JOMC 441

DIVERSITY AND COMMUNICATION

SPRING 2014

Online Course

Professor: Trevy A. McDonald, Ph.D.

Office: 329 Carroll Hall

Phone: 919-843-1035

Office Hours: MW 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., M 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m., by appointment, or whenever my office door is open.

e-mail: [trevy@email.unc.edu](mailto:trevy@email.unc.edu)

Graduate Assistant: Victoria Fosdal (fosdal@live.unc.edu)

“Commit to your dream

and the desired resources

are provided now.”

--Trevy A. McDonald, 2003

**Diversity and Media: Dispelling Myths, Challenging Stereotypes** is the theme for the course this semester. I have long been interested in how the media informs individuals about groups they have little experience or exposure with.

American mainstream media has long been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes. Members of marginalized groups have particularly been concerned about their representation because it is not as balanced as representations of the majority group. This semester through your individual and group assignments you will dispel the prevalent myths and challenge the limiting stereotypes that are so pervasive in our society. It is my goal that these assignments can be posted to a class website in order to inform and educate others beyond the confines of our classroom, university, and local community.

Very early in the semester you will each be assigned to a group. That group represents a marginalized group (e.g. African American, Arab American, etc.). Through the duration of the semester you will critically examine how that group is represented in American mainstream media through the individual assignments: Written Diversity Feature and Textual Analysis, and the group final project. I would like for the group members to combine their skill sets and experiences to create the group project. Based on your findings, for the final project, each group will create a new media text, which you feel presents that group more accurately. You will find details about each assignment in this syllabus.

**Course Objectives**

This syllabus covers expectations of you as a student in JOMC 441, “Diversity and Communication.” It also describes the general types of assignments, exams, and provides guidelines to evaluate and grade your work.

This course examines representations of marginalized groups in entertainment, news, advertising and public relations with a particular focus on roles and responsibilities. It will also explore media access and advocacy. Course topics will be explored through lectures, discussions, guest speakers, student assignments and videotapes/DVDs. Students are expected to be prepared for class discussions and to submit papers on assigned dates. **(LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.)** If you miss an exam, be prepared to provide me with a physician’s verification of illness to avoid an assignment of ‘F’ for the exam. Students are responsible for any and all material covered in class (lectures, discussions, presentations, videos) and for all reading assignments.

**Course Goals**

* Critically analyze a media text
* Critically examine and explain how ethnic portrayals in the media shape our society
* Explain the complexities of the relationships between race, culture, mass media and media management/ownership
* Build networks with experts on various issues of media and society
* Master project-based learning skills including communication and presentation skills, research and inquiry skills and group-participation and leadership skills

**Professional Values and Competencies**

Individual professions in journalism and mass communication may require specialized values and competencies. Irrespective of their particular specialization, all students should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

* Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
* Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
* Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
* Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
* Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
* Think creatively and independently.
* Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communication professions, audiences, and purposes they serve.
* Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

**Required Text and Readings**

Wilson, C.C., Gutiérrez, F., and Chao, L.M. (2013). ***Racism, sexism, and the media: Multicultural issues into the new communications age.*** Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Reserve readings are listed as noted on the syllabus.

Sakai Readings: Additional related readings will be posted on Sakai.

**Participation**

All students are expected to actively participate in class. This means that you ask questions, share opinions, challenge and critique in a respectful manner. I’m sure you will find that the more you contribute to online discussions and group exercises, the more knowledgeable we all become.

**Grades**

Definitions of Undergraduate Grades

These definitions were adopted by the Faculty Council in 1976. The Council reiterated that the purpose of grades is to identify **degrees of mastery of subject matter.** Moreover, those grades have specific meaning with respect to mastery of the material.

A

Outstanding mastery of course material. Students earning an “A” have performed far above that required for credit in the course and far above that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student

performance that is relatively unusual in the course. The “A” grade states clearly that the student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study that he or she may be strongly encouraged to continue.

B

Superior mastery of course material. Students earning a “B” have exhibited mastery clearly above that required for credit in the course. The “B” grade should represent student performance that is strong and very clearly above performance that is generally held to be satisfactory. The “B” grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.

C

Satisfactory mastery of course material. The “C” grade should reflect performance that is satisfactory on all counts and that clearly deserves full credit for the course. The “C” grade states that, while not yet showing an unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.

D

Mastery of course material that is unsatisfactory or poor along one or more dimensions. Students achieving a “D” have exhibited incomplete mastery of course material but have achieved enough to earn credit for the course. The “D” grade states that the student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of “D” grades should mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in that academic field.

F

Unsatisfactory mastery of course material. Students earning a “F” have not demonstrated sufficient mastery of course material to earn credit for the course. The “F” grade indicates that the student’s performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. A grade of “F” should warrant an adviser’s questioning whether the student may suitably register for further study in the discipline before remedial work is undertaken.

Grading Worksheet

**Assignment/Exam Grade Value My Grade**

* Reflection Paper—Campus Cultural Center 50 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Reflection Paper—Diversity Event 50 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Autobiography 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Diversity Feature 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Textual Analysis 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Midterm Exam 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Final Exam 150 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Final Project 150 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Peer Evaluation 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Class Exercises 100 points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Breakdown of Grades

A = 950-1000 A- = 900-949 B+ = 870-899

B = 830-869 B- = 800-829 C+ = 770-799

C = 730-769 C- = 700-729 D+ = 670-699

D = 630-669 D- = 600-629 F = 599 and below

* Your grade will be lowered for unexcused absences (see Attendance section).
* Your grade for a specific assignment will be lowered if it is turned in late (see Assignments section).
* Your grade for the papers and final project will be limited to a C if it contains ten or more spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.

**Grading Disputes**

My goal is to be fair, consistent, and objective in grading each student based on the established grading rubric criteria. If you have any questions about your grade you must make an appointment with me to discuss it within a week after the assignment was returned. However, if you feel that an error has been made in grading it is your right to appeal the grade using the procedure outlined on page 384 of the *Undergraduate Bulletin.*

**Honor Code**

It is the responsibility of each student to abide by the UNC Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating or plagiarism. The Honor Code, which has governed the performance of all academic work at UNC for more than 120 years, will be enforced in this class. For a refresher visit http://honor.unc.edu/students/index.html

**Getting Assistance from Me**

You can contact me outside of class by e-mail. I will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours. Feel free to visit me during office hours to discuss any problems you may be having with the course. It is imperative that you address problems as they arise rather than waiting until the end of the semester.

**Special Accommodations**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can help ensure that your needs are met. **I prefer to know about any special circumstances within the first two weeks of the semester.**

If you need information about disabilities, you can contact the Department of Disability Services at 962-8300 or visit the Department’s website at: <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu>.

**Assignments**

* A tentative course schedule of readings and assignