

# WOMEN & mass media



MMC 6936-902 cross listed with Women's Studies  
spring 2006, Wednesday 6-9, CIS 1016

Instructor: Dr. Kim Golombisky  
School of Mass Communications  
University of South Florida, Tampa  
kgolombi@cas.usf.edu

974-9400 voice mail

974-2592 fax

973-0814 home, emergencies only please

office hours CIS 3094

Monday & Wednesday 9:30-10:30

Wednesday 5-6

If my office hours are at odds with your schedule,  
I'm always available by appointment.

## About Email

Get a USF email account or Blackboard login ID and PIN  
(<https://my.usf.edu>) so you can receive class email  
announcements and access readings posted there. Blackboard  
also gives you access to the USF Library.

*The USF School of Mass Communications complies with national  
accrediting standards designed to help prepare students to  
understand and relate to issues of interest to women and minorities  
in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and otherwise diverse society.*

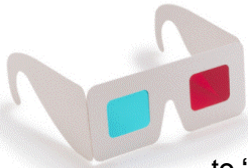
*Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with instructors to  
discuss accommodations. Each student must provide a current  
Memorandum of Accommodations from the USF Office of Student  
Disability Services, which is a prerequisite for receiving  
accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the OSDS  
require two weeks notice.*

## Texts

bell hooks (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*.  
Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Ramona Rush, Carol Oukrop, Pamela Creedon (Eds.) (2004).  
*Seeking Equity for Women in Journalism & Mass Communication  
Education: A 30-year Update*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Miscellaneous Readings: See course calendar.



## Welcome...

to "Women & Mass Media." I'm glad you joined us.

The goal of this course is to feature women and their relationships to mass communications.

Designed as a survey, the syllabus touches on women's contributions to mass communications, key theories of women, key women scholars, and the exciting varieties of contemporary feminist media studies. In truth, this syllabus honors some of Colombisky's favorite mass comm women.

Students who successfully complete the course will better appreciate the history and contributions of women in mass communications as well as the theoretical and methodological issues in studying gender.

Whether you're in the class out of curiosity or for a specific research purpose, you are encouraged to share your interests so we all can help you pursue them.

## Decorum

One of the best things about our classroom this semester is that we are an inter-disciplinary group. We are joined by students in Women's Studies, Communication, and Mass Communications.

All three disciplines are foundationally cross-disciplinary. That's a common strength we can be proud of and build on. At the same time, all three disciplines can contribute unique and useful perspectives to the study of women and mass media. So keep your ears open for new approaches.

In the tradition of feminist pedagogy, our group will operate as a cooperative effort. Every voice is important to our semester-long

collaboration. We won't always agree with each other, and, in fact, we may disagree strenuously. That's a good thing. Just keep the debates intellectual, not personal.

Also, we need to be conscious of allowing everyone to contribute. Sometimes that means giving the floor to others, and sometimes that means forcing ourselves to speak up. In sum, mutual respect and good manners will prevail. "Esprit de corps"—all for one and one for all.

## Projects

### Short Reports

In addition to weekly readings, from time to time during the semester you will produce short reports that require both a *brief, informal* oral presentation and a *petite* handout for the class. We'll cover the specifics in class, but these projects will not take up a lot of time.

### "State of the Art" Group Paper

As a class, our major project will be to write a paper together (or at least get started on it) titled, "The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Mass Communications." This will be a critical literature review of scholarly journals in mass comm.

The inspiration for this project came from Celeste Condit and Bonnie Dow, who published "The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Communication" for the *Journal of Communication* in September 2005. Their excellent essay excluded U.S. mass communications journals. So we will take up the job where Condit and Dow left off.



## Would You Like Paper or Project?

Your final assignment is up to you. Would you like to write a paper? or do a Project? or maybe something else?

If you're already working on something related to the course in terms of subject matter—a research project, thesis, conference paper, journal article, etc.—please use the class as an opportunity to move things along.

If you're interested in starting a new research paper or just exploring the literature on a class-related topic that interests you, by all means, go for it. If you start a new paper, write it as a conference paper!

Another idea would be to write something for the mainstream media. A terrific exercise is to translate an academic or scholarly topic for a lay audience. Let me give you an example: As a doctoral student, I took a class called “The Public Intellectual” about the ways scholars can participate in public issues. My “translation” essay summarized the issues of women and sports in education. I thought it was one of the best things I'd ever written. My professor gently suggested that since “women and sports is not a real academic area,” he would let me redo the paper. I replied, “Over my dead body.” And I promptly sent the essay to the *St. Petersburg Times*, which printed it as a guest editorial. (Then I educated the professor over coffee.)

