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**Diversity and the Media**

Fall 2018

Tuesdays & Thursdays

2:30 – 3:45 p.m.

202 Stauffer-Flint

Blackboard site: <http://courseware.ku.edu>

Prof. Barbara Barnett

203-B Stauffer-Flint Hall

Phone: 785-864-0604

E-mail: [barnettb@ku.edu](mailto:barnettb@ku.edu)

Office Hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays –

1 – 2 p.m., 4 – 5 p.m.

Or by appointment

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to J534, a course on diversity in the media. In this course we're going to take a look at how the mass media affect us—our points of view, our actions, our attitudes about others and their attitudes about us. We'll take a look at the roles the media play in challenging or reinforcing the stereotypes we have about ourselves and the people with whom we live and work.

You want to think of diversity as an important work tool.

Webster's dictionary defines diversity as a "state of difference."

In this class we'll define diversity as difference, too—differences in perspectives and experiences. Our views of the world—and the world's view of us—may be affected by our race, sex, religion, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, geography, ethnicity, age, or physical abilities. We'll look at the roles mass media play in shaping our views of ourselves, as well as our views of others whose experiences and perspectives are different from our own.

In this class, we'll start to think carefully about the media images we see and hear. And we'll consider if or how those images are realistic and representative of the world in which we live. In this class, we'll study images and portrayals of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, whites, women, men, gays and lesbians, the elderly, and the disabled. We'll consider how wealth and social status—or lack of it—affect our access to information.

Our primary focus will be journalism and strategic communications and will include news, public relations, and advertising, but we'll take a look at entertainment media as well, including film, music, and television. We'll study historic and contemporary examples of media portrayals of diverse groups, and we'll discuss how those portrayals have changed and continue to change.

## **What will we learn?**

Our goals in this class are to:

- Increase our understanding and awareness of how the mass media portray diverse populations.
- Think critically and carefully about the media's portrayals of diverse groups.
- Consider how media portrayals affect our personal views and professional practices.
- Examine diverse populations' use of mass media to disseminate information, provide entertainment, and practice "resistance" to mainstream ideas.
- Become skilled, thoughtful communication professionals by becoming more aware of diversity in news, entertainment, advertising, public relations, marketing, and digital media.
- Improve research, writing, and media presentation skills as we learn how to portray more accurately and fairly individuals and groups outside society's mainstream.
- Think about the relationship between diversity and ethics.

- Consider the needs of diverse audience, publics, and markets and think about how an understanding of diversity can help us best meet those needs.

### **How will we learn?**

One way we'll learn is by reading what communication professionals and media scholars have written about diversity. There is one required textbooks for this course. It is:

**Lind, R. A. (Ed.) (2013). *Race/gender/media 3.0: Considering diversity across audiences, content, and producers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.**

It is available in the KU student bookstore. There are older editions of this book, but they don't include some of the readings we'll discuss in class. You want the most recent edition.

We will also have readings online, and we'll watch videos. Those materials will be posted on the course Blackboard site: [Https://courseware.ku.edu](https://courseware.ku.edu)

Read before you come to class.

You'll learn best in this class if you're actively participating, so please come to class prepared. Discussion should be the rule in this class, not the exception.

Because this class is about differences in perspectives and experiences, it is **essential** that we all **listen to** and **respect** each other. We will talk about some controversial topics, and we will read articles or see videos that challenge our ideas about how the media work. You don't need to agree with others in the class or to accept what you read as true. However, you do want to keep an open mind, and you want to be civil.

### **What will you do in this class?**

To determine how well you are learning key concepts from readings and discussions and to determine how skillful you are in applying the concepts you've learned, you'll complete a series of assignments. This class is focused on research and analysis of media, so your assignments will reflect that emphasis. You also will receive a grade for attendance. The assignments are outlined below.

#### ***Quizzes.***

We'll have three short quizzes on the readings this semester. This will include any videos posted on Blackboard, and they will include any additional readings we have for the class. I will post the quizzes online, and you'll have 24 hours to complete them. Each will be 10-20 multiple-choice questions. You will take the quizzes on Blackboard. They will be open-book, open-note. Tentative quiz dates are: **Tuesday, Sept. 11; Tuesday, Oct. 2; and Tuesday, Nov. 27.** These dates may change, but I'll announce any changes in class and I'll announce them well in advance.

