**COMM 4364/6364**

**Gender in Public Discourse**

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on how gender is portrayed and performed within and through public discourse. The ways in which gender is viewed, discussed, performed and constrained through public discourse now is a reflection of the ways the US has historically discussed gender publicly. Focus will be placed on theory, topics and contexts that publicly discuss gender issues. Starting with speech texts and writings in the 1800s when social and political norms prevented many women from public discourse to current day subjects featuring multiple areas of professional, political and mediated contexts.

**Course Objectives:**

**Upon finishing this course you will be able to**

1. Identify major historical discursive acts featuring issues of gender and its evolution covered in class and describe the impact of these events.
2. Explain and differentiate various feminist, gender, rhetorical, identity, and media theoretical perspectives related to communication.
3. Use the theoretical and critical perspectives discussed in class to analyze and critique rhetoric and public discourse.
4. Improve your ability to read and understand theoretical texts
5. Take greater responsibility for your own learning.

**Required Texts:**

**TBA –**

**Required Reading Packet on E-Courseware Modules**

**Suggested Texts:**

Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald ed., *Available Means: An Anthology of Women’s Rhetoric* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001)

Jennifer A Hurley, *Women’s Rights: Great Speeches in History*, (San Diego, Greenhaven Press, 2002)

Sen. Robert Torricelli and Andrew Carroll, *In Our Own Words: Extraordinary Speeches of the American Century* (New York, Washington Square Press, 1999)

Speeches and Texts may also be found on the Text List on E-courseware

**Course Format**:

This course will mainly be conducted online. I will post readings, videos, and written information for each week’s objective. Assignments will be listed in the schedule on e-courseware. Due dates for coursework are on Thursdays and Sundays of each week. Office hours will be conducted every Tuesday during our scheduled class time, and you may also make an appt. if you can’t make office hours. I will also conduct a few synchronized discussions on Zoom for you to attend. Think of these as classes you need to be there for. There will only be a few. If you cannot attend, please let me know ahead of time.

**Course Assignments:**

This course allows you some choice in the assignments you wish to comprise the majority of your grade. A contract will be completed and turned in by the second week of class that describes your choices for the assignment. Due dates are included in the schedule.

Descriptions of assignments are listed below and in the Assignments Module. Feel free to ask questions.

**Contracts are based on the following:**

**Mandatory 25%**

Participation (20%)

Contract (5%) (pass/fail)

Choices --- You choose **75%** of your graded assignments from the following:

**Choice #1** (**20% choose one)**

Midterm

Gender Podcast

Historical Interview

Critical Essay

**Choice #2** **15% (Choose Two**)

Book/Movie Review

Intersectional Autobiography

Visual Graphic Project

Journals

**Choice #3 25% (Choose one)**

Final Exam

Creative Project

Social Justice Project

Archival Project

**ASSINGMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

**Mandatory Assignments:**

**Participation, Homework, and Attendance (weight 20%)**

**Attendance:**

Your performance in this class will be greatly affected by your presence and participation. While class roll will be taken every day, participation requires more than coming to class. You are expected to have read assigned reading and come to class prepared to discuss and summarize your homework and assignments.

You are given 3 absences (excused or unexcused) After these absences 5 points will be deducted from your homework and participation grade. It is your responsibility to discuss any absences with your professor. Any excused absence will be issued according to University of Memphis policy. The University policy may be viewed at

http://www.memphis.edu/ugcatalog/acad\_reg/attendance.php

**Participation:**

This is determined by the following:

Each week we have readings you are to three questions you have about the readings. ***These should be submitted in a drobox every week. Questions submissions are pass/fail.*** ***Questions indicating a lack of reading will not be accepted.*** From time to time you will have homework, assignments and discussions for the week that will be explained for each week. These will be due on Sundays.

**The bottom line for participation is do your readings, be prepared, be present, and be invested!**

**Contract (weight 5%)**

You are required to turn in a complete contract specifying which variable assignments you would like to include in you class evaluation and how much weight you want the assignments to be worth (where applicable). You must turn in your copy of the contract to drop box. Your instructor must approve your contract. **You may change the contract ONCE during the semester before midterm. Changes cannot be made after the midterm exam.** Note: this is a pass/fail assignment. You earn and A for turning it in on time and complete. You earn a 0 if you fail to meet the deadline or if contract is done incorrectly.

**Assignment Choices: 75% of Grade**

**CHOICE #1 20% Assignments (choose one)**

**Midterm Exam**

Will be taken online as “quiz”. Will consist of subjective and objective questions. A variety of question types are possible including matching, multiple choice, justification true and false, short answer and short essay.

**Gender Podcast (20%)**

You create three 10-15-minute podcasts (audio recording) each explaining a different course concept. Your podcast should be entertaining and utilize examples you have researched that exemplify each concept. You may use other guests in your podcast or do the entire thing yourself. This is more than “just talking” each podcast needs a point and a clear development of your ideas. You may edit or produce as needed. Feel free to use humor/games/letters from the audience, etc. during these.

**Essays (20%)**

**Note: each essay must incorporate at least 3 important quotations and/or concepts from course readings and include a bibliography. The essay may also require outside research or sources. Specific essay options are listed below:**

**Historical Interview (20%) (5-7pages)**

This assignment requires interviewing someone currently over the age of 55. You will interview them asking questions relating to how societal gendering has changed in their lifetime. Questions might include areas of professional careers, domestic division of labor, raising children, attitudes about sexuality, financial security, legal protection, etc. The interview will be followed by a paper including:

1. An introduction introducing your interviewee. Explain when and how your interview took place. You must also provide a thesis and preview of your paper that shows a synthesis of the information you gained during the interview.
2. Give a brief description of the person you interviewed covering basic demographic information and relevant biographical information.
3. Analyze the responses you got during the interview. This should not be a *mere reporting* of the information. Take at least three theoretical elements and/or class concepts and apply them to what you learn about gender communication from this person. Do you see differences in the gendered public roles from then to today?
4. Provide a solid conclusion summarizing your main ideas and suggesting how what you have learned may be important to or a catalyst for gender communication today.

**Critical Essay: 20% (5-8 pages)**

You will complete an analysis of a speech, book, scholarly journal article, film, television show, museum exhibit, commemorative monument or event, protest, social movement, website, podcast, etc.

You are to select, read, analyze and evaluate a text that is relevant to issues about gender and communication discussed in class. The text may be fiction or non-fiction. A list of some possible options is on e-courseware. As you analyze your text you should write an essay accomplishing the following:

1. Explain and describe clearly the subject to be analyzed, what it is, the context of its formation and existence, etc.
2. Explain what theories or concepts from class you will use to analyze the text. This includes what major questions you see as relevant to your discussion of gender regarding the text. Be sure to clearly explain the theoretical elements in your own works as well as through research.
3. Analyze the text using theories or concepts discussed previously. Use clear examples, quotes, and specifics from the text to back up claims regarding your analysis. All source use should be cited.
4. Draw conclusions about your text and what it says about gender based on hour analysis.
5. As you write the essay include the following:
   1. An introduction introducing the text by arguing for its relevance or appropriateness to the class and justifying its importance for analysis. You need a clear and specific thesis communicating the key argument of your essay.
   2. Briefly summarize and describe the basic content of the text.
   3. Analyze and critique the text in light of at least three of the critical concepts, themes, or issues we learned in class. But sure, that you:
      1. Define and explain the concepts you use.
      2. Evaluate the text using theoretical perspectives discussed in class
      3. Provide sufficient examples from you selected text to illustrate your points
      4. Cite the relevant class readings you use.
   4. Conclude by summarizing your main points and providing your recommendation, assessment, or judgment about the text.

**CHOICE #2 15% Assignments (choose 2)**

**Journals (weight 15%)**

Each week you will have the choice of creating your own journal topics on which to write or choosing from the 3-4 journal questions given by your instructor; you must answer al least two questions for the week. Journal entries that are not relevant to the class will not be graded. To keep parity between students, each entry must be at least 150 words (about 2/3 typed page). Journals will be graded purely on a quantitative basis: 24=A (95); 23-21=B (85); 20-18=C (75); 17-15=D (65); Less than 15 =F.

**(Journals are checked twice during the semester)**

**Book/Movie Review (5-7 pages – 15%, You may do two of these)**

Choose a book or movie dealing with issues of gender. Books should be non-fiction. Movies or documentaries may be fiction or non-fiction. Write a review of the book in light of the **theoretical** perspectives discussed in class. A variety of books and movies from various perspectives are possible such as: religious, cultural, current event, memoirs, etc. If you need some ideas about books, please see your instructor. The review should include:

1. A clear thesis, preview and introduction.
2. A brief summary of the book or movie and explanation of its relevance to the course
3. Analyze the book or movie by
   1. Explaining whether the it would be a valuable tool for this class or other classes on gender and communication.
   2. Identify at least three concepts within the book or movie that deal with issues of communication in either a public or private setting
   3. 3. Provide sufficient examples from your selected text to illustrate your points
   4. Cite the relevant research or class readings needed to support your points.

D. Conclude by summarizing your main points and providing your recommendation or judgment about the text. Would you encourage others to read the book or see the movie? Why or why not?

**Intersectionality Autobiography (15%, 5-7 pages)**

Write a compelling autobiography that shares your understanding of yourself and your identity as it is intersectional (race, socio-economic class, gender, ableism etc.) in light of the significant ideologies in your life. The essay should include:

1. A clear thesis and introduction
2. At least three relevant class concepts, issues, or themes
   1. Define the concept using course texts and quotations. Use appropriate citation reference.
   2. Explain the meaning of the concept in your own words
   3. Provide sufficient examples from your text to illustrate your points. How do the examples from your life illustrate your point?
3. A clear conclusion that summarizes your autobiography.

