

**Hugh Downs School of Human Communication (HDSHC)
COM 316: Gender & Communication**

**Section #12380
T/Th 9:00am-10:15am
LL 150**

**Section #12174
T/Th 12:00-1:15pm
WXL R A308**

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SYLLABUS ANNENDUM

Podcast Assignments

Episodes should be listened to BEFORE coming to class on the respective date.

All of these episodes can also be streamed / downloaded for free from podcast apps on Android and iPhone. If using an app, I recommend queuing them all up and then listening on-the-go (when driving to campus, at the gym, etc.) so you can maximize efficiency!

- Week 3 (1/23): [First story in "The New Norm" from Invisibilia](#) (39 minutes -- 3:13-41:30)
 - **Themes:** Hypermasculine occupations and the consequences of communication norms (increased rates of injury and death), oil rigs workers, retraining masculine emotion.
- Week 3 (1/25): ["The Gondolier" from Radiolab](#) (57 minutes)
 - **Themes:** The "first female Gondolier" in Venice, transgender identity, pronoun use in dominant and marginal media, heterosexism and cissexism.
- Week 5 (2/6): ["Queer Fashion as Activism" from Stuff Mom Never Told You](#) (1 hour)
 - **Themes:** The personal as political when getting dressed; the importance of social media in helping shape communities and identities through a queer-fashion landscape.
- Week 5 (2/8): [Act Two of "If You Don't Have Anything Nice to Say, SAY IT IN ALL CAPS" from This American Life](#) (8.5 minutes)
 - **Themes:** Vocal fry (the "buzz" in the back of the throat when someone (usually Millennial) says, "Okayyyyyy," online harassment of female radio hosts / producers.
- Week 7 (2/20): ["The Council of Dads" from The Moth Radio Hour](#) (14 minutes)
 - **Themes:** Fatherhood, masculinity, cancer diagnoses, father figures for daughters after biological fathers' passing.
- Week 7 (2/22): [Yes Yes No segment in "Raising the Bar" from ReplyAll](#) (9.5 minutes -- 0:00-9:25)
 - **Themes:** Pop culture, Twitter, "the manosphere" (toxic masculinity on the Internet), Star Wars' casting a woman as the lead protagonist casting men of color in supporting roles.
- Week 10 (3/13): [Prologue & Act One of "Once More, With Feeling" from This American Life](#) (19 minutes)
 - **Themes:** Gender harassment, catcalling, catcallers' justifications, linguistic resistance.
- Week 12 (3/27): ["The Lady Vanishes" from Revisionist History](#) (33 minutes)

- **Themes:** The “token” phenomenon in art and politics; how we might systematically perpetuate discrimination by trying to alleviate it.
- Week 13 (4/3): [Yes Yes No segment in "Disappeared" from ReplyAll](#) (14 minutes -- 19:45-32:58)
 - **Themes:** LGBTQ youth, “ball culture,” the cultural appropriation of language, linguistic erasure of marginalized communities.
- Week 14 (4/12): ["Why Men Hate Going to Church" from The Art of Manliness](#) (50 minutes)
 - **Themes:** The "gender gap" in the Christian church (i.e., who is in the pews, who tends to fulfill what leadership roles, the directionality and content of worship songs, etc., and how all of those things have historically shifted over time) and what many churches are doing to involve more men in the church.
 - **NOTE:** The title of this episode is slightly misleading, as it is not harsh or anti-religious. The episode profiles a book by the same name that was a Christian bestseller, written by David Murrow, which has been profiled on networks such as PBS, NBC, and FOX.

Small Group Discussion Board Assignments

GDB #1 (Theoretical Approaches + Essentialism)

1. Which of the four approaches to theorizing about gender do you find most useful or beneficial (biological, psychological, cultural, critical)? Why?

2. Using the following articles/images, identify at least one example of essentialism (keep in mind, the author/company could be engaging in essentialism, or the subject of the article/image could be fighting against subtle essentialism). Explain why the instance(s) is an example of essentialism (think: peeling back the layers). In doing so, articulate why is it important to NOT essentialize when speaking or thinking about sex and gender; be sure that you are offering an explanation of your understanding of the term in your response.

- Humans of New York: <https://www.facebook.com/humansofnewyork/photos/a.102107073196735.4429.102099916530784/1335897216484375/?type=3&theater>
- Rhonda Rousey: <http://www.rollingstone.com/sports/features/ronda-rousey-the-worlds-most-dangerous-woman-20150528>
- Parenting: <https://pulptastic.com/dads-vs-moms/>
- Children's Clothing: <http://jezebel.com/to-old-navy-toddler-boys-are-ghostbusters-and-toddler-1785916532>

GDB #2 (Power + Language)

The “You Don’t Say?” Campaign was created by Duke University in 2015 to highlight various slang or slurs (many of which are gendered or related to sex or sexual orientation) to "raise awareness about language marginalizing and offensive to particular identities.” After visiting the following link about the campaign, what connections can you make between the campaign and our class discussions of power and language, especially sexist language? Specifically, you should use these connections to consider the value (or not) of this type of campaign, and similar others enacted by various colleges.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/danielk74/duke-student-athletes-take-a-powerful-stance-on-ma-o7hn>

NOTE: The comments at the conclusion of this article may also be illuminating (despite what everyone says about "never read the comments"). You should develop your initial response independent of those in the comments, but they may offer different perspectives to consider.

GDB #3 (Toxic Masculinity)

Whenever we cover verbal and nonverbal communication in gender, it's important to explore how language and socialized behavior affect all groups of people. MTV recently released a short film titled, "American Male," that explores how oppressive and exhausting masculinity in particular can be for young men. The film has quickly garnered critical acclaim for "tackling toxic masculinity in a powerful way." As you watch the film...

(1) What do you notice about how language is used (see Slide #3 in the "Gendered Verbal Communication" packet)?

(2) What connections can you make to any of the following concepts (take your pick!) relative to the character's internal struggles against prescribed masculinity?

- Gendered speech communities (Slide #12 and #14 in the "Gendered Verbal Communication" packet)
- Language and play (Slide #13 in the "Gendered Verbal Communication" packet)
- Types of nonverbal communication (Slide #3-5 in the "Gendered Nonverbal Communication" packet)
- Performativity and Passing (Slide #7 in the "Gendered Nonverbal Communication" packet)

(3) Given your observations above, how well do you think the film illuminates these societal pressures? Feel free to draw upon personal experiences here, if applicable.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ-Pyhk7GQA>

GDB #4 (Underrepresentation & Misogyny in Media, Education & the Workplace)

Step 1: Read the following articles – Women of Color in Tech

(<http://www.wocintechchat.com/blog/wocintechphotos>--look through the photo album too)

and 'Spectre' interview with Daniel Craig (<https://www.redbulletin.com/us/us/culture/daniel-craig-tells-us-what-he-really-thinks-of-bond>). The content of these links may not be inherently or obviously related, but both illustrate particular media portrayals of gender—that of underrepresentation and hegemonic masculinity/misogyny.

Step 2: What other instances of stereotyping, misappropriation/representation, or erasure of gender have you noticed in the media, whether that be film, TV (shows or commercials), radio, or advertising? Provide at least one specific example (preferably one that your colleagues can easily 'Google' when writing their response to you). What, if anything, do you find inherently problematic in these media portrayals, or in the ones that #WOCintechchat and Daniel Craig are responding to?

GDB #5 (The Hunting Ground Reflection)

Yesterday in class, we watched the documentary *The Hunting Ground*. This GDB is an opportunity to reflect, to “unload,” and to critically consider what we witnessed on film. In your reflection, you might consider: What about the film has lingered with you since this morning? What elements struck you or were most difficult to witness? How did gendered verbal and nonverbal communication, including essentialism and rape culture, emerge in the film? How does the film challenge your participation in college life (i.e., what are *tangible* steps we might take to eradicate the epidemic of sexual assault on college campuses)?

GDB #6 (Parents’ Work)

After visiting the following links and reading about parents who work in and outside of the home, post a response that explores the following questions: From your experiences and observations, what are the benefits and/or challenges associated with both parents working outside of the home? In your opinion, what impact does gender have on the decisions that families make about work choices and how might that change in single-parent homes? What other influences are part of the discussion (class, sexuality, age, etc..)?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/06/upshot/more-fathers-who-stay-at-home-by-choice.html>

<http://www.hbs.edu/news/articles/Pages/mcginns-working-mom.aspx>

(The following NPR story featuring a Hugh Downs School faculty member, Dr. Sarah Tracy, may also be of interest to you as background info: <http://www.npr.org/2014/08/18/339830815/more-men-put-ambitions-on-back-burner-for-their-partners-careers>)

GDB #7 (White Feminism & Intersectionality a la Twitter)

Read the following story from *The Guardian*: http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jul/22/taylor-swift-nicki-minaj-faux-feminist-tone-deaf?CMP=fb_gu

(See [this preceding article](#) for the few remaining tweets not pictured in the article above.)

- (1) Do you agree with the headline, "...faux-feminist and tone deaf"? Why or why not?
- (2) Deconstruct Nicki Minaj's critique--what do you think she is trying to point out about the music industry and the bodies that are/aren't celebrated?
- (3) How are white feminism and intersectionality presented or not presented in the exchange of tweets?

GDB #8 (Feminism & LGBTQIA Acronym)

Respond to one (or both if you want) of the following questions:

- (1) Would you call yourself a feminist? Why or why not?
- (2) Does the acronym LGBTQIA work for you? Why or why not?

GDB #9 (Closing Reflection)

This final Group Discussion Board is an “open” prompt, meaning there are no special links/articles to view. Instead, please use this space to highlight any topic/question that you feel hasn’t been covered in this course, or to expound upon something which you feel deserved more attention. In general, take this chance to leave any lasting impressions or points of critical thought about gender and communication.