Or maybe you have a project of some kind in mind. In the feminist tradition, you also may choose to produce some kind of intervention or service project. Let's talk about it.

Think it over. Then we'll chat. You will need instructor approval on your final paper or project. Please don't wait until the last minute to commit.

## Grades

Here's how grades work. I assume that you are a committed graduate student who wants to learn and participate. I also assume that you will put your best effort into the course and your assignments. If that is the case, you can assume that you begin the semester with an “A” and that your job is to maintain that “A” until April 26. Your final grade will be based upon your attendance and participation in class meetings, along with the degree to which you execute your assignments, large and small, in spirit and letter.

## Calendar

### 1. 1/11

#### Introductions

Who are we and why are we here?

### 2. 1/18

#### Gender & the “F” Word

Read:

*(As you read hooks, make of list of the relevant issues she covers. As you read Rakow, note what has changed since 1986—or not.)*

bell hooks (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*.

Cambridge, MA: South End Books.

Lana Rakow (1986). Rethinking gender research in

communication. *Journal of Communication*, 36(4), 11-26.



### 3. 1/25

#### “The State of the Art...”

Launch Class Project: “The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Mass Communications”

**Read:**

*(Read for this study’s rationale, method, and theoretical and thematic issues. Start thinking about which journals to include in our study.)*

Bonnie J. Dow & Celeste M. Condit, (2005). The state of the art in feminist scholarship in communication. *Journal of Communication*, 55(3), 448-478.

**Also Read:**

*(Make a list of the key issues these women raise.)*

Carolyn Kitch (1997). Changing theoretical perspectives on women’s media images: The emergence of patterns in a new area of historical scholarship. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(3), 477-489.

Lana F. Rakow (1989). Feminist studies: The next stage. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 6(20), 209-215.

Michela Ardizzoni (1998). Feminist contributions to communication studies: Past and present. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 22(3), 293-305.

Lisa Henderson (2001). Sexuality, feminism, media studies. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1(1), 17-24.

Lynn Spigel (2004). Theorizing the Bachelorette: “Waves” of feminist media studies. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(1), 1209-1221.

### 4. 2/1

#### But First a Little History...

**Due:** Short reports on women’s Orgs

1. AEJMC Commission on the Status of Women
2. AEJMC CSW *Women’s Words* Newsletter
3. ICA Feminist Scholarship Division
4. ICA FSD *Feminist Con/text* Newsletter
5. NCA Feminist & Women’s Studies Division
6. NCA Women’s Caucus
7. NCA FWSD & WC *Voices* Newsletter
8. ORWAC & Newsletter
9. OSCLG & Newsletter
10. BEA Gender Issues Division
11. Media Report to Women
12. International Women’s Media Foundation

**Read:**

Lana F. Rakow (1992). The field reconsidered. In L. R. Rakow (Ed.), *Women making meaning: New feminist directions in communication* (pp. 3-17). New York: Routledge.

Therese L. Lueck (2004). Like newsroom, like classroom: Women journalism educators temper the times. *American Journalism*, 20(4), 83-104.

Janet Cramer (1998). The state of (women’s) media history. *Clio: Newsletter of the History Division of the AEJMC*, 31(1), 1.

Elizabeth Burt (1998). Challenges in doing women’s history. *Clio: Newsletter of the History Division of the AEJMC*, 31(1), 17.

Danna Walker (1998). Teaching the third wave. *Clio: Newsletter of the History Division of the AEJMC*, 31(1), 20.

Agnes Hooper Gottlieb (1999). America’s top women communicators. *Women’s Words*, 9(1), 1

Agnes Hooper Gottlieb (2000). U.S. women communicators—part ii. *Women’s Words*, 9(2), 14.

Janet Cramer (2000). Women scholars in journalism, mass communication. *Women’s Words*, 9(2), 1.

## 5. 2/8

### *Equity for Mass Comm Women*

**Due:** Short Reports on Readings (We're going to divide up this reading & report back to each other on what we need to know.)

**Due:** List of journals for inclusion in the "State of the Art" review, along with the time period we'll cover (5, 10, 15 years?).

**Read:**

Ramona Rush, Carol Oukrop, & Pamela Creedon (2004). *Seeking equity for women in journalism and mass communication education: A 30-year update*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ramona Rush, Carol Oukrop, Katharine Sarikakis, Julie Andsager, Billy Wooten, & E-K Daufin. (2005). Junior scholars in search of equity for women and minorities. *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 6(4).

Kim Golombisky (2002). Gender equity and mass communication's female student majority. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 56(4), 53-66.

Lucila Vargas (1999). When "other" is the teacher: Implications of teacher diversity in higher education. *The Urban Review*, 31(4), 359.



## 6. 2/15 (NCA paper deadline)

### *Big Moments in the '70s:*

### *Spiral of Silence, Symbolic Annihilation, & Decoding Advertising*

**Read:**

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1977). Turbulences in the climate of opinion: Methodological applications of the spiral of silence theory. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 41(2), 143-158.

Gaye Tuchman (1978). Introduction: The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media. In G. Tuchman, A. Kaplan Daniels, & J. Benet (Eds.), *Hearth & home: Images of women in mass media* (pp. 3-38). New York: Oxford University Press.

Judith Williamson (1978). Chapter two: Signs address somebody. *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in advertising* (chapter 2 only, pp. 40-70). London (1978) & New York (1984): Marion Boyars.

## 7. 2/22

### *More Big Moments in the '70s & '80s:*

### *The Gaze & Female Desires*

**Due:** "State of the Art" Word file annotated biblio & hard copies of articles

**Read:**

Laura Mulvey (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6-18.

Laura Mulvey (1981). Afterthoughts on "visual pleasure and narrative cinema" inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946). *Framework*, 15-16-17, 12-15.

Rosalind Coward (1985). The sex-life of stick insects. *Female desires: How they are sought, bought and packaged* (pp. 209-215). New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

## 8. 3/1

Big Moments in the '80s:

Ang's *Dallas* & Radway's *Reading the Romance*

Due: Paper or Project Proposal (paragraph)

Read:

Ien Ang (1993). Editor's Introduction and *Dallas* and the ideology of mass culture. In S. During (Ed.), *The cultural studies reader* (pp. 403-420). New York: Routledge. (If you're interested in reading the book: Ien Ang [1985] [Trans. Della Couling]. *Watching Dallas*.)

Janice A. Radway (1985). Introduction & Three: The Act of Reading the Romance: Escape and Instruction. *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature* (pp. 1-18 & 86-118).

## 9. 3/8

More Big Moments in the '80s (and '90s):

Dramedy, Polysemy, & Patriarchal Co-optation

Due with Short Report: "State of the Art" Analysis

Read:

Leah R. Eklom Vande Berg (1991): Dramedy: *Moonlighting* as an Emergent Generic Hybrid. In L.R. Vande Berg & L.A. Wenner (Eds.), *Television criticism: Approaches & applications* (pp. 87-111). New York: Longman.

Celeste Michelle Condit (1989). The rhetorical limits of polysemy. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 6(2), 103-122.

Janice Hocker Rushing (1989). Evolution of the "The New Frontier" in *Alien* and *Aliens*: Patriarchal Co-optation of the female archetype. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 75(1), 1-24.

## 3/15 Spring Break

### 10. 3/22

While We're Talking about Film...

The Final Girl, Chick Flicks, & Gender Bending

Due: status report final paper or project

Read (Treat yourself to a movie marathon after you read these):

Carol J. Clover (1989/1999). Her body, himself: Gender in the slasher film. In S. Thornham (Ed.), *Feminist film theory: A reader* (pp. 234-250). New York: New York University Press. [Originally published in J. Donald (Ed.) (1989), *Fantasy and the Cinema* (pp. 91-133). London: BFI.

Brenda Cooper (1999). The relevancy and gender identity in spectators' interpretations of *Thelma & Louise*. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 16, 20-41.

Kim Golombisky (2001, Winter). Mothers, daughters, and female identity therapy in *How to Make an American Quilt*. *Western Journal of Communication*, 65(1), 65-88.

Brenda Cooper (2002). *Boys Don't Cry* and female masculinity: Reclaiming a life & dismantling the politics of normative heterosexuality. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(1), 44-63.



## 11. 3/29

### Very Cool Women & Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Due: status report final paper or project

Read:

- Debra Merskin (1998). Sending up signals: A survey of native American media use and representation in mass media. *Howard Journal of Communication*, 9, 333-345.
- Anne Cooper-Chen (1999). An animated imbalance: Japan's Television Heroines in Asia. *Gazette*, 61(3-4), 293-310.
- Carolina Acosta-Alzuru (2003). "I'm not a feminist...I only defend women as human beings": The production, representation, and consumption of feminism in a *Telenovela*. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 20(3), 269-294.
- Radhika Parameswaran (2001). Feminist media ethnography in India: Exploring power, gender, and culture in the field. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(1), 69-103.
- Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2004). Constructing the "new ethnicities": Media, sexuality, and Diaspora identity in the lives of South Asian immigrant girls. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(2), 140-161.

## 4/1 AEJMC paper deadline

### 4/5 no class

SSCA Convention



## 12. 4/12

### Very Cool Women & Othering

Due: status report final paper or project

Read:

- Patricia Hill Collins (2004). Get your freak on: Sex, babies, and images of black femininity. *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism* (pp. 119-148). New York: Routledge.
- Beth Haller (1994). The misfit and muscular dystrophy. *Journal of popular film and television*, 21(4), 142-150.
- Elizabeth Bird (1999). Gender construction of the American Indian in Popular Media. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 61-83.
- Susan Kray (1993). Orientalization of an "almost white" woman: The interlocking effects of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in American mass media. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 10(4), 349-366.
- Dafna Lemish (2000). The whore and the other: Israeli images of female immigrants from the former USSR. *Gender and Society*, 14(2), 333-349.

### 13. 4/19

#### More Cool Women

Due: status report final paper or project

#### Read:

- Mary Vavrus (1998). Working the senate from the outside: The mediated construction of a feminist political campaign. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 15(3), 213-235.
- Stacy J. T. Hust & Julie L. Andsager (2003). Medicalization vs. adaptive models? Sense-making in magazine framing of menopause. *Women & Health*, 38(1), 101-122.
- T.N. Walters, Lynne M. Walters, Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, & Susanna Hornig Priest (1997). The picture of health? Message standardization and recall of televised AIDS public service announcements. *Public Relations Review*, 23(2), 143-159.
- Noliwe Rooks (2004). Chapter 2: Refashioning rape: Ringwood's Afro-American journal of fashion. *Ladies pages: African American women's magazines and the culture that made them* (pp. 25-46). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

### 14. 4/26

#### Yet More Cool Women & Wrap Up

Due: status report final paper or project

#### Read:

- Barbie Zelizer (2002). Finding aids to the past: Bearing personal witness to traumatic public events. *Media Culture & Society*, 24, 697-714.
- Judith Halberstam (2004, July 5). Pimp my bride: Reality TV gives marriage an extreme makeover. *The Nation*, 279(1), 44-46.
- Judith Cramer (2006, in press, forthcoming July). Radio: The more things change...the more they stay the same. In P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women in mass communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

### 5/3, 5 p.m.

Due in Golombisky's departmental mailbox:  
Paper or Project?

### 9/15 SSCA paper deadline



# Bibliography

- Carolina Acosta-Alzuru (2003). "I'm not a feminist...I only defend women as human beings": The production, representation, and consumption of feminism in a *Telenovela*. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 20(3), 269-294.
- Ien Ang (1993). Editor's Introduction and *Dallas* and the ideology of mass culture. In S. During (Ed.), *The cultural studies reader* (pp. 403-420). New York: Routledge. (If you're interested in reading the book: Ien Ang [1985] [Trans. Della Couling]. *Watching Dallas*.)
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- Elizabeth Bird (1999). Gender construction of the American Indian in Popular Media. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 61.
- Elizabeth Burt (1998). Challenges in doing women's history. *Clio: Newsletter of the History Division of the AEJMC*, 31(1), 17.
- Patricia Hill Collins (2004). Get your freak on: Sex, babies, and images of black femininity. *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism* (pp. 119-148). New York: Routledge.
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- Brenda Cooper (1999). The relevancy and gender identity in spectators' interpretations of *Thelma & Louise*. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 16, 20-41.
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- Rosalind Coward (1985). The sex-life of stick insects. *Female desires: How they are sought, bought and packaged* (pp. 209-215). New York: Grove Weidenfeld.
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- Janet Cramer (2000). Women scholars in journalism, mass communication. *Women's Words*, 9(2), 1.
- Judith Cramer (2006, in press, forthcoming July). Radio: The more things change...the more they stay the same. In P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women in mass communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bonnie J. Dow & Celeste M. Condit, (2005). The state of the art in feminist scholarship in communication. *Journal of Communication*, 55(3), 448-478.
- Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2004). Constructing the "new ethnicities": Media, sexuality, and Diaspora identity in the lives of South Asian immigrant girls. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(2), 140-161.
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- Agnes Hooper Gottlieb (1999). America's top women communicators. *Women's Words*, 9(1), 1
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- Lisa Henderson (2001). Sexuality, feminism, media studies. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1(1), 17-24.
- bell hooks (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Books.
- Stacy J. T. Hust & Julie L. Andsager (2003). Medicalization vs. adaptive models? Sense-making in magazine framing of menopause. *Women & Health*, 38(1), 101-122.
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- Laura Mulvey (1981). Afterthoughts on "visual pleasure and narrative cinema" inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946). *Framework*, 15-16-17, 12-15.
- Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1977). Turbulences in the climate of opinion: Methodological applications of the spiral of silence theory. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 41(2), 143-158.
- Radhika Parameswaran (2001). Feminist media ethnography in India: Exploring power, gender, and culture in the field. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(1), 69-103.
- Janice A. Radway (1985). Introduction & Three: The Act of Reading the Romance: Escape and Instruction. *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature* (pp. 1-18 & 86-118).
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- Noliwe Rooks (2004). Chapter 2: Refashioning rape: Ringwood's Afro-American journal of fashion. *Ladies pages: African American women's magazines and the culture that made them* (pp. 25-46). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Ramona Rush, Carol Oukrop, & Pamela Creedon (2004). *Seeking equity for women in journalism and mass communication education: A 30-year update*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
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- Janice Hocker Rushing (1989). Evolution of the "The New Frontier" in *Alien* and *Aliens*: Patriarchal Co-optation of the female archetype. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 75(1), 1-24.
- Lynn Spigel (2004). Theorizing the Bachelorette: "Waves" of feminist media studies. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(1), 1209-1221.

- Gaye Tuchman (1978). Introduction: The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media. In G. Tuchman, A. Kaplan Daniels, & J. Benet (Eds.), *Hearth & home: Images of women in mass media* (pp. 3-38). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leah R. Ekdom Vande Berg (1991): Dramedy: *Moonlighting* as an Emergent Generic Hybrid. In L.R. Vande Berg & L.A. Wenner (Eds.), *Television criticism: Approaches & applications* (pp. 87-111). New York: Longman.
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- Barbie Zelizer (2002). Finding aids to the past: Bearing personal witness to traumatic public events. *Media Culture & Society*, 24, 697-714.

## General Tips for Grad Students On Writing Papers

Please remember that a research paper is a logical argument, clearly and concisely presented, that persuades readers that:

- *Your topic is useful, has merit, is valuable, is important, contributes something, fills a need or gap in the literature of your particular research stream.*
- Your theoretical framework is suitable, workable, appropriate.
- Your research site, subjects, sample, text, population, treatment (whatever) is/are justified.
- Your method is appropriate and doable.

And later, that:

- Your results are believable, credible, reliable, valid.
- Your conclusions are believable, credible, supportable, justified.

So be sure to write the argument. In a very real sense, you are making a case before a jury. Be sure the jury will buy the goods you're selling (to mix metaphors).

### Style & Format Issues

Follow the APA (or MLA, Chicago, etc.) stylebook for citations, levels of headings, rules for capitalization, and use of numerals, etc.

Proof, proof, proof, and then proof again. Do not turn in work with typos. Your grading professor should be reading only for content. C'mon, you're a graduate student—write, proof, and edit like one.

Speaking of proofing, make sure your reference list or bibliography is complete, accurate, and proofed for APA (or MLA, Chicago, etc.) style. Again, that's your job, not your professor's.

### Common Errors

Do not quote sources **quoting sources**. *Always* quote the primary source. That means you have to go get the real thing *and* you have to read it. Quoting Golombisky quoting Holtzhausen and everyone else under the sun will not do at all. That is the worst kind of scholarship. Visit the library because libraries are our friends.

**No-no words:** many, very, really, a lot, . . . and any other words in the "useless family." In other words, cut the vague modifiers. Similarly, cut the hyperbole. (Look it up.)

Avoid **passive voice**. (Look it up.)

Do not write claims that you cannot substantiate either with data, or citations, or a logical piece of rhetorical persuasion backed up with argumentative evidence.

Be careful not to use quotations to **substantiate claims** if the quotations themselves are merely opinion. Golombisky has many good opinions, and you may cite her opinions *as* opinions ("Golombisky [2004] argues that. . ."). But you cannot let opinions stand in for quantifiable facts. You can't write, for example, music videos cause acne, unless you cite empirical scientific studies that "prove" videos *cause* acne.

You can soften claims like that with wording such as, "There may be a relationship between acne and music videos," or "Some scholars argue a relationship between acne and music videos," or "Teens who watch music videos also tend to have acne, although the relationship

between the two is not documented.” You can see, however, that the softened statements do not make claims to fact—or causality. Helpful words for your toolbox are “tend” and “may.”

**Long block quotes:** Go lightly. The purpose of long block quotes is not to avoid having to paraphrase and explain. Paraphrasing and explaining is *your* job.

The purpose of block quotes is to share original words that should not be paraphrased for some special reason. I would say that other than particularly pithy or insightful short quotes or original theorists’ theoretical logic, you should be able to avoid most block quotes, and even when you do need block quotes, they should never be very long ones. Long block quotes are the first sign of a rookie.

Two other sure-fire signs of new scholars are: First, beginning sentences over and over again with **theorists’ names** (Barnes argues...Smith writes...Davis suggests)—once in a while here and there is OK, but not sentence after sentence—a common problem with student lit reviews.

A second problem is the direct quote that drops out of nowhere: You’re nicely writing sentences to make an argument, then, boom, here’s a direct **quotation with no setup** as to who is being quoted or why. Introduce and attribute prior to new quotations, please.

The last thing I want to caution you against in terms of style is the **non sequitur**. (Look it up.) Police yourself so you don’t do it—don’t do it between ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or sections—just don’t do it. Readers can only read what you’ve put on paper; they can’t read your mind. Make sure your logic is apparent.

A couple words about **document organization**: have one. Every document has a beginning, middle, and end. Every section within the

document has a beginning, middle, and end. Most paragraphs have a beginning, middle, and end. Do yours? The beginning offers the thesis statement and previews what’s to come. The end summarizes/reviews, draws a conclusion, and segues to the next section or next paragraph. Speaking of organization...

## Parts of a Research Paper (or thesis proposal or thesis)

### Cover Pages & Abstract

You need cover pages and an abstract. If you can’t write a succinct abstract, then you don’t really know what your thesis or paper is about. The abstract is a condensed, one-paragraph version of the entire research paper, including findings, if you have them (this ain’t no mystery).

### Introduction

The *introduction* should be a slightly-longer-than-the-abstract-but-still-brief encapsulation of the entire paper. That includes overall thesis statement, proposed study including methodology, theoretical framework, and overt/explicit “reasons why” the study has value to the literature stream you are attempting to contribute to. (By the way, what literature stream *are* you attempting to contribute to? Be sure it’s clear.) If the research is finished, report the gist of your findings (this ain’t no mystery).

It’s good but not necessary to begin the introduction, thus the paper, with a “hook.” A hook is a brief but enticing and intriguing paragraph that piques the reader’s interest in your paper and topic.

Next come right out and say what you’re doing. Remember, “This ain’t no mystery.” (And first-person “I” is perfectly fine *once in awhile*, especially if it helps you avoid passive voice.):

“This paper/study/essay/thesis will/hopes to/explores/explains/argues/studies...”

Next provide a one-paragraph preview of the *content* rest of the paper. This is like a kind of abstract.

Last write a one-paragraph preview of the *organization* of the paper by writing a thesis sentence for each of the next sections. “Below I first provide a little background on the issue of...Next I argue that the literature..., etc.”

Again, if you can’t write the introduction, then you really don’t know what the study is about yet. *The purpose of the intro is to preview the entire document point by point.*

Broadway producer David Belasco says if you can’t write your idea on the back of his business card, then you don’t have a clear idea. Ditto. On the other hand, you can’t really write this section until you’ve nailed the other sections in your own mind:

### **A few words about the next three sections— background, literature review, and theoretical framework:**

You may or may not have all three sections, although every research paper should have a literature review section. But sometimes the literature review *is* the background for the paper. Sometimes a literature review precedes the theoretical framework, and sometimes vice versa. Sometimes you may not have a theoretical framework, although I would argue that you always *should* have one. But as long as you cover the functions of all three sections—provide background, position yourself in the literature, identify the theory from which you operate—then you may not necessarily label all

three as separate sections. Just use common sense and lay out the information in a logical flow.

### **Background**

After the introduction, write a *brief background* section that sets up the historical, social, cultural underpinnings and foundations of the study. *The purpose of the background is logically to argue the need for the study as well as to provide “background” info readers will need in order to understand where you are taking them with the writing.*

Here is where you make the argument for the validity of the topic itself. So make the argument. This is where you answer the “who cares?” question. Once again, this ain’t no mystery. Come right out and say what your argument is: Scholars of ... need to be concerned about...because...

Begin the section with an intro paragraph that offers a thesis for the section itself as well as a preview of what the section will cover (a kind of roadmap readers can follow). At the end of the section, write a summary paragraph that draws a conclusion and summarizes what readers need to take away from the section. Also in the conclusion paragraph segue to the next section so the reading flows logically to the next step.

It’s not the reader’s job to figure out where you’re headed with this thing. It’s your job constantly to point to and remind and crystallize where you are leading the reader. Yes, very hard work. Yes, your job.

## Literature Review

By the way, ditto on this section and every other section regarding set-up thesis/preview intro graph and summary/segue closing graph. Each section of your paper needs both.

So now you're ready to write the *literature review*. The literature review is *not* a long string of descriptions of studies. *The purpose of the literature review is to locate your study within a tradition of research, scholarship, or studies.* The literature review is an intentional argument that assesses/judges the existing literature, critiques its strengths and weaknesses, and argues why *your* study is necessary to fill a gap or build on the tradition. Tell us the story about this literature. Organize it all for us in a way that makes sense and supports your case for the merits of *your* study.

First, in your mind, assess the literature. Can you visualize the several or many different streams? So tell us what those streams are, what they study, and use citations to support your claims. Use a couple of concrete studies as examples and for instances for each stream. Tell us the strengths and limits of each stream—either in your own judgment or in the judgments of other scholars.

Then tell us what stream you are joining with *your* study. Provide a rationale for why *your* study belongs in that stream. Next tell us what your chosen stream already knows in terms of *hard data*, and support each claim with citations. Tell us what your study will add to what we already know, what hole it fills, how it contributes to/builds on the stream, and provide an argument of reasons why.

In sum, the literature review is a *critique* of the *relevant* literature, not an endless description of the literature. The reason you're writing is because you supposedly are now an expert on this topic. Winnow through the literature and give readers only what's important so they

can understand *your* study. (On the other hand, if you're writing a thesis proposal or a thesis, the literature review also must prove you've read *all* the literature, so your thesis is not the place to be skimpy on reviewing the literature.)

## Theoretical Framework

*The purpose of the theoretical framework is literally to frame your study with a worthy theory that helps explain, articulate, predict, or model both the study and what you hope to argue, discover, find, or prove.*

The *theoretical framework* may come after your background to situate your work within a theoretical tradition, or it may come after your literature review to provide readers with the theoretical setup for your analysis. A good rule of thumb is to put the theoretical framework before the literature review if your research is empirical or quantitative research that extends/proves/disproves the theory you describe in your theoretical framework. If your research is empirical qualitative analysis or a critical essay of some kind, then put your theoretical framework between the literature review and the method because, in this case, your theoretical framework actually becomes part of your method—the theory is *how* you will analyze. Nevertheless, like all rules of thumb, they don't always apply. So use your common sense on how to order your sections.

For your own sake, choose only one theoretical framework with which to approach or frame or operate under in your study. Then thoroughly explain the theory, its development from day one to present, and offer arguments as to why it is the best theory to use for *your* study. Support your arguments whenever possible with what other scholars have written—in other words, citations.

Your theoretical framework may be uses and gratifications or it may be Mulvey's gaze, or it may be Tuchman's symbolic annihilation, or whatever. Only you can decide what theoretical frame to put around your study. But you still have to make a good argument for why *that* theory and what you are contributing to or building on that theory with *your* study.

Why is your theory the best choice to approach *your* study? Why should anyone care about this theory and its arguments—or *your* study, for that matter?

You've heard the old saying that if we have a hammer, we go around looking for nails to hammer, and if we have a saw, we go around looking for things to saw. Your theoretical framework is the hammer, so make the argument that you need to hammer nails, not saw boards.

