threshold—and then move up or down based on the factors above.

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today’s technological culture, but they also can distract you from the class discussion and dampen participation. We expect you to use computers for note-taking purposes only, and to avoid using other mobile devices during class time. *Please see Blackboard folder for current articles that discuss the value of taking notes by hand and some of the problems with using laptops in the classroom.*

**Classroom Conduct and Respect**

All students are encouraged to use the classroom as a safe space in which to speak and voice their opinions. We will regularly have visits from guest speakers, and expect you to give them your full attention. Further, our expectation is that you show respect not only to your professors, guests and TA, but also to your classmates when they participate in discussion.

**Course Readings/Required Texts:**

All readings will be posted on Blackboard as PDFs or weblinks. In addition to articles and chapters from books, we will regularly draw from the [interactive study guide](http://beautifultrouble.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/BT_StudyGuide_Interactive.pdf) from *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution* (referenced as **BT** in schedule below). If you have trouble opening or reading any of the articles, let us know ASAP.

**Course Grading**

Your grade will reflect the quality of assignments you complete as follows:

* Attendance and participation 10%
* Paper (5 pages; limits and possibilities of media & social change) 20%
* Topic proposal 5%
* Research proposal/case study 20%
* Multimedia research proposal/sizzle reel 20%
* Final story summary, 10 pages 25%

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material.

<A grade of A+ (97-100) *may* be given to *individual* assignments in *rare* instances where expectations are exceeded.>

A-/B+ above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of

conceptual ideas and their relation to work in the community site

B/B- average work, needs improvement on ideas and argument

C+/C shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument

C- and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the

material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade as per the scale shown below:

A+ = 97-100 (only possible on individual assignments, NOT final course grade)

A = 96-94 C = 76-74

A- = 93-90 C- = 73-70

B+ = 89-87 D+ = 69-67

B = 86-84 D = 66-64

B- = 83-80 D- = 63-60

C+ = 79-77 F = 59-00

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must first wait 24 hours (cooling off period) before appealing it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 10 days of receiving the graded assignment. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

