

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: GENDER AND SEXIST LANGUAGE IN ADVERTISING AND THE MEDIA

COURSE DATA

Degree	European Track
Academic Year	2026-2027
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	Department of Translation, Interpreting and Multilingual Communication
Language of instruction	English
Name and email of instructor	Patricia Martin Matas patricia.martin@comillas.edu

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This course critically explores the intersection of language, gender, and media, with a particular focus on how advertising and media shape, reinforce, or challenge gender stereotypes and contribute to gender inequality. Moving away from these practices involves many actors in the communication process. This course fosters awareness of the socio-cultural power of language in media discourse and equips students with analytical tools to advocate for more inclusive and equitable communication.

CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

1: Introduction to gender and sexist language

2: Advertising and the construction of stereotypes. Analysis of visual language in advertising.

3: Sexist language in print and digital press. The role of media in perpetuating or challenging gender roles.

4: Inclusive language: strategies and controversies.

METHODOLOGY

This online course is taught in a hybrid format. Half of the sessions will be synchronous and half asynchronous. Students will analyze contemporary and historical examples from different platforms (television, print, digital...), identifying linguistic and visual strategies that perpetuate or resist gender bias.

Activities inside the classroom include: debates about required readings, case studies and practical workshops. These activities are designed to promote analytical thinking and collaborative learning.

Activities outside the classroom include: video lectures, weekly readings, case studies, individual or work projects. These activities allow students to deepen their understanding at their own pace and apply key concepts to real-world contexts.

The course concludes with an in-class final exam, assessing students' ability to critically evaluate and apply course content.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
CLASS PARTICIPATION	– Frequency and quality of contributions. – Ability to ask relevant and insightful questions. – Ability to connect theoretical concepts to practical examples. – Respectful and productive engagement with peers.	20%



CASE STUDIES / ACTIVITIES	– Capacity to apply theoretical concepts to practical examples effectively. – Ability to clearly analyze provided examples of advertisements or media content regarding gender representations. – Appropriate academic language, grammar, vocabulary, coherence, etc. – Critical and analytical depth regarding concepts discussed in class. – Integration of academic references and appropriate citations when necessary.	30%
FINAL EXAM	– Correct identification / understanding of key concepts. – Precise use of terminology related to gender studies and linguistic analysis.	50%

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material, or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not being able to pass the course in the ordinary assessment period.**
- The **use of AI** to create complete works or relevant parts, without citing the source or the tool or without being expressly allowed in the description of the work, will be considered plagiarism and regulated according to the General Regulations of the University.
- At the beginning of the term the professor will announce the **office hours** for the course. Tutorials are an essential part of the development of the course, and students may attend tutorials during the course within those office times, but it is recommended that they are arranged in advance with the professor.
- Any non-face-to-face **learning activity** that requires the **submission** of an assignment/document, etc. will be submitted by the student through Moodle, always in PDF format.
- To be able to take the final exam, students must not have missed **more than one third of the classes without justification.** If this requirement is not met, the student may lose the right to be assessed both in the ordinary and extraordinary assessment period (art. 93-1 of the General Regulations).

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	outside classroom	OVERALL
30	120	150



READING LIST / relevant references

Cameron, D. (1998). Gender, Language and Discourse: A Review Essay. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol 23(4), 945-973.

Carter, C., Steiner, L. & McLaughlin, L. (2013). *The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender*. Routledge.

Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the Media*. Polity Press.

Gwynne, J. (Ed.). (2022). *The Cultural Politics of Femvertising: Selling Empowerment*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jobling, P., Nesbitt, P. & Wong, A. (2022). *Fashion, Identity, Image*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Jule, A. (2008). *A Beginner's Guide to Language and Gender*. Multilingual Matters

Jule, A. (2018). *Speaking Up: Understanding Language and Gender*. Multilingual Matters

Lazar, M. M. (2014). Recuperating feminism, reclaiming femininity: hybrid postfeminist I-identity in consumer advertisements. *Gender and Language*, vol 8.2, 205-224. doi: 10.1558/genl.v8i2.205

Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. Harper & Row

Machin, D. & Thornborrow, J. (2003). Branding and discourse: the case of Cosmopolitan. *Discourse & Society*, vol. 14(4): 453-471).

Machin, D. & Thornborrow, J. (2006). Lifestyle and the Depoliticisation of Agency: Sex as Power in Women's Magazines. *Social Semiotics*, vol. 16(1), 173-188, DOI: 10.1080/10350330500487968

Macnamara, J. R. (2006). *Media and Male Identity: The Making and Remaking of Men*. Basingstoke.

Richardson, N. & Wearing, S. (2014). *Gender in the Media*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Speer, S.A. (2005). Introduction. Feminism, Discourse and Conversation Analysis. In *Gender Talk: Feminism, Discourse and Conversation Analysis*. Ebook pages 19-42). Taylor & Francis.

Sunderland, J. (2006). *Language and gender: an advanced Resource Book*, London: Routledge.

Talbot, M. (2019, 3rd ed.). *Language and Gender*. Polity Press

Tannen, D. (1994). Chapter 1. The Relativity of Linguistic Strategies: Rethinking Power and Solidarity in Gender and Dominance. In *Gender & Discourse*. Ebook pages 23-47. Oxford University Press.