### R1, H1, or Thesis Statement, Etc.

*Before you get to your methods section, you need to clarify the specifics of what you are studying for your readers.*

In social scientific work, whether quantitative or qualitative, you will have one or more research questions or hypotheses. "R" stands for research question and "H" stands for hypothesis.

For example, if you are trying to answer a research *question*, you might write something like: "R1: Do elementary-age children notice the use of tobacco products in Disney animated films? R2: How do elementary-age children interpret tobacco use in Disney animated films?"

If you are testing one or more *hypotheses*, then you might write something like: "H1: Elementary-age school children associate

smoking with villains in Disney animated films. H2: Elementary-age school children will not notice the use of tobacco in Disney animated films."

If you are not doing social science, then you merely need to write a sentence that encapsulates your question or thesis. In any event, just before the methods section, gel and consolidate the intention of the research.

### Method

Next write the methodology section. *The purpose of the methodology section is to detail step by step the process involved in the study and to offer rationales for each decision you have made at every step.*

So begin at the beginning: In the first paragraph tell us your question/hypothesis/driving thesis/purpose and also detail the entire study step by step in terms of the method. I mean "detail." What people, site, and/or texts will you use, how will you get the participants, how many, which genders and which mixes and why, what treatments will you use and why, what prompts will you use and why? Etc., etc. What in the end do you hope to find out, learn, discover, prove, disprove? Outline all this succinctly in one paragraph.

Then, after you have detailed the study in the first paragraph, break down the study step by step and provide arguments and rationales supported by citations for each decision you have made. Why focus groups and not another method (use citations)? Why the particular age group you've chosen? Why the treatment you've chosen? Etc., etc., step by step. Justification, justification, justification. Rationale, rationale, rationale. Cite, cite, cite.

In the last paragraph, summarize the argument for your method and why it's the one and only best method for your theory, your positioning in the literature, and your question/hypothesis/thesis. Again, this is an argument. You are arguing a case before a jury. So make the case. Use logic and proofs to support your argument.

## Results

Here you merely describe your results. *The purpose of the results section is to report your findings*—simply and objectively.

If you're writing a research proposal, you obviously won't have results to report so skip it and move on.

Unless your completed research project involves data collection or empirical observation, you probably won't have a results section, either. For example, historical research may not have results. Essays won't have "results."

However, social scientific data collection, including qualitative methods such as depth interviews and focus groups, will have results. So report them.

## Analysis or Discussion

Once again, if you're writing a research proposal, you obviously won't have anything to analyze yet so skip it and move on.

*The purpose of the analysis section is to make sense of the results.* Analyze your data for readers.

Or, if you don't have "results" per se, then do the qualitative or critical explication or the deconstructive unpacking of your unit of analysis, your research matter or material, or the "text" under

scrutiny—interviews, media content, organizational policy, corporate culture, etc.

This is where your theoretical framework will become mighty handy. Use the theory as a lens or frame through which to view and analyze. If you're writing an essay of some sort, then your analysis might be labeled something else, but the function of the section is the same—to break down and assess the meat of the project and to showcase your original thinking on the subject.

## Conclusions

### A *Proposal* Conclusion

A proposal conclusion quickly "concludes" a proposed research project. *The purpose of the proposal conclusion is merely to put closure on the proposal.* For the last time, briefly summarize your thesis or research question, theoretical proposition, methodological choices, contribution to the chosen literature/research stream/tradition, and answer the "who cares" question. This should be a smooth, logical progression in the form of an argument. Close the sale (you're selling your ideas).

For a thesis proposal, you will need to write a preview of chapters *before* the conclusions. The preview of chapters, quite literally, offers sentences that preview each chapter. (Chapter one will... Chapter two will..., etc.)

### Conclusions for a *Completed* Study

Here you draw some conclusions based on your results and analysis or, if you don't have "results," then based on your final analysis and argument. You also need to reiterate the same information as in a proposal conclusion. Finally, you do a little self-critique by admitting the limitations and weaknesses of your study (thereby pre-empting the embarrassment of having others point them out for you). Here

also is where you suggest directions for future research. *The purpose of the conclusions section is to wrap up and restate the study, its value, the significance of its findings, and its strengths and weaknesses.*

Then, you're done—except for making sure your bibliography is complete, accurate, and complies with APA standards, or whatever your particular academic stylebook dictates.