Media and Deaf History—H-332
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COURSE OUTLINE:
This is an historical survey of the mass media (print, film, and television) as sources and interpreters of
deafness and deaf people within the context of US social and cultural history. This class also will
examine historical changes in the products of mass media within the deaf community and offer ways of
critiquing media sources.


Supplementary reading: Gannon, Deaf Heritage (1981);
   Martin Norden, Cinema of Isolation (1994)
   Maltin, Movie and Video Film Guide (any recent edition)
   Klobas, Disability Drama in Film and Television (1988)
   Steven J. Ross, Movies and American Society
   Thomas Sobchack, Vivian C. Sobchack, An Introduction to Film
   John e. O’Connor, Image as Artifact
   Peter C. Rollins, ed. Hollywood as Historian
   Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America
   Silent News
   Disability Rag
   Any general American History textbook.

Requirements and Grades:
1. Class Participation. You are expected to attend every class and to be prepared for discussion. This
   also includes written homework assignments and required film viewing.(25%)
2. A three to five page (minimum) research paper (endnotes and bibliography) in which you address an
   issue or controversy or importance to the Deaf community during one decade (ten year period) based
   on your reading of Deaf community newspapers/magazines.(15%)
3. A four to six page (minimum) research paper in which you describe films/television programs
   produced from 1970-2000 which depict deafness or deaf people. (at least five different examples).
   Compare your thesis to Schuchman’s in Hollywood Speaks.(25%)
4. Class presentation on your project. (10%)
5. Summaries of 3 classic films (5%)
6. One take-home midterm exam on Media and Deaf history to 1960s. (20%)

Note: I will offer regular viewings of classic films covering various time periods and genres.
Undergraduate students are required to see 3 of these films. If you are unable to attend the viewings, you
may ask for the list of recommended films to see on your own. You may be asked to incorporate these
films into your written assignments.

Class schedule (subject to change**)
8/31 Who’s who; course introduction;
Homework: Place of Their Own, Chap. 9; Deaf History Unveiled, Chap 11

9/2  Deaf and print media/research with Lpfs
     Homework: Gomery, Chap. 2

9/6  **First Project Topic Due BY NOON**

9/7  “Reading films” and Research: types of historical approach; issues in film history
     Homework: Gomery, chap. 3

9/9  Sources: issues. How do you find information? Use of Motion Picture Encyclopedia, American Film Institute Index, NY Times Film Reviews, lpf, disability studies and deaf studies literature.
     Homework: Schuchman, Chap. 1

9/14 Silence is Golden: The Silent Movie Era; NAD collection film
     Homework: Handout (NAD films); NAD assignment (*Sign Language Studies Special Issue (Spring 2004)*)

9/16 NAD films
     Homework: Homework: Schuchman, Chap. 2

9/21 Silence into Sound: Talkies and conflicting views of deafness;
     Homework: work on project

9/22  **First Research Paper Due by noon**

9/23 His Busy Hour: view and critique
     Homework: Schuchman, Chap. 3

     Homework Johnny Belinda or Heart is a Lonely Hunter
     (on reserve) and critique

9/30 intro: Assessing popular films; assessing community films
     Homework: Ethnic Notions, (on reserve) and handout (Ross, Chap. 9)

10/5  **Film/TV Project Topic Due**
     Film as a mirror: stereotypes; Birth of a Nation: Race and Films;
     Homework: Norden sections and response

10/7 Other bodies and film: Celluloid Closet
     Homework: Sobchack handout: genres (Chap. 5)

10/8  **Midterm Exam Due by noon**

10/12 Genres of films
     Homework: Allen and Gomery, Chap. 7, sections Gomery, 9

10/14 Social history and film; intro to documentary
Homework: Handout, Connor: news films and documentary

10/19  **ENRICHMENT DAY**-work on source list, viewings

10/21  **Source list for Film/TV project due**
   Practice session: TBA
   Homework: Moving Pictures, Moving Hands: The Story of Earnest Marshall or 2)
       Charles Krauel, Deaf Filmmaker

10/26 group session: comparing documentaries
   Homework: Schuchman Chap. 4, TBA: Manix: Silent Cries, Deaf Mosaic

10/28  Television; Deaf actors appear; Intro: Love is Never Silent
   Homework: Schuchman, Chap. 5

11/2  conclude: Love is Never Silent
   Homework: Children of a Lesser God, handout

11/4  The Matlin Era: biography
   Homework: TBA—Matlin sections; Schuchman, Conclusion

11/9  Marlee Matlin: impact?
   Homework: DPN, individual primary source handouts

11/11  DPN and the media
   Homework: TBA (Haller, print media; primary source work: NYTimes index)

11/16  Into the 90s: print
   Homework: Sklar, Hollywood in the 1980s and 1990s (Chap. 20-1) handout; Ross, Chap. 11
   handout

11/18  Mainstreamed?: Hollywood film in the 1980s and 1990s
   Homework: TV assignments

**11/22 Film/TV project draft due by noon**

11/23  into the 90s: television
   Homework: enjoy break

11/24- 11/28  **THANKSGIVING BREAK--NO CLASS**

11/30  Into the 90s: film: overview
   Homework: “Compensation” (Michelle Banks)

**12/1 Film/TV Project Due by noon**

12/2  Independent Films
   Where to next?: the issues of Deafness and the media
   Homework: prepare presentations
12/7  Presentations
12/9  Presentations and wrap up