***A brand new you.*** We'll assign you a new identity, and you'll take a look at media through your new "eyes." You'll see how the new you is portrayed in the media, if at all. And you'll write a two-page, double-spaced paper about how you saw your new self included or excluded, how the media portrayed the new you, and how you felt about all of this. The paper is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, Sept. 20.**

***Listening post story.***

This assignment has two parts.

First, you'll visit a (safe) place you normally don't go. You'll observe who's there, what they're doing, what they're talking about, how they're acting and interacting with each other. You'll write a short paper, no more than two pages, on what you observed. You'll link it to your future profession. What product/s might you advertise to this group? If you wrote a news story, what would that story be about? If you were a public relations professional, how might you try to build relationships with the people you've seen. This is due **Tuesday, Oct. 9**, at the beginning of class.

Second, you'll return to the place you visited (or you can do this during your first visit). You'll interview someone there who is not like you. After you've interviewed the person, you want to write a short profile story or a story about an important event in this person's life (first day at KU, first visit to this place, most memorable day in their life, or an idea of your own). This should be three to four pages, double-spaced. Make this work match your interests. If you prefer to shoot video, to think about an ad for a product, or plan a PR message, you can do that. See me to discuss details. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, Oct. 30.**

***Final research report.***

***Media Advocacy Project.*** Instead of a final exam, you will turn in a report on mass media and diversity. You'll monitor some aspect of the media over a set period of time, then you'll write a report for the person who produces the media, explaining how well the media did or did not incorporate diversity. You'll use information that you learned in class in your report, but this will primarily be your own observations and thoughts, based on careful analysis.

This is an opportunity for you to write about something you're really interested in and to focus on a form of media that appeals to you. Past reports have included analyses of: minority characters in soap operas; images of men in photos in a health magazine published over a three-month period; images of women on the sports pages of three different newspapers; photos of racial minorities in USA Today; and racial diversity among news sources in the Kansan.

Start thinking about this now since you may want to see movies, watch television shows, or read magazines over several months. You need to submit an idea for your final project by **Friday, Nov. 9, by 5 p.m.** Submit the final paper by **Friday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.**

In all of the writing assignments, grammar and spelling count. Please follow Associated Press style guidelines. Your work must be original, accurate, and on time.

**Attendance.** There are numerous studies that show that students who receive the highest grades in class are also the students who attended class most often. It's a simple concept: If you show up, you'll learn more, and you'll get a higher grade. To encourage you to attend class regularly, I'll take attendance.

I will start taking attendance Sept. 4 to give people time to drop and add the course. Afterward, we will have 25 class sessions, and you will receive four points for each class you attend. Everyone gets one "free" absence, so even if you miss one class, you can still get a 100 on attendance. You don't need to explain why you're absent—just use the one free absence wisely.

I will circulate a sign-up sheet during every class session. Please sign your name. Signing for another person constitutes academic dishonesty, and you will be expelled from the class if you do so.

### **A few words about your assignments**

- Because deadlines have been announced in advance, **late papers will not be accepted. They. Will. Not. Be. Accepted.** Broken computers, lost jump drives, dysfunctional printers, or an interviewee's failure to call you back are not excuses for missing the deadline. If you anticipate a problem meeting a deadline, let me know ahead of time.
- Please keep electronic and hard copies of all your work. That way if a paper is lost (because of you or me), we can solve the problem quickly. Please keep any copies of graded papers that are returned to you. That way, if there is a discrepancy as grades are posted, we can check and resolve the problem right away.
- If you type your paper on library or lab computers, save your papers to a jump drive. The computers are "cleaned" every night. If you don't save your paper electronically, you'll lose it.

### **How will your work be evaluated?**

Here is how your grades will be calculated:

Attendance – 100 points

Quiz 1 -- 20

Quiz 2 – 20

Quiz 3 – 20

A brand new you – 50 points

Listening post observation – 50 points

Listening post interview – 100 points

Advocacy project – 200 points

You can earn a total of 560 points in this class. To get your final grade, I'll divide the number of points you earned by the total number for the class. For example, if you earned 445 points in the class, your final grade will be 79.4 or C+ ( $445 / 535 = 79$ ). If you earned 490 points, your grade will be an B+ ( $490 / 535 = 87.5$ ). If the first decimal point is .5 or above, it will be rounded up to the next number. If it's .4 or lower, it will not be rounded up.

You will receive a numerical and letter grade on each project you complete. Specific instructions and evaluation sheets for each writing assignment are posted on Blackboard. Generally, your research and writing will be evaluated this way:

A = Excellent. Wow, wow, and wow! You hit it out of the park! The assignment is well-written or well-presented. You got out of your comfort zone. The assignment presentation is clear and concise. Your approach shows originality and creativity. The assignment refers back to concepts and ideas discussed in class and in the readings. The assignment demonstrates that you clearly understand these concepts. The assignment is thorough; there are no unanswered questions. You have done an excellent job researching, reporting, and presenting. Quotes and information are attributed. Sources are credible and clearly identified. Grammar and spelling are close to perfect. You followed Associated Press style.

B = Above average. Really nice job. Your work shows a high level of originality and independent thought. You have gone above and beyond what was expected. You have presented the material well, but there may be minor unanswered questions or organizational problems. You have done a good job researching, reporting, and presenting. However, you may not have identified clearly all sources or may not have used the most credible sources. There may be some minor grammar, spelling, or style mistakes. You show a good understanding of the ideas and concepts discussed in class or in the readings, although there may be some minor errors or explanations may not be clear.

C = Satisfactory. Ok job; you cruised. You did the minimal amount of work expected in the assignment. There are significant unanswered questions for the reader / viewer. The article / report is not well-organized. The writing is not clear or succinct. There are technical problems with photos or videos, and they do not work to tell a story. There are numerous grammar, spelling, or style errors. There are numerous cases when information and quotes are not attributed. Many sources are not credible. You have not demonstrated a clear understanding of ideas or concepts discussed in class.

D = Unsatisfactory. Are you kidding me? The work is below average. The quality of the writing and research is poor. You did not use credible sources or did not attribute sources. There is no indication you put much thought or effort into the work. Grammar and spelling errors make this story incomprehensible. Photos or videos are of such poor quality, it's hard to tell what's going on. They don't work together to tell a story. The work demonstrates little understanding of the ideas or concepts discussed in class. (If you are taking this class, you should not get this grade.)

F = Failing. Back to the drawing board. You did not complete the assignment on time or did not do what was expected. (You don't want this grade either.)

Your final grade for this class will be a letter grade. Here's the grading scale.

<b>A</b>	560 – 521	<b>C</b>	430 – 409
<b>A-</b>	520 – 504	<b>C-</b>	408 – 392
<b>B+</b>	503 – 487	<b>D+</b>	391 – 375
<b>B</b>	486 – 465	<b>D</b>	374 – 353
<b>B-</b>	464 – 448	<b>D-</b>	352 – 336
<b>C+</b>	447 – 431	<b>F</b>	335 and below

### **Class policies**

It's my responsibility to make this class a positive learning experience for you and to help you do well on your assignments. My responsibilities are to be in class on time, to give you feedback on your assignments in a timely way, and to create a classroom atmosphere in which you feel you can safely express your ideas and opinions. You have responsibilities to make this class a good learning experience, too, for yourself and your classmates.

- You should complete the assigned readings before you come to class. That way, you'll be able to participate actively in the discussions.
- *Everyone* in this class should participate in the discussions. Everyone should feel free to express ideas, opinions, and questions. I will work to make sure we all feel comfortable talking and that no one, including me, dominates the conversations.
- We are going to discuss some controversial topics in this class, and these discussions may make us feel angry, annoyed, hurt, guilty, or confused. While it's normal to feel emotional, we want to keep our discussions civil and respectful. We want to listen to what others have to say, even if we don't agree, and to give everyone an opportunity to speak. I expect everyone in the classroom to be tolerant and open to new ideas.
- I expect you to be here every day, and I expect you to be on time. If you are going to be absent, or if you're going to be late or need to leave early, please let me know in advance.
- Do not wander in and out of class. Take restroom and water breaks before or after class.
- Please turn off cell phones when class begins. Don't check phone messages or text messages in class. If your cell phone rings, I will ask you to leave.
- No computers in class.
- Don't work on other assignments in this class. Don't work on crosswords or play Minecraft on your phones. Again, if you do this, I'll ask you to leave.

- Keep personal conversations to a minimum. Your ideas are important, so be sure to share them with the entire class.
- This is a journalism class, so deadlines are important. Please turn in assignments on time.
- Because this is a journalism class, grammar and spelling are important. Not paying attention to grammar and spelling will adversely affect your grade.

### **Academic integrity and professionalism**

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism and fabrication. Neither do I. If you plagiarize or fabricate material, you can expect to get a zero on the assignment. You also can expect to fail the course and possibly to be expelled from the journalism school.

Here's some more information that may clarify these issues.

Plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas, thoughts, or opinions and passing them off as your own. This includes print and electronic materials (no matter how old they are), as well as materials from the Internet. If you cut and paste materials from the Internet, and you don't attribute your work, you've committed plagiarism.

If you use secondary sources—that is, research that someone else has already done—you must attribute the sources in your papers.

You don't have to attribute commonly known facts (broccoli is a vegetable) or historical facts (Donald Trump is president of the United States).

Fabrication is making up something and presenting it as true. This includes making up a statistic, a fact, or a figure. It also includes making up quotes for interviews or “fudging” on quotes to make them sound more interesting. It's okay in fiction; it's not okay in a journalism course.

If you have questions about plagiarism or fabrication, see me.

Also, please note that all your work must be **original** for this class. Don't recycle assignments from past or current classes, including high school (this actually happened). If you write your own blog, work for campus media, or have another class that is discussing diversity, don't use work from those projects to meet the requirements of this class or vice versa.

### **The course Blackboard site**

We'll use the course Blackboard site throughout the semester: <http://courseware.ku.edu>. I will post grades on the site (only you will be able to see your grade), and I'll use the site to send class e-mails. Many of your assigned readings will be posted on the Blackboard site. Also,

we'll use the site to post class announcements, to post some of your excellent work, or to post interesting articles or links to relevant articles and Web sites. Please check the site frequently.

Also, you can file your assignments on Blackboard. If you do that, I can give you feedback on your work.

### **Some other information to know**

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a need that may affect your learning, please contact me as soon as possible. I want to work with you to make learning in this class accessible.

Please be aware that the KU Office of Student Access Services coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. You will need to provide documentation to the office, and a staff member will contact me. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at: <https://access.ku.edu/> Or you can visit the office at 22 Strong Hall. The phone number is: 785-864-4064 or email: [achieve@ku.edu](mailto:achieve@ku.edu). Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

Watkins Health Center. KU wants to be healthy while you're here. You can visit Watkins for confidential preventive care or treatment – everything from prescription medicines, to flu shots, to broken bones. Here's the website: <http://studenthealth.ku.edu/> Here's the phone number: 785-864-9500. Here's the email: [health@ku.edu](mailto:health@ku.edu)

KU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS provides confidential counseling services to help you stay mentally health here at school. Here's the website: <https://caps.ku.edu/> Here's the phone number: 785-864-2277.

KU Financial Aid and Scholarships. Here's the website: <http://affordability.ku.edu/> Here's the phone: 785-864-4700. Here's the email: [financialaid@ku.edu](mailto:financialaid@ku.edu)

Food banks. The Campus Cupboard, operated by the Center for Community Outreach, can help if you need food. You can find the organization on Facebook. Here's the website: <http://www.cco.ku.edu/campus-cupboard-2/> Here's the email: [cco@ku.edu](mailto:cco@ku.edu). Here's the phone: (785) 864-4073.

### **A final word**

Diversity is more than a way of thinking; it's a job skill. Diversity is an important topic in mass media, and one that is sparking considerable debate within the communication professions. This class offers you a chance to get in on the discussions: to consider how the media shape our perspectives of ourselves and others. It also gives you an opportunity to start thinking about how you might want to change or challenge the way the media work. In the future, you'll be making the rules. This class offers you a chance to think about mass media images and how you might change those images when you become a media producer. Have some fun!



