

## CIN210 Racial and Gender Role Stereotypes, Spring 2020

**Instructor Contact:** Name: Dr. Knopf ["nope"] (she/her/hers) --you can also call me C.K.  
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**Class Meetings:** MWF 12:40-1:30

### Course Description:

Focus on racial and gender role awareness and attitudes in individuals. Prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities and women are examined, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination are discussed. Also listed as AAS 210, PSY 210. Fulfills GE 11; LASR. (3 cr. hr.)

This particular section of CIN210/AAS210 will access these issues through an in-depth look at the X-Men cinematic universe – a franchise historically known for providing metaphors of representation, diversity, and inclusion/exclusion. With movies spanning 2000-2019, this focus will allow for contextualized exploration of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in recent media history.

### Learning Outcomes:

#### Communication & Media Studies -

I. Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of various forms of communication as vehicles of human expression:

- a. Know and understand modes of human communication: intercultural, mediated, and transmediated
- b. Know and understand foundational theories of communication – especially cultural studies and critical theories
- c. Know and understand the significance of cultural context within human communication

#### General Education -

II. Students will reflect critically about the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination from individual to institutional levels. The courses will examine the challenges of constructing a more diverse and inclusive society. Students will demonstrate an understanding of

- a. how power, bias, prejudice and discrimination can affect society's values, attitudes and institutions;
- b. approaches that address barriers and foster greater equity and inclusivity.

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With regards to the above programmatic goals, students will

1. identify common cultural stereotypes used in media, particularly film (Ia & IIa)
2. illustrate how metaphors are used in pop culture products to discuss socio-political issues (Ic)
3. cooperatively summarize course content and produce course materials to engender equity & inclusivity (IIb)
4. evaluate contemporary communication and cultural scholarship regarding issues of identity and representation in film (Ib)

### Required Materials:

#### Textbook:

- Bucciferro, C., ed. (2016). *The X-Men films: A cultural analysis*. Rowman & Littlefield. [can be purchased through the College Store or other retailers – used and e-books acceptable]

#### Journal articles (via Blackboard – no purchase necessary):

- Baron, L. (2003). X-Men as J Men: The Jewish subtext of a comic book movie. *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 22 (1): 44-52.
- Century, S. (2019). X-Men as a queer metaphor. *SyFyWire*, June 7: <https://www.syfy.com/syfywire/x-men-as-a-queer-metaphor>.
- Diebler, M. (2006). "I'm not one of them anymore": Marvel's X-Men and the loss of minority (racial) identity. *International Journal of Comic Art*, 8 (2): 406-413.
- Hicks, H.J. (2011). Impalement: Race and gender in Bryan Singer's "X-Men." *Cineaction*: 52-62.

- Lund, M. (2015). The mutant problem: X-Men, confirmation bias, and the methodology of comics and identity. *European Journal of American Studies*, 10(2): <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/10890#text>.
- Parks, G.S. (2017). "A choice of weapons": The X-Men and the metaphor for approaches of racial equality. *Indiana Law Journal*, 92 (5): article 1.
- Shyminsky, N. (2006). Mutant readers, reading mutants: Appropriation, assimilation, and the X-Men. *International Journal of Comic Art*.
- Zingsheim, J. (2011). X-Men evolution: Mutational identity and shifting subjectivities. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 22 (3): 223-239.

Other: (provided; no purchase necessary, but you are responsible to replace lost items)

- Reading Logs (index card deck)
- Cinema Journals (bound blank notebooks)

### Assignments/Grade Distribution:

Reading Responses:	30%	(SLO4)	Exams:	30%	(SLO3)
Cinema Journal:	25%	(SLO1)	Critical Creative Character:	25%	(SLO2)

### Grading Breakdown:

95-100 = A	90-94 = A-	85-89 = B+	80-84 = B	75-79 = B-	
70-74 = C+	65-69 = C	60-64 = C-	55-59 = D+	50-54 = D-	0-49 = E

### Grade Policies:

If you *find an error* in grading, bring it to the instructor's attention immediately so it can be corrected. If you have a question about assignment feedback, exam answers, etc - ask. It will help you learn. If you *disagree* with a grade earned on written work, you can file a request for reconsideration no sooner than 24 hours after receiving the grade and no later than 1 week after receiving the grade. The original work with all evaluation forms should be re-submitted to the instructor along with a written explanation of why you believe your work warrants reconsideration and a higher grade. The instructor will reconsider your work within 2 weeks; any grade change at that time, including a lower one, will remain final.

"Extra" credit is built into the course and grading scheme (it is possible to earn up to 110% in the course). It is never given on an individual basis or as a replacement for regular coursework. But, you can email the professor a gif of how your week is going to receive 2 bonus points (offer valid through week 6 of the semester).

**Attendance:** Roll will be called at the start of each class meeting; please inform the instructor of your pronouns and preferred name. The focus of this course is on live, non-mediated, communication. Attendance is expected, necessary, and required. Everyone, including the instructor, is expected to show up and be prepared for class *on time*. Though attendance is not graded, much of the work that is graded happens in class.

Absences on exam days for religious observances or college-sanctioned events must be discussed in advance for accommodations to be made. Emergency absences on such days require notification to the instructor at the earliest possible time *and* documentation (such as appointment cards or admissions forms for medical treatment) with work being completed *immediately* upon return to classes. To show you are aware of the attendance policy, email the professor a meme that describes you before week seven to receive 2 bonus points (offer valid until week 5 of the semester).

**Etiquette:** Recent research has suggested that we are not as good at multitasking as we think we are, so to succeed in this class and to help those around us succeed, we will minimize distractions by using technology only in ways that are directly related to coursework and goals. Devices will be silenced and put away when not being used for class purposes.

We will not attend class under the influence of alcohol or other recreational substances. We will also minimize distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, food, drink, bathroom breaks, extraneous conversation, and packing up early before class is over; these not only break our own concentration but also disrupt those around us.

We will come to class on time and prepared with whatever materials are expected of our roles. For the instructor that means, at minimum, lecture notes, related presentation aids,

graded student work, the roster, and writing instruments. For the student, that means, at minimum, any relevant texts, work that needs to be submitted, paper), and a writing instrument.

We will practice professional communication styles and habits. Emails will be written in a way that is appropriate for acquiring and maintaining employment. And, we will practice good civic communication; we will listen respectfully and attentively to all opinions, we will be prepared to explain our own opinions, we will be open to not only trying to persuade others but also to *being* persuaded by others, we will recognize that different experiences are valid.

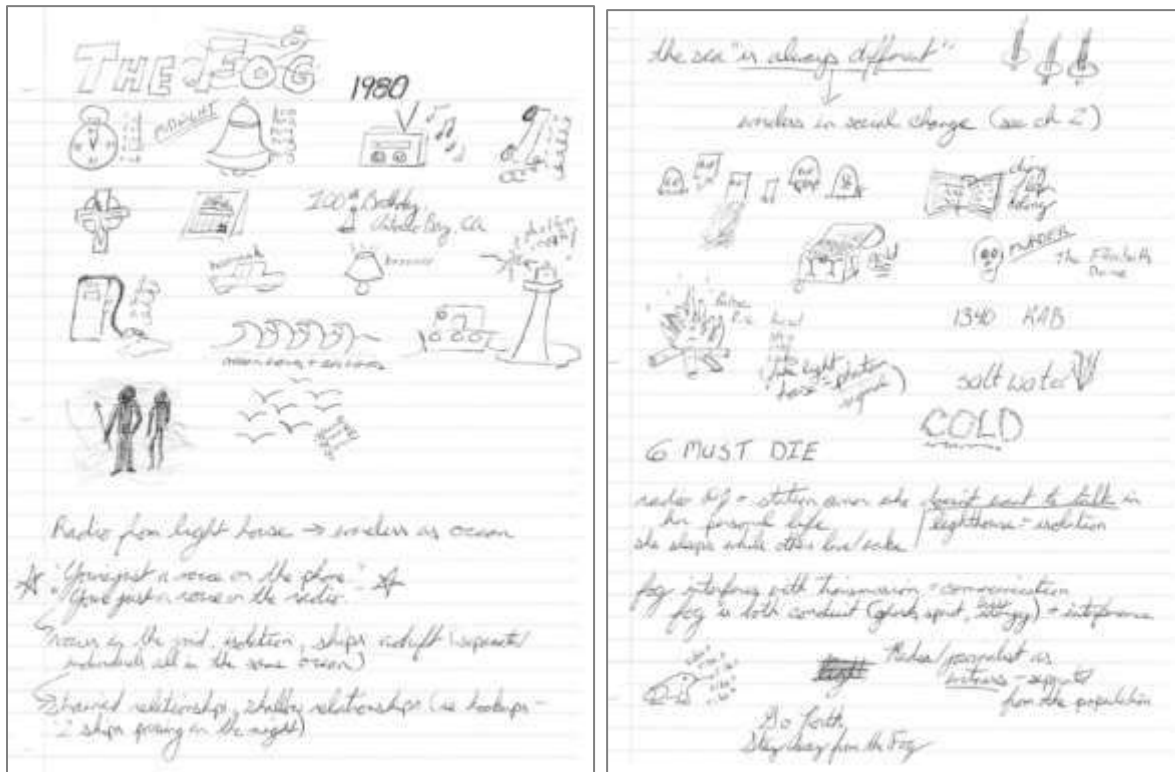
### Coursework:

#### Movies & Cinema Journals:

As a cinema class, we will watch movies. It is okay, even encouraged, to have fun watching the movies, but you will also be expected to be engaged, active, and critical in your viewing. For that reason, you will keep Cinema Journals. Each entry should be developed during class time while viewing the movies and contain the following information as appropriate:

- 1) The film title & year
- 2) Observations about who is represented and how. Consider:
  - Who are the actors? (Not necessarily names, but demographics)
  - Which characters do and don't have powers? What are the different types of powers?
  - What's the gender, racial, ethnic mix?
  - How is sexuality portrayed?
  - **Are any stereotypes present?** If so are they reinforced or subverted?
- 3) **What issues about diversity, inclusion, and/or acceptance in socio-politics are being addressed in the film?** How?
- 4) **What theory or other course content informs or shapes your observations of the film?**

You are encouraged to be creative in your approach to these journals. (See example).



**The journals will be collected randomly** throughout each week following completion of an in-class movie semester to check that they are up-to-date and complete. Grades will be based on completion, thought, and evidence of effort (not on having "correct" responses). Each collection will equal up to 6% points. An additional point can be earned for perfect submission at the end of the semester.

### Readings & Reading Responses:

Readings are meant to a) expose you to the nature of communication research and academic writing, b) introduce course concepts to you, c) prepare you for in-class discussions, activities, and assignments. Readings let you hear multiple voices, make lectures more accessible to you, and allows you to tailor discussions to meet your own interests and goals. To help you achieve these benefits, you are asked to submit the following for each assigned reading:

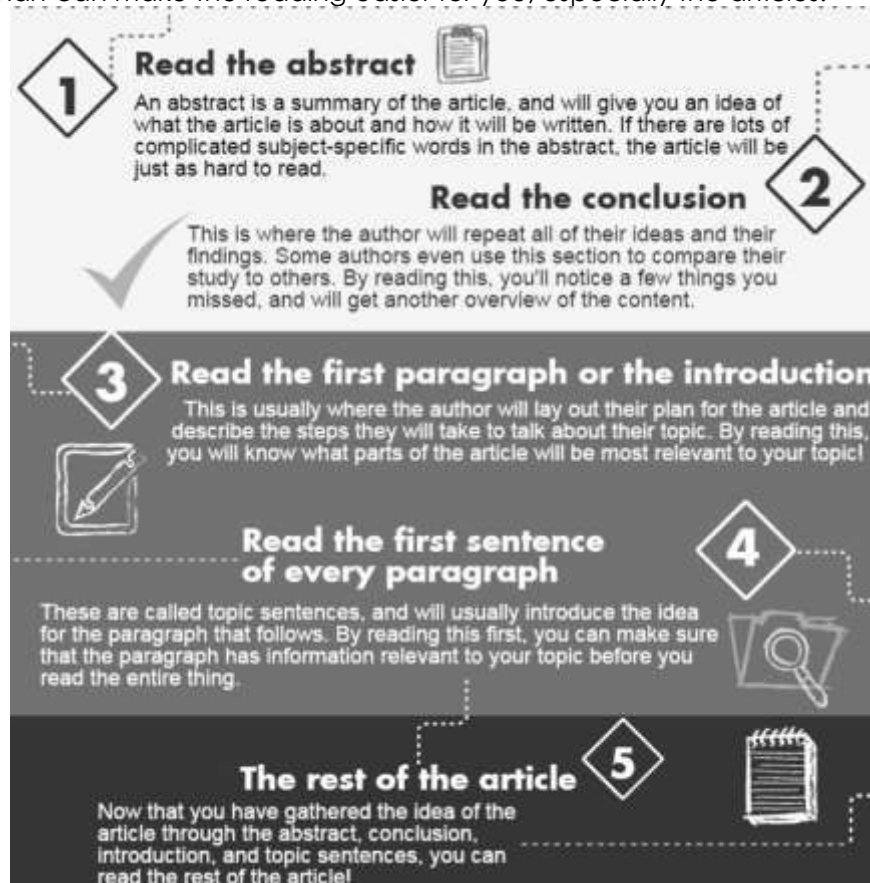
Your Name	Date
Chapter or Article Title	
1. One-two sentences identifying a key takeaway or central lesson in the reading.	
2. A one-two sentence reaction to, comment about, or question regarding, the reading.	

Each card is worth 2 points. To receive credit, they must be

- Put in your own words to demonstrate understanding
- Brought to class for submission, unless you cannot be in class, then an emailed photo by class time is acceptable

Cards will be submitted *at the start of class* when readings are due and returned at the next class session. You will keep these cards bound together to create your own Reading Logs. These logs, in addition to your class notes & cinema journals, will help you prepare for exams. (See next section).

\*This chart can make the reading easier for you, especially the articles:



### Exams:


There will be 3 exams in the class at the 5, 10, and 15 week points. Exams will be created through crowdsourcing. You will contribute exam questions. The class will work together to determine exam content. (The instructor will finalize the exam format and specifics.) To prepare/study for the exam, you will collaborate with classmates in class, and via GoogleDocs, WhatsApp, email, or other platforms you choose. Within these processes we will consider, discuss, and explore issues of access and inclusivity and the relationships between information, knowledge, and power.

### Critical Creative Character:

As your final project, you will create your own X-Men character. You will choose some aspect or intersection of your own identity (race, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, body type, personality type or trait, medical condition, etcetera) and create an appropriate mutant/superhero identity to represent that identity. Your character will have:

- a superhero alter-ego name
- a mutant superpower
- a category of hero, antihero, or villain, and why
- a backstory/origin story
- an appearance which includes an actual image (drawn by you, a friend, or created through a source like heroized.com, marvelhq.com/create-your-own-super-hero, superherotar.framiq.com/, charactercreator.org, etc) – this will be submitted both with the rest of the assignment AND via email to christina.knopf@cortland.edu
- a note about how this hero represents or is a metaphor for your identity
- a casting decision about what actor would play this character in a future X-Men film and why (and no, you can't cast yourself)

<b>Name:</b>	Storm
<b>Power:</b>	Controls the weather
<b>Category:</b>	Hero
<b>Story:</b>	Born Ororo Munroe to a tribal princess of Kenya and an African-American photojournalist father, Storm is raised in Harlem and Cairo. Descended from a long line of African witch-priestesses, Storm is able to control the weather. Orphaned in the midst of an Arab–Israeli conflict, she suffers from trauma that includes claustrophobia.
<b>Appearance:</b>	Black with white hair, a black costume with a wing-like cape that allows her to fly on air currents she controls, electricity reflects in her eyes
<b>Representation:</b>	I suffer from severe claustrophobia, a mental illness, and so does Storm. The fact that her power is based out-of-doors reinforces her innate claustrophobia.
<b>Actor:</b>	Halle Berry



*-brief example, you will want to develop yours, especially regarding the category, representation, and actor, further-*

## CALENDAR

YOU are responsible for being aware and keeping track of these dates

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Wk1	1/27: course introduction	1/29: <i>Ch. Introduction</i>	1/31:
Wk2	2/3: <i>Ch. 6</i>	2/5: <i>Zingsheim</i>	2/7:
Wk3	2/10: <i>Ch. 7</i> <i>X-Men (2000)</i>	2/12: <i>X-Men (2000)</i>	2/14: <i>X-Men (2000)</i>
Wk4	2/17: <i>Ch. 8</i>	2/19:	2/21:
Wk5	2/24: Exam creation	2/26: Exam preparation	2/28: <b>Exam #1</b>
Wk6	3/2: <i>Ch. 9</i>	3/4: <i>Parks</i>	3/6:
Wk7	3/9: <i>Ch. 10</i> <i>X-Men: First Class (2011)</i>	3/11: <i>X-Men: First Class (2011)</i>	3/13: <i>X-Men: First Class (2011)</i>
Wk8	3/16: SPRING BREAK	3/18: SPRING BREAK	3/20: SPRING BREAK
Wk9	3/23: <i>Ch. 11</i>	3/25: <i>Exam creation</i>	3/27: <i>Exam preparation</i>
Wk10	3/30: <b>Exam #2</b>	4/1: <i>Ch. 12</i>	4/3:
Wk11	4/6: <i>Ch. 13</i>	4/8: <i>Century</i>	4/10:
Wk12	4/13: <i>Shymónisky</i>	4/15: <i>Diebler</i>	4/17:
Wk13	4/20: <i>Ch. 14</i>	4/22:	4/24: <i>Critical Creative Characters</i>
Wk14	4/27: <i>Ch. 15</i> <i>X-Men: Apocalypse (2016)</i>	4/29: <i>Baron</i> <i>X-Men: Apocalypse (2016)</i>	5/1: <i>X-Men: Apocalypse (2016)</i>
Wk15	5/4:	5/6: <i>Exam creation</i>	5/8: <i>Exam preparation</i>
Finals			5/14, 11am-1pm: <b>Exam #3</b>

Readings are noted in This Font on the day they are due (this means log cards for the reading are also due that day).

Exams are **bold** faced.

In-class activities, other than regular discussions & lectures, are italicized.

Travel arrangements for breaks and finals week should properly accommodate course responsibilities. Class days immediately before and immediately after break are still class days and final exam times, which are set by the college, are part of the required contact hours for the semester, per orders from the Provost.

## **Helpful Information, Syllabus Supplement - CIN210 Racial & Gender Role Stereotypes, Spring2020**

**Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to uphold academic integrity standards. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas of others and using them as one's own without due credit. Students who cheat in examinations, course assignments, or plagiarize in this course may be disciplined in accordance with university rules and regulations. (College Handbook, Chapter 340)

**Access (Accommodation of Disabilities):** As part of SUNY Cortland's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, we strive to provide students with equal access to all courses. If you believe you will require accommodations in this course, please place a request with the Disability Resources Office at [disability.resources@cortland.edu](mailto:disability.resources@cortland.edu) or call 607-753-2967. Please note that accommodations are generally not provided retroactively so timely contact with the Disability Resources Office is important. All students should consider meeting with their course instructor who may be helpful in other ways." (College Handbook, Chapter 745)

**Mental, Emotional, & Physical Wellbeing:** Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance.

If symptoms are related to your course work, please speak with the instructor.

If problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis are negatively impacting your mental health and/or interfering with your academic success, SUNY Cortland offers the following resources to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being.

- Counseling Center: Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-44 \* 607-753-4728
- Substance Abuse & Prevention Education Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-1 \* 607-753-2066
- Active Minds student club

If challenges securing food or housing are affecting your academic performance, or your emotional wellbeing, you are urged to contact the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs for support (607-753-4721).

**Title IX:** Title IX, when combined with New York Human Rights Law and the New York Education Law 129-B, prohibits discrimination, harassment and violence based on sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation in the education setting. The federal Clery Act and NY Education Law 129-B provide certain rights and responsibilities after an incident of sexual or interpersonal violence. When a violation occurs, victims and survivors are eligible for campus and community resources. Where the College has jurisdiction, it may investigate and take action in accordance with College policy. If you or someone you know wishes to report discrimination based in sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation, or wishes to report sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or relationship violence, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 607-753-4550, or visit [cortland.edu/titleix](http://cortland.edu/titleix) to learn about all reporting options and resources.

**Diversity:** SUNY Cortland is dedicated to the premise that every individual is important in a unique way and contributes to the overall quality of the institution. We define diversity broadly to include all aspects of human difference. The College is committed to inclusion, equity, and access and thus committed to creating and sustaining a climate that is equitable, respectful and free from prejudice for students, faculty and staff. We value diversity in the learning environment and know that it enhances our ability to inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a changing world. We are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive campus through the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students. As a community, we hold important the democracy of ideas, tempered by a commitment to free speech and the standards of inquiry and debate. To this end, we are dedicated to developing and sustaining a learning environment where it is safe to explore our differences and celebrate the richness inherent in our pluralistic society. (College Handbook, Chapter 130)

**Inclusive Learning Environment:** SUNY Cortland is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. The course instructor honors this commitment and respects and values differences. All students enrolled in this course are expected to be considerate of others, promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment, and demonstrate respect for individuals with regard to ability or disability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other aspects of identity. In an environment that fosters inclusion, students have the opportunity to bring their various identities into conversation as they find helpful, but are not expected to represent or speak for an entire group of people who share aspects of an identity. If you have any questions or concerns about this statement, contact the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office at 607-753-2263.