

C O U R S E G U I D E

Stereotypes and the Media

Gerda Lederer
White Plains, New York

and

Ingrid Volkmer
Bielefeld, Germany

DIAL
The New School
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Course Description:

STEREOTYPES AND THE MEDIA ACROSS CULTURES

This interdisciplinary, cross-cultural course will focus on stereotypes and the media. The participants will be students in Germany and in the United States, the instructional moderators will be faculty members in both countries (at the University of Bielefeld, Germany and the New School, New York). Conducted in English, students will examine together similarities and differences of stereotypes inherent in the media presentation of "reality" in the two cultures. Following an introduction to the theories of stereotypes, students will be encouraged to select a topic discussed and to conduct research together with class members across the Atlantic. The findings of each intercultural team of participants will be presented to the class for discussion and used to analyze how cultures define themselves by means of the stereotypes they create.

Instructors Biographies:

Dr. Ingrid Volkmer is an Associate Professor at the School of Education, University of Bielefeld, Germany. She teaches in the field of media studies. Her special areas are International/Global Communication, Pop Culture and Media and News Journalism. She has published in all of these areas in Germany and internationally. Besides the academic work, she is also a consultant for Global Media Consultants, London and serves on the advisory board of Nickelodeon, Germany.

Dr. Gerda Lederer was born in Vienna and emigrated to the United States during childhood. In 1980, she received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in sociology and social psychology and has since engaged in cross-cultural research on authoritarianism, dogmatism, anti-semitism, and political protest behavior in East and West Germany, in Austria, in Moscow, and in the United States. Her work was supported by grants from the Institute for Conflict Research in Vienna and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, the German National Science Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), and the Thyssen Foundation in Germany. Her findings have been published in numerous books and articles in the United States and in Germany.

Letter from the Instructors:

Welcome to our "virtual classroom"! As you know, since its inception DIAL classes have brought students together from different locations in the New York area and occasionally from much further afield. The geometric increase in course offerings and in student enrolment in our distance learning program bear witness to the success of the method. But as far as we know, this is a "first"! We are excited to welcome participants from (at least) two cultures, from both sides of the Atlantic: in our class we have German students studying at the University of Bielefeld (Bielefeld is in West Germany, about 80 miles north-east of Cologne) and American students of the New School for Social Research.

We think the subject of our course, the study of stereotypes, is particularly well suited to reflecting on our own culture and to seeing our culture as it looks to others, from outside. We hope that you will encounter each other with an open mind and that you will get to know each other with that strange intimacy cyberspace seems to promote. We hope that you will work together in inter-cultural pairs and groups as the semester progresses and that you will learn from each other and that we will also learn from you.

We at the New School thank the German students for the extra effort they must make to keep up with a class conducted in English. Your ability and your willingness make the cooperation possible. We - your instructors - speak both German and English. If you don't understand something, please ask. We will try to use other words to explain or we will translate. If you find it hard to express yourself in English, that's alright, too. Write it in German and we will translate.

And one more thing: Like many Americans, we at the New School are informal. We would like you to call us by our first names and we would like the privilege of "speaking" that way with you. If you have a problem with that, please let us know!

We are all part of an experiment. We are excited and happy to have this opportunity and you can help make it a success by taking an active part and by "speaking up".

See you on line!

Gerda (-8 and Ingrid :-)

(that is our cyberspace mood barometer, as you can recognize, Gerda wears glasses and Ingrid does not and we are both smiling at you.)

Course outline:

(This course will be on-line from January 27th to March 29th, 1997.)

Our textbooks will be:

Gail Dines & Jean M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race and Class in Media, A Text-Reader*. Sage Publications, 1995.

Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1954/1988.

Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1963.

The following books and articles will be made available and used as needed during the semester:

Kurt H. Stapf, Wolfgang Stroebe, Klaus Jonas, *Amerikaner ueber Deutschland und die Deutschen*, (Americans about Germany and the Germans) Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986.

Horst-Alfred Heinrich, *Diligent or Subservient? A word list of typical German features*. Unpublished paper by permission of the author, 1995.

W.G.Stephan, C.W.Stephan, T.Stefanenko, V.Ageyev, M.Abalakina, and L.Coates-Shrider, *Measuring Stereotypes: A Comparison of Methods Using Russian and American Samples*. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol.56, No.1, pp.54-64, 1993.

The following videos should be obtained (rented or bought) by the students:

"Baghdad Cafe ("Out of Rosenheim")
"Night on Earth"

Week 1 starting January 27th:

Orientation week: Introduction to the DIAL Program - You will be introduced to our distance learning environment and we will introduce ourselves to each other. While this is going on, you might look ahead to

reader "Gender, Race and Class in Media" by reading the short introduction that precedes each of the seven parts the book consists of. Decide which one you want to work on, if possible with one or more class participants on the other side of the Atlantic. Your own media use and analyses will be the core of your report and class discussion.

Week 6 starting March 3rd:

Topic: Parts I and II of "Gender, Race and Class in Media" ("The Cultural Studies Approach" and "Advertising") will be the subject of our study. Student pairs will present summaries, evaluations and analyses of their reading and illustrate with examples from their experiences.

Week 7 starting March 10th:

Topic: Parts V and VI of "Gender, Race and Class in Media" ("The Cultural Studies Approach" and "Advertising") will be the subject of our study. Student pairs will present summaries, evaluations and analyses of their reading and illustrate with examples from their experiences.

Week 8 starting March 17th:

Topic: Students will view and analyze either on line an episode of the film "Night on Earth" or the film "Baghdad Cafe" ("Out of Rosenheim") from the vantage point of the theories and categories discussed in the course and their own insight. Suggestion: Read "Stigma" and analyze the Paris episode of "Night on Earth".

Week 9 starting March 24th:

This final week will be used to tie up loose ends, finish discussing presentations and offering criticisms and suggestions relevant to the course content, the DIAL technology and the cross-cultural cooperation. What can be done in future semesters for an encore?

Course Requirements and Criteria for Grading

our course content by reading chapters 1-4 (pp.3-67) in Allport, "The Nature of Prejudice".

Week 2 starting February 3rd:

Topic: What are stereotypes? We examine definitions and theories relating to stereotypes and take a brief look at the role of the mass media.

Allport, chapters 1-4 (pp.3-67) (see above)

Allport, chapters 12 & 13, (pp.189-218).

Week 3 starting February 10th:

Topic: How are the "scapegoats" (Suendenboecke, Pruegelknaben) chosen? And are some personalities more subject to prejudice than others?

Allport, chapter 15 (pp.243-260)

Allport, chapters 25-28 (pp.395-457)

Week 4 starting February 17th:

Topic: Attributes associated with a national group - examining our prejudices: What do Americans think of Germans? What do Germans think of Germans? How can we measure stereotypes? Read Stephan et al., Measuring Stereotypes. Also, the course participants in Germany will read "Amerikaner ueber Deutschland und die Deutschen" (Americans about Germany and the Germans); the course participants in the US will read "Diligent or subservient? A word list of typical German features". Then we report to each other on our own opinions and compare notes.

Week 5 starting February 24th:

Topic: Stereotypes and the media: Examine our voluminous

Class Participation

Students are expected to log-on regularly (three times a week if possible, but at least twice a week) and to keep current on all assigned required reading. Class participation consists of weekly responses to the subject under discussion. These may consist of a short paragraph or be as long as a page or two. You can report on some optional reading you have done on the subject, you can respond to the instructor's text or to a fellow student's comment, or to a point in the assigned reading. Your participation can be in the form of questions, comments, or examples. (35%)

Term Paper

Students are expected to select one of the subjects addressed in the topics for weeks 6, 7, and 8 and, if possible collaborating with one or two other students, preferably from across the Atlantic, prepare a paper of about 12 pages to be posted on-line by March 23rd (35%). The student authors are then encouraged to answer questions and monitor the discussion resulting from their paper (15%). In preparation, students are encouraged to indicate their interest in the subject for their paper by the end of the fifth week. Suggestions can then be made for collaborative efforts. By the seventh week an outline of the paper should be submitted (15%).