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Women in Journalism History

Jour. 4800
Spring 2008
Dr. Jane Marcellus

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Texts

Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* 2nd ed. (State College, Pennsylvania: Strata, 2003)

Jean Marie Lutes, *Front-Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880-1930*. (Cornell UP, 2006)

There will also be supplemental readings made available through D2L or eReserve.

Course Description

In this seminar, we will examine the lives and work of women journalists from the past. By reading about their lives, and by reading excerpts from their work, we will become more familiar with the roles they have played in the development of the field. Along the way, we will also explore critical questions related to our topic, namely this one: Is journalism gendered male? What might that mean? Why would we ask? Grounded in the assumption that sex is biologically determined but gender is socially constructed, we will ask how ideas about gender have shaped the field and prescribed both men's and women's roles. Given these prescriptions, how have women succeeded or not succeeded in making their voices heard? Bringing history into the present, we will ask whether and how gender makes a difference in journalistic careers today. How does it affect *your* experience with journalism, as readers and/or as student journalists, whether you are male or female?

We will examine these issues through readings, discussion, some lecture, and writing. You will contribute to discussions both in class and an online through our D2L site, and you will develop a documented research paper on a female journalist or appropriate publication from the past.

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By the End of the Course You Should

- Be familiar the lives and work of a number of female journalists
- Have a better understanding of how ideas about gender have shaped the field
- Have learned some critical ways to think about media, history, and gender
- Have gained more experience in writing a documented research paper

Requirements

Come to class.

Be an active participant by completing readings before class and taking part in discussions through D2L and in class.

Do all assigned work for the course on time. Detailed course assignment sheets will be made available through D2L, but here is an overview of the work for the course:

1. Weekly online discussions about the class issues and weekly critical thinking terms. Grade based on overall quality of participation. See details under "Assignments" on D2L. 20% (15% for weekly posts; 5% for term).
2. Two exams over assigned readings, in-class lectures, and any supplemental materials (videos, etc.) 25% each (50% total)
3. A documented research paper on a female journalist or a publication written and edited by women, plus a class presentation on the project. 30% (25% for paper; 5% for presentation)

Plan to participate in class because doing so is a joy, and you'll learn more! Participation may raise or lower your grade, particularly in borderline cases, but I'm expecting us to create an environment where everyone does it because they want to.

All assigned work must be completed to pass the course.

Any form of cheating, including plagiarizing, will result in an F for that assignment and possibly the course. It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and the rules for citing others' work, according to MTSU policy.

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Schedule

TTP is *Taking Their Place*, our main text. FPG is *Front Page Girls*. "Supp" refers to supplemental readings, most of which will be made available on D2L, though some may be on Walker Library eReserve. This schedule is subject to change *with* notice announced during class. You are responsible for knowing about announced changes.

Wk	Topic	Readings	Due
1	Introductions & expectations. Women and work in historical context. Is journalism gendered?	Marcellus: ch. 1 <i>Business Girls and Two-Job Wives</i> and "Is Newspaper Work Healthful for Women?" (both D2L)	1 st discussion post (after Wk. 1, due by 5 p.m. each Thurs)
2	Reaching a Young Nation	TTP: All of Part I (pp. 5-31)	Discussion post
3	Voicing Women's Experience I	TTP: Ladies' Periodicals Supp: from <i>Women and Print Culture</i>	Discussion post Research paper proposal
4	Voicing Women's Experience II	TTP: Suffrage Press and Correspondents Supp: Steiner, "Finding Community in Nineteenth-Century Suffrage Periodicals"	Discussion post
5	Making a Place in Spite of Obstacles I	TTP: Lucy Smith and Ida B. Wells FPG: The African American Newswoman	Discussion post Exam I posted
6	Making a Place II	TTP: Stunt Reporters and Sob Sisters FPG: Into the Madhouse with Girl Stunt Reporters and The Original Sob Sisters	Discussion post Exam I due
7	Making a Place III	TTP: Investigative Reporting, Metropolitan Journalism, and War Correspondence Supp: from Dorr, <i>A Woman of Fifty</i> Video on Ida Tarbell	Discussion post Research paper progress report
8	Making a Place IV	TTP: Politics and Commentary and Advocates of Social Justice	Discussion post
9	Seeking Empowerment I	TTP: Newspaper Families, Early Broadcast. Supp: From <i>It's One O'Clock and Here is Mary Margaret McBride</i>	Discussion post
10	Seeking Empowerment II	TTP: Women's Pages, Alternative Media, Women's Magazines Supp: Marcellus, <i>Business Girls and Two-Job Wives</i> , ch. 8 & <i>Independent Woman</i> excerpts	Discussion post
11	Doris Fleischman and Public Relations History	Susan Henry, Meg Lamme articles on Doris Fleischman	Discussion post Exam II posted
12	Envisioning Greater Opportunity	TTP: All of Part V	Discussion post Exam II due
13	Going Global	Video:	Draft conferences
14	Your work	Paper presentations; celebrate (food?)	Papers due