**Tentative Weekly Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Topics/Daily Activities** | **Readings and Screenings** | **Deliverable/Due Dates** |
| **Week 1**  1/10 | Introduction: Theorizing Gender | Judith Lorber, “Believing Is Seeing: Biology as Ideology”  Roxanne Gay, excerpt from *Bad Feminist*  ***Beautiful Trouble (BT)/Tactics:***  [Détournement and Culture Jamming](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/detournementculture-jamming/); [Guerilla Projection](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/guerrilla-projection/)  ***Screenings***: *Pakistan: On the Front Lines; Canada: The Missing First Nations* |  |
| **Week 2**  1/17 | Global Perspectives on Femininity | Rahda Hedge, “Gender, Media and Trans/National Spaces”  Chandra Mohanty, “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism”  Inderpal Grewal, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights: The Transnational Production of Global Feminist Subjects”  ***BT Principles*:**  [Lead with Sympathetic Characters](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/lead-with-sympathetic-characters/);  [Choose Tactics That Support Your Strategy](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/anyone-can-act/)  ***Screenings***: *El Salvador-Femicide; Colombia: The Women of FARC* |  |
| **Week 3**  Week of 1/24 | Gendered Violence: Rape Culture | Laurie Penny, excerpt from *Unspeakable Things*  Kimberle Crenshaw, “Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew”  Carrie Rentschler, “Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media”  ***BT Principles:***  [Choose Your Target Wisely;](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/choose-your-target-wisely/) [Balance Art and Message](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/choose-your-target-wisely/);  [Think Narratively](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/think-narratively/)  **Screenings**: *DRC: Rape as A Weapon of War* + *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia’s Story* |  |
| **Week 4**  1/31 | #MeToo: Gender, Power & Institutions, part 1 (government, Hollywood, Silicon Valley) | Carrie Rentschler, “Bystander Intervention, Feminist Hashtag Activism, and the Anti-Carceral Politics of Care” Sarah Banet Weiser, “[What the Fearless Girl Statue and Harvey Weinstein Have in Common](https://theconversation.com/what-the-fearless-girl-statue-and-harvey-weinstein-have-in-common-85367)”; “[When Nice Guys Turn Out to Be Sexual Predators](http://fortune.com/2017/11/30/matt-lauer-sexual-harassment-nice-guys/)”  Rebecca Solnit, “[Let this Flood of Women’s Stories Never Cease](http://lithub.com/rebecca-solnit-let-this-flood-of-womens-stories-never-cease/)” (Literary Hub)  Laurie Penny, “[The Consent of the (Un)governed](https://longreads.com/2017/12/05/the-consent-of-the-ungoverned/amp/)” (LongReads)  Kate Manne, excerpt from *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*  ***BT Principles***:  [Make the Invisible Visible](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/make-the-invisible-visible/);  [Anyone Can Act](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/anyone-can-act/);  [Challenge Patriarchy as You Organize](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/challenge-patriarchy-as-you-organize/);  [Media Jacking](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/media-jacking/);  [Anger Works Best When You Have the Moral High Ground](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/anger-works-best-when-you-have-the-moral-high-ground/)  ***Screening:*** *The Hunting Ground* |  |
| **Week 5**  2/7 | Signs of (IN)Equality from Wages to Reproductive Rights | Gloria Steinem, “The Importance of Work” and “If Men Could Menstruate”  TV Reed, “The Poetical is Political: Feminist Poetry and the Poetics of Women’s Rights”  Roxanne Gay, “The Alienable Rights of Women”  Alison Trope, “Girl in the Box”  ***BT Tactics***: [Mass Street Action](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/mass-street-action/)  ***Screenings***: *Zambia: Child Brides; Handmaid’s Tale* |  |
| **Week 6**  2/14 | Gender, Race, Power & Institutions, part 2 (military, prison industrial complex) | Carol Cohn, “Wars, Wimps, & Women”  Ruthie Gilmore, “Mothers Reclaiming Our Children”  Alicia Garza, “[A Herstory of BlackLivesMatter](http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/)” (Feminist Wire)  Kimberle Crenshaw, “[From Private Violence to Mass Incarceration: Thinking Intersectionally About Women, Race, and Social Control](https://www.uclalawreview.org/pdf/59-6-1.pdf)”  ***BT Principles:***  [Know Your Cultural Terrain (and use it to your advantage)](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/know-your-cultural-terrain/)  ***BT Tactic:*** [Public Filibuster](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/public-filibuster/)  ***Screenings***: *USA: Mothers Behind Bars; USA: Assault in the Military* | Paper due |
| **Week 7**  Week of 2/21 | Theories, Organizations & Strategies of Change (NGOs, advocacy groups, non-profits) | Robert Hornick, “Why Can’t We Sell  Human Rights Like We Sell Soap?”  Oxfam blog, “[What Is a Theory of](https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/what-is-a-theory-of-change-and-does-it-actually-help/)  [Change and How Do We Use It?](https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/what-is-a-theory-of-change-and-does-it-actually-help/)”  “[Kiva and the Power of Story](https://people.stanford.edu/jaaker/sites/default/files/kivaandstorytelling030509rev010410.pdf)”  (Stanford Business Case”  Charlotte Ryan & William Gamson,  “The Art of Reframing Political  Debates”  *Making Waves: A Guide to*  *Cultural Strategy* (report)  ***BT Principles***:  [Consensus, Is a Means Not An End](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/consensus-is-a-means-not-an-end/);  [Don’t Mistake Your Group for Society](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/dont-mistake-your-group-for-society/); |  |
| **Week 8**  2/28 | Social Change Media Outlets from Broadly to Teen Vogue | Clemencia Rodriguez, “From Alternative Media to Citizen’s Media”  Leslie Regan Shade, “Gender and the Commodification of Community: Women.com and gURL.com”  Cynthia Carter, “Online Popular  Anti-Sexism Political Action in the  UK and USA: The Importance of  Collaborative Anger for Social  Change”  Jessalyn Keller, “Girl power's last chance? Tavi Gevinson, feminism, and popular media culture”    Anne Helen Peterson, “Too Gross: Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson”  ***BT Principle***: [Brand or Be Branded](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/brand-or-be-branded/) | Topic proposal due |
| **Week 9**  3/7 | Commodity Activism | Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Free Self-Esteem Tools?”: Brand Culture, Gender, and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign”  Alison Trope, “Mother Angelina: Hollywood Philanthropy Personified” |  |
| **Spring Recess** | **Spring Recess** | **Spring Recess** | **Spring Recess** |
| **Week 10**  3/21 | Using Public Space as Site of Change  ***Guests***: When Women Disrupt Collective | Erica Doss, “Contemporary Public Art Controversy: An Introduction”  Nicolas Lambert, “The Battleground Over Public Memory”; “No Apologies for Asco: Performance Art and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement”  Taj Frazier and Jessica Koslow, “Krumpin in North Hollywood: The Public Moves in Private Spaces”  ***BT Tactic***: [Occupation](http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/occupation/) | Research proposal due |
| **Week 11**  3/28 | Social Media Advocacy | Tajnja Carstensen, “Gender and  Social Media: Sexism, Empowerment, or  the Irrelevance of Gender”  Ruxandra Looft, “#girlgaze: photography, fourth wave feminism, and social media advocacy”  Jen Schradie, “[Bringing the](http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/11/bringing-the-organization-back-in-social-media-and-social-movements/)  [Organization Back In: Social](http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/11/bringing-the-organization-back-in-social-media-and-social-movements/)  [Media and Social Movements](http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/11/bringing-the-organization-back-in-social-media-and-social-movements/)” |  |
| **Week 12**  4/4 | Praxis: Development and Putting Research to Use | Matthew Nisbet and Patricia Aufderheide. "Documentary Film:  Towards a Research Agenda on Forms, Functions, and Impacts."  David Whiteman, "Out of the Theaters and into the Streets: A Coalition Model of the Political Impact of Documentary Film and  Video."  (see p. 39 [BT Study Guide](http://beautifultrouble.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/BT_StudyGuide_Interactive.pdf)) |  |
| **Week 13**  4/11 | Praxis: Visual Strategies and Story Structure | Paula J. Massood“Spike Lee’s *4 Little Girls*: The Politics of the Documentary Interview”  Andy Goodman, “Storytelling as Best Practice” [video](http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/15665748) (58 min) | Multimedia proposal due |
| **Week 14**  4/18 | Praxis: Target Audience | Joke Hermes, “Rediscovering 20th Century Feminist Audience Research”  ***BT Principles***:  [Consider Your Audience](Consider%20your%20audience);  [Play To The Audience That Isn’t There](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/play-to-the-audience-that-isnt-there/) |  |
| **Week 15**  4/25 | Praxis: Spreading & Sustaining Messages of Social Change | Beth Karlin, John Johnson, “Measuring Impact: The Importance of Evaluation for Documentary Film Campaigns”  ***BT Principle***:  [Do The Media’s Work For Them](http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/do-the-medias-work-for-them/) |  |
| **FINAL EXAM**  **PERIOD** |  |  | Final story project due May 9 by or before 5pm |

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

***Academic Conduct***

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standardshttps://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior- violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

***Support Systems***

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.* Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu