

**ETHN 164/ MUS 153**  
**African Americans and Mass Media**  
**M/W 11:00a.m. - 1:50p.m. WLH 2115**  
**Summer Session I 2015**

Instructor: Maisam Alomar  
Office: Social Science Building (SSB) 248  
Office Hours: Monday 2:30 - 3:30pm and by appointment  
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**Overview:**

This course will examine the media representations of African Americans from slavery through the twentieth century. Attention will be paid to the emergence and transmission of enduring stereotypes, and their relationship to changing social, political, and economic frameworks in the United States. The course will also consider African Americans' responses to and interpretations of these mediated images. Representations will be examined through a variety of mass-produced media forms, including film, television, and music.

What are the political and social implications of mass media representations of African Americans? How are these representations received by mainstream and Black audiences? The course will engage these question and others focusing on: the history of the development of mass media in the context of US race relations; the construction of enduring stereotypes; the political and economic imperatives of mass media; and Black resistance to representations produced by and circulating in dominant culture.

**Readings:**

All course readings are available through UCSD library e-reserves ([reserves.ucsd.edu](http://reserves.ucsd.edu)). The page is listed under ETHN 164, and the password is **ma164**. Though you are not required to purchase texts for this course, you are required to print course readings. **Please complete all course readings before each class to prepare for discussion and possible quizzes.**

**Course Requirements:**

Final grades are based on the successful completion of class requirements as weighted below. Students must complete all assignments to pass the course. No late or make-up assignments will be acceptable without documentation of an emergency.

Quizzes: Two unannounced quizzes will focus on required readings for the week/day of the quiz.

Class Participation: is based on student's presence and engagement which may include completion of short in-class assignments. Absenteeism will be reflected in the final grade. Along with the UCSD Principles of Community, the following guidelines are the basis for meaningful discussions.

- Respect is key. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- All claims or arguments made must be supported by the texts (academic settings necessitate scholarly claims).

Presentation: You will be required to give one 15 minute group presentation analyzing the week's readings and films. Presentations should conclude with two discussion questions.

Final Paper (more details to be presented throughout course): an analysis of a research topic relevant to the course (4-5 typed pages). Paper must include **at least 3** references from class. Paper must also include a bibliography and proper citation of sources.

### **Grading & Grade Distribution:**

Presentation	30%
Quizzes	10%
Final Paper	30%
Participation	30%
	100%

Grading focuses primarily on how thoughtfully and insightfully you engage course content, including your ability to understand and articulate arguments made in lecture and in readings. I also expect clear, grammatical writing.

### **Email Policy:**

Please observe standard email etiquette and formatting. Send all email from your UCSD account. I will do my best to respond to your questions within 24 hours. Email is a good way for you to ask short and/or logistical questions or set up office appointments. If you have questions that require an in-depth answer, please see me during office hours.

### **Additional Resources:**

- Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD): <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/about/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.ucsd.edu/>
- Writing Center (127 Mandeville): <http://writingcenter.ucsd.edu/>

## **Class Schedule**

### Week 1 - INTRODUCTION

#### **Mon 6/29**

- **Film:** *Race: The Power of an Illusion*
- Jane Rhodes, "The Visibility of Race and Media History" in *Gender, Race, and Class in the Media*

**Wed 7/1**

- Janette Dates and William Barlow, "Introduction: A War of Images" in *Split Image: African Americans in the Mass Media*

**Week 2 - REPRESENTATIONS****Mon 7/6**

- Darnell Hunt, "Making Sense of Blackness on Television" in *Channeling Blackness*

**Wed 7/8**

- **Film:** *Ethnic Notions*
- Kenneth Goings, "The Birth and Adolescence of Aunt Jemima and Uncle Mose" in *Mammy and Uncle Mose*

**Week 3 - STAKES****Mon 7/13**

- Kimberly Springer, "Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women: African American Women in Postfeminist and Post-Civil Rights Popular Culture" in *Feminist Television Criticism*
- Rachel Herzing, "What Is the Prison Industrial Complex?": [http://www.publiceye.org/defendingjustice/overview/herzing\\_pic.html](http://www.publiceye.org/defendingjustice/overview/herzing_pic.html)

**Wed 7/15**

- Lakshmi Fjord, "Disasters, Race, and Disability: [Un]Seen Through the Political Lens on Katrina"

**Final Paper Topic Proposal Due****Week 4 - RESPONSE/ RESISTANCE****Mon 7/20**

- **Film:** *A Century of Black Cinema*
- Manthia Diawara, "Black American Cinema: The New Realism" in *Black American Cinema*

**Wed 7/22**

- Tricia Rose, "All Aboard the Night Train: Flow, Layering, and Rupture in Postindustrial New York" in *Black Noise*

**Week 5 - CO-OPTATION/ DEFUSION****Mon 7/27**

- **Film:** *Cry of Jazz*
- Penny Von Eschen, "Ike Gets Dizzy" in *Satchmo Blows Up the World*

**Wed 7/29**

- Amy Ongiri, “‘Black is Beautiful’: Black Power Culture, Visual Culture, and the Black Panther Party” in *Spectacular Blackness*
- **Final Note:** Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”

**Final Papers Due In-Class 7/29****Majoring or Minorin in Ethnic Studies**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact:

Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor

858-534-3277 or [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu) or visit [www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu](http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu)