

FOSS, CRIME & GENDER IN MEDIA

Crime & Gender in Media

3 credits, *JOUR/EMC 4800 Seminar in Media Issues*

Fall 2016

John Bragg Building, Room TBD

M, W 12:40-2:05 p.m.

Instructor:

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Office Hours: M, W, F: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

and by appointment

Course Description

In this upper-level seminar, students develop critical perspectives of media's various constructions of gender in crime stories and representations. Students reflect on their own crime awareness, attitudes, and experiences, explore other students' perceptions of campus safety, analyze crime reporting in print and broadcasting, and work together to rewrite fictional narratives to counter gender stereotypes about criminals and victims. Through the analysis of different media products, including news, fictional film and television, popular music, comic book film adaptations, and video games, students learn about the origin and history of "rape myths" and crime-related legislation as contextually-situated, gender disparities in the "cultivation of fear," sex trafficking, and intimate partner violence, and media course that perpetuates inequality through messages about crime, criminals, victimization, and the prison system, as positioned across social intersections. This course is taught through a Feminist lens, focused on engagement, experience and critical discussion.

Goals and Objectives:

- Discuss the impact and media coverage of the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act.
- Understand that media's representations of crime have very real implications for women and men, impacting how perceptions of crime, legal consequences, victim restitution, and other aspects.
- Think about disparities in crime reporting and representation of various groups of people in terms of gender, race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and other intersections.
- Analyze media discourse using theories from Victimology and Feminist Media Studies.
- Use media narratives about different groups of women and men to understand how they have been positioned as victims and criminals.
- Explore how phones and personal technology are and have been used for crimes against people who are LGBTQI, women, and various "othered" groups.

Student Roles and Expectations

As a student in this course, you are expected to read the assigned material, actively participate in class activities, and thoroughly complete all assignments in accordance with the style guidelines listed in this syllabus. In turn, the instructor will answer questions that arise, provide timely feedback, and offer needed assistance outside of the classroom.

This class explores constructions of gender with various social intersections and its cultural connections to crime and media. Negative statements about race, class, sex, sexual orientation,

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disability, age, or religion will not be tolerated. Please choose your words carefully and be mindful of difference. Violations of this policy will affect your grade.

Required materials

Read all assigned materials for the week before Monday's class. Required readings marked with asterisks (*) are posted on the course D2L website. In addition to the scholarly articles listed here, students will also read a timely popular article/website/video each week, provided by different students in the class and posted on D2L.

Class website

This course has a Desire to Learn (D2L) site that you will need to access: <https://elearn.mtsu.edu/> Announcements for class, assigned readings and other material will only be available on our course website. It is your responsibility to check this site daily as you are accountable for all of the information posted on the site.

Electronic Devices/Distracting behavior

Cell phones, pagers, iPods, MP3 and all other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Laptops may only be used during lectures with permission from the instructor and may only be used for taking notes. Points will be deducted from your engagement grade if you choose to violate this policy.

Course Requirements

Engagement	50 points
Reflexive Reflection	50 points
Cultivation of Fear Exercise	100 points
Critical Media Discussions	100 points
In-class Assignments	100 points
Group Project	150 points
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>250 points</u>
Topic paragraph	50 pts
Final paper	200 pts
Exam #1	100 points
<u>Exam #2</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total:	1000 points

Engagement

50 points of your grade is determined by your active engagement in class discussions and activities. This grade is based on your attendance and your participation in class. Students who are actively engaged read the assigned chapters before Monday's class, arrive to class on time, pay attention during lecture, ask and answer questions, and wholeheartedly participate in discussions, debates, and other activities. These students are supportive of their peers and have a positive attitude toward learning. Students who are not actively engaged, as defined in the previous statement, will earn a lower engagement grade.

Reflexive Reflection

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In 1-2 pages, reflect on your own identity and experience with crime. What is your earliest awareness that crime exists? What media influenced this awareness? What are your experiences with crime (share within your comfort zone)? How does your media consumption influence your perceptions of crime now? How do your intersections (race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, birth order, etc.) impact your experiences and perceptions?

Cultivation of Fear Exercise

For this assignment, you will interview six students (cannot be roommates) about their perceptions of campus safety. Your subject pool should be as heterogeneous as possible, with a mix of gender, race, and background. You will inquire about the extent to which they feel safe during the day and at night, their estimate of the frequency of different types of crime on campus, and their attitudes toward campus and city police. You will write up your interview themes in a narrative, using theory and existing literature to explain the responses.

Critical Media Discussions

One objective of this course is to help you develop a critical eye toward media products. For your assigned week, you will find a salient and timely example of the topic and share it with the class. On Wednesday of that week, you will lead a short discussion on the example and its implications. More information will be available on D2L.

In-class Assignments

A portion of your final grade will be determined from points earned on short in-class and out of class writing assignments, designed to spur discussion and help students think critically about class topics. They may also be used to encourage students to do the weekly assigned reading. Since many of these assignments develop from a group learning environment, if you are absent, you cannot make them up. All assignments done outside of class must be typed and need to follow the stylistic writing guidelines.

Group Project—Rewriting the Story

As a group, you will choose a negative fictional portrayal of crime and gender. Your assignment is to rewrite the story, changing the depiction to a positive one—a challenge to the conventional stereotypes. You will present your rewritten story to the class. Further instruction can be found at the end of this syllabus.

Research Paper

In the course of the semester, each student will complete an extensive project analyzing a salient issue regarding crime, gender, and media. All students are required to turn in a topic paragraph and a write-up of their research. Further instruction can be found at the end of this syllabus.

Exams

The first exam, which is designed to measure the student's mastery of crime legislation, relevant theories, and other concepts, consists of multiple-choice, true-false, matching and short essay questions. This exam is closed-book, closed-notes. The final exam is a take-home essay, due by our final exam period. For the take-home exam, students may use notes and class material to support their answers. In lieu of the final exam, you may choose to double your Midterm Exam score.

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Late Assignments

Part of a college education is learning how to meet deadlines and be on time. For this class, assignments are due at 12:40 p.m. Short assignments will only be accepted at the assigned deadline (no late short assignments). Late research papers will be accepted, but will be penalized 10% of the total points for each 24 hour period beyond the due date. You must receive the instructor's approval to turn an assignment in late without penalty. Approval will only be given with documentation of a University-sanctioned excuse. Rare exceptions will be made. In these situations, you must notify the instructor prior to the due date and receive consent for an extension.

Make-ups

Make-up exams and assignments will not be given without a University-sanctioned excuse and permission from the instructor. You need to schedule your personal plans around class time, including trips home. Travel arrangements should be made so that you are available for exam time.

Extra Credit

No extra work may be submitted in order to raise one's grade. Extra credit opportunities may be available from time to time, but only if they are open to the entire class, do not disadvantage those who do not participate, and enhance the objectives of the course.

Grades

In an academic course, points are earned, not given. The amount of points a student earns determines his or her grade for the course. Grades will not be "rounded up." For this course, the grades (A, B+, B, B-, C, D, F) will be given for this course.

895 points—100 points	= A
860 points—894 points	= B+
828 points—859 points	= B
795 points—827 points	= B-
695 points—794 points	= C
595 points—694 points	= D
Below 594 points	= F

Grade Questions

The instructor is happy to answer questions and concerns about grades earned. Note that due to FERPA regulations, grades cannot be discussed via email, on the telephone, with other students present, or with anyone who is not the student, including parents. To receive additional feedback about a graded assignment or exam, please take at least 48 hours after you receive the graded assignment to think about your questions before you visit the instructor to discuss your questions. All grade questions must occur within two weeks of when the graded assignment was returned in class. Questions asked after this point may be asked in order to improve a future assignment or to prepare for an exam, but no grade changes will be considered after the two week mark.

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Academic Honesty

All work turned in for this course must be done exclusively by you for this course. Passing another's work off as your own, cheating, and plagiarism are all examples of academic dishonesty. Any information taken from another text must be cited and paraphrased. Directly copying from another text, including website material, without using quotations and proper citation is considered plagiarism. Students guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment or exam and will have to redo the work with academic integrity in order to pass the class. If extensive or repeated cases of academic dishonesty are committed, you may be subject to persecution under the university's academic dishonesty policy and fail this course.

Do you have a lottery scholarship?

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a **cumulative** TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 **cumulative** GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a **semester** GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

Students with Disabilities

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the Disability & Access Center (DAC) website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu.

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: Aug. 22, 24th

Reflexivity: Positioning yourself in the discussion

Reflexive Reflection due on Aug. 24th

Read

*Heidensohn, F., & Gelsthorpe, L. (2012). *Gender and crime* (pp. 336-369). In Oxford University Press.

*Selected readings from Barak, G., Leighton, P., & Cotton, A. (2014). *Class, race, gender, and crime: The social realities of justice in America*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Week 2: Aug. 29, 31st

Crime and campus culture

Read

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- *Chekwa, C., Thomas Jr, E., & Jones, V. J. (2013). What Are College Students' Perceptions About Campus Safety?. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, 6(3), 325-332.
- *Cantalupo, N. C. (2011). Burying our heads in the sand: lack of knowledge, Knowledge avoidance and the persistent problem of campus peer sexual violence. *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*, 43, 205.
- *Gomez, C. (2015). Show community 'rape culture's stereotypes don't apply to your campus. *Campus Security Report*, 11(12), 1-7.

Week 3: Sept. 7th (no class on Sept. 5th)

The Cultivation of Fear: The history of crime and gender constructions

Read

- *Callanan, V., & Rosenberger, J. S. (2015). Media, Gender, and Fear of Crime. *Criminal Justice Review*, 0734016815573308.
- *Schafer, J. A., Huebner, B. M., & Bynum, T. S. (2006). Fear of crime and criminal victimization: Gender-based contrasts. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34(3), 285-301.
- *Roche, S. P., Pickett, J. T., & Gertz, M. (2015). The Scary World of Online News? Internet News Exposure and Public Attitudes Toward Crime and Justice. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 1-22.

Week 4: Sept. 12, 14th

Constructing gender and criminals

Cultivation of Fear Exercise due on Sept. 12th

Read

- *Dye, M. H. (2011). The gender paradox in prison suicide rates. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 21(4), 290-307.
- *Carbone-López, K. C. (2005). The 'Usual Suspects' How Race Affects Decisions to Report Rape Victimization. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, 3(4), 29-47.
- *Whiteley, K. (2012). Monstrous, Demonic and Evil: Media Constructs of Women Who Kill. *The Harms of Crime Media: Essays on the Perpetuation of Racism, Sexism and Class Stereotypes*, 91.

Week 5: Sept. 19, 21st

Reporting crime: How gender influences media frames

Topic paragraph for the Research Paper due on Sept. 21st

Read

- *Franiuk, R., Seefeldt, J. L., Cepress, S. L., & Vandello, J. A. (2008). Prevalence and Effects of Rape Myths in Print Journalism The Kobe Bryant Case. *Violence Against Women*, 14(3), 287-309.
- *Chakraborti, N., & Hardy, S. J. (2015). LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions.

Week 6: Sept. 26, 28th

Crime in popular music: Perpetuating violence against women

Read

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- *Rebollo-Gil, G., & Moras, A. (2012). Black women and black men in hip hop music: misogyny, violence and the negotiation of (white-owned) space. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 45(1), 118-132.
- *Kurzban, R. (2012). Cheatin' hearts & loaded guns: The high fitness stakes of country music lyrics. *Review of General Psychology*, 16(2), 187.
- *Selected readings from Johnson, B., & Cloonan, M. (2013). *Dark side of the tune: Popular music and violence*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd..

Week 7: Oct. 3, 5th

Fictionalizing crime—The “CSI Effect,” Midterm Exam

Midterm Exam on Oct. 5th

Read

- * Mopas, M. (2007). Examining the ‘CSI effect’ through an ANT lens. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 3(1), 110-117.
- * Foss, K. (2010). Choice or Chance? Gender, Victimization, and Responsibility in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

Week 8: Oct. 12th (no class on Oct. 10th)

Fictionalizing prison: Caged birds or captured psychopaths?

Read

- *Kerman, P. (2011). Are you gonna go my way? In *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.
- *Selected readings from Mason, P. (Ed.). (2013). *Captured by the Media*. New York: Routledge.

Week 9: Oct. 17, 19th

The damsel in distress: Gender & violence in comic books & video games

Read

- *Beck, V. S., Boys, S., Rose, C., & Beck, E. (2012). Violence against women in video games: A prequel or sequel to rape myth acceptance?. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 0886260512441078.
- *Fox, J., & Potocki, B. (2015). Lifetime Video Game Consumption, Interpersonal Aggression, Hostile Sexism, and Rape Myth Acceptance A Cultivation Perspective. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 0886260515570747.
- *Stabile, C. A. (2009). “Sweetheart, This Ain't Gender Studies”: Sexism and Superheroes. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(1), 86-92.

Week 10: Oct. 24, 26th

Crime, gender and othered groups: Representing crime, LGBTQI, and disability

Read

- *Miles-Johnson, T. (2013). LGBTI Variations in Crime Reporting. *Sage open*, 3(2), 2158244013490707.
- *Selected readings from Ben-Moshe, L., Chapman, C., & Carey, A. C. (2014). *Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 11: Oct. 31, Nov. 2nd

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Sex trafficking and the media

Read

- *Johnston, A., Friedman, B., & Sobel, M. (2015). Framing an Emerging Issue: How US Print and Broadcast News Media Covered Sex Trafficking, 2008–2012. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1(3), 235-254.
- *Barnett, B. (2015). Dividing women: the framing of trafficking for sexual exploitation in magazines. *Feminist Media Studies*, (ahead-of-print), 1-18.

Week 12: Nov. 7, 9th

Covering and portraying intimate partner violence

Read

- *Gillespie, L. K., Richards, T. N., Givens, E. M., & Smith, M. D. (2013). Framing deadly domestic violence why the media's spin matters in newspaper coverage of femicide. *Violence against women*, 1077801213476457.
- * Nettleton, P. H. (2011). Domestic violence in men's and women's magazines: Women are guilty of choosing the wrong men, men are not guilty of hitting women. *Women's studies in communication*, 34(2), 139-160.
- * Greenberg, K. (2012). Still hidden in the closet: Trans women and domestic violence. *Berkeley J. Gender L. & Just.*, 27, 198.

Week 13: Nov. 14, 16th

Rewriting the narrative: Empowering gender in media discourse

- *Fan fiction assignments—Instructions on D2L

Week 14: Nov. 21st (no class on Nov. 23rd)

Crime and technology—voyeurism & consent in the age of social media

Read

- *Boux, H. J., & Daum, C. W. (2015). At the Intersection of Social Media and Rape Culture: How Facebook Postings, Texting and Other Personal Communications Challenge the Real Rape Myth in the Criminal Justice System. *U. Ill. JL Tech. & Pol'y*, 149.
- *Powell, A. (2010). Configuring consent: Emerging technologies, unauthorized sexual images and sexual assault. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 43(1), 76-90.

Week 15: Nov. 28, Nov. 30th

Wrap-up and presentations of research papers

Research paper due on Nov. 28th at 12:40 p.m.

Take-home Final Exam due during our Final Exam scheduled time (TBD).

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Group Project—Rewriting the Story

Choose an existing negative fictional portrayal related to crime and gender. Your assignment is to rewrite the story, changing the depiction to a positive one—a challenge to the conventional stereotypes. You will preserve elements of the original storyline, but change other details to contradict stereotypes. The representation must be a fictional TV episode, made-for-TV movie or film, and easily available. Each group will choose a different representation. The presentations should be no longer than 8-10 minutes.

Example: the *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* episode “Too Tough to Die” begins with an African American woman walking alone in a dark parking garage. When she reaches her car, she drops her keys. As she bends over to pick up the keys, she is attacked. In the next shot, her body is on the side of the road with most of her clothes torn off. Doctors declare her “brain-dead” and she is shown on a ventilator for the remainder of the episode.

The rewrite: A Caucasian man walks alone in a parking garage. When he reaches his car, he drops his keys. As he bends over to pick up the keys, he is attacked. In the next shot, her body is on the side of the road with most of his clothes torn off. Doctors declare him “brain-dead” and he is shown on a ventilator for the remainder of the episode. The lead CSI, an African American woman, cracks the case and catches the assailant, another Caucasian man. The victim's gender is not mentioned.

Process:

1. Select your TV episode, made-for-TV movie or film. The storyline should focus on crime and violence.
2. As a group, watch the entire episode or film. Make notes on the positive and negative aspects of the character, storyline, and overall messages about crime and gender. If you were rewriting this storyline to challenge stereotypes, what would you keep? What would you change? Note: you must preserve enough elements of the original story that you don't completely lose it. For example, you may not change the time period or more than one key character.
3. Sketch out the new storyline. While you don't need to rewrite the script, the more details, the better.
4. Create a presentation to convey your rewritten message to the class.

The Presentation:

1. Introduce your original TV episode or film to the class, using visuals and/or the trailer or teaser. Briefly state the year, genre, and premise.
2. Explain the positive and negative messages in the original representation and what you would change.
3. Give a detailed description of the new storyline and what the new messages about crime, criminals, or victimization would be, using visuals.
4. Speculate on how your storyline could contribute to changing perceptions of crime and gender. How will this new storyline be received with the viewing audience?

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Crime & Gender in Media Research Paper

In the course of the semester, each student will complete an extensive project analyzing a salient issue regarding media, crime, and gender. All students are required to turn in a topic paragraph and a write-up of their research. Your analysis of your chosen topic should be in essay form, follow the stylistic guidelines listed in the syllabus, and be no more than 6 pages. You need to have in-text citations and a bibliography. Only books and journal articles will be accepted as sources for this project.

Some ideas

- Compare media treatment of a specific group in crime stories across two time periods.
- Analyze an ethical dilemma or other controversial topic in covering or fictionalizing violence.
- Conduct a cross-cultural media study of gender and crime
- Extend one of our weekly topics, examining a new angle, media portrayal, or group
- Select a crime event and compare its news coverage, social media presence, and fictionalization
- Trace the history of specific crime-related legislation, including its origin and media coverage
- Other (instructor-approved) issue

Guidelines

- The topic must incorporate media coverage or representations.
- Compare “apples” to “apples.”
- You need to include at least 5 sources in addition to your media examples.
- For the topic paragraph: include a description, plus specify your time period, aspect of gender (are you focusing on women? Men? Trans”), and media examples.