Your essay must be interesting, relevant and must discuss at least three of the critical concepts, themes, or issues we have used in class. Your essay must incorporate at least 3 quotations/concepts from class readings.

**Visual/Graphic Project (15%)**

The majority of this project is delivered in a visual format of your choosing and is accompanied with a written explanation of the rhetorical visual choices you made and why. The project allows you to visually communicate one major course theoretical concept (Intersectionality, Standpoint theory, Marxist feminism, Disciplining gender, Vernacular, etc.). You may use words within the visual format, but the main focus should be visual or graphic in nature. Examples might include photography, paintings, clothing design, comic books, visual posters/ads, etc.)

**CHOICE #3 25% Assignment (Choose one)**

**Final Exam (25%)**

The final exam will be primarily short answer and essay and will revolve around reading and visual material from class. The exam will be done as a take home final and due the day designated for the class final.

**Archival Project (25%)**

For this project you are to use the archives in the library and find a rhetorical text not discussed in class by someone not discussed in class that is associated with gender as performance or discourse. Then you are to research the author or speaker, the event the text was delivered, the context of the event and the audience present then summarize your findings along with an explanation as to why you think this text is important and relevant to the course. You will then include a copy of the archived text.

**Social Justice Project/Campaign (25%)**

You are go come up with a social justice campaign that focuses on a gender inequality. Using concepts or theories from the course you need to create a public event utilizing at least three types of public discourse (speeches, short documentaries, ads, murals, artwork, performances, etc.) You are to create the event and create the public discourse. You will then present a proposal and summary to the class explaining the event’s function and purpose, who the event is for, what you hope to accomplish, and how the event relates to the course. (Presentations will take place the last two weeks of class).

**Creative Project (25%)**

The assignment must be determined in consultation with instructor. Creative Projects may be individual or group. For this assignment you must include a written prospectus (due at least 30 days before your project is due) describing the project and detailing the criteria you want used in evaluating your grade for the project. The prospectus must include documentation, a rationale for the project and its relevance to the issues and content of the course, and identify ways the concept applies to course material. Projects must include a presentational component. Creative presentations will be scheduled during the last 2 weeks of class.

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**Course Policies**

There are some basic human kindnesses that need to be in place right now to help each other and this class be what it can be. To that end here are some driving course policy concepts:

1. We will conduct class in a way that respects the dignity of those with whom we learn. This is of utmost significance.
2. We will prioritize humanity, kindness, community and knowledge throughout the course. Your growth as a student and my ability to help you achieve are of major importance. Let’s help each other do those things.
3. I will fail. I will misspeak, get things wrong, and not understand. I may even

offend. I assure you none of this is intentional. I am learning too. I am open to you letting me know when I do fail. Please do so.

1. The course deals with some difficult material that may have triggers or involve thinking about hard and uncomfortable information. Be responsible with the material but also read your own reactions and reflections and be kind to yourself. If you need to talk to me and let me know you are struggling due to course subject matter, please do.
2. There are synchronous outlets to help people gain clarity as well as discuss what is needed and acknowledge our need to see and be around folks. I actually like my students and want to see them to make sure we are all making it!
3. There are asynchronous outlets to allow for flexibility in learning and schedules that may increase as the pandemic affects us all differently. Let’s face it, things are messed up – but we can deal with it.
4. University policies regarding disabilities are in affect. Please see the following links if you need clarity or assistance. I will do my best to accommodate any reasonable request from students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations offered by the University and the department, students must register with Disability Services for Students. <http://www.memphis.edu/sds/disabilitysvcs/index.php>

Please make me aware of known problems as early as possible for the most efficient and adequate help. If you encounter problems during the class let me know as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to help you get the most out of the class.

1. University policies are in affect regarding ethics and performance. See those below.

**COVID -19:**

The recent pandemic has made things more difficult for all of us. Communicate with me if you run into problems associated with managing illness, family illness, or anything that has resulted from the current economic and health crisis. You do not have to give me details or personal information you do not want to share. However, you may need some help or latitude from me that means you need to give me some idea of your situation so I can help.

**Incompletes:**

A grade of “Incomplete” is reserved for exceptional situations where students are prevented from finishing course work on time. All grades of incomplete will be left to the discretion of the instructor in regard to the student’s needs and performance. If you experience a problem during the semester that may require an incomplete grade please, see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Integrity:**

The Department of Communication is committed to upholding a high standard of academic integrity. This applies to written as well as oral presentations. All of your assignments must reflect your own effort and work. When using external sources, you are expected to cite sources appropriately as discussed in class and in citation guides. If you have any questions about academic dishonor or doubts about what constitutes a violation, please see me. If you are expected of plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment you will be turned over to the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs. For further information you may see the University policy on plagiarism at

<http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct.htm>

**Equity Policy:**

All persons regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in the Communication Department courses and program. Any harassment should be reported immediately to either the classroom instructor or Department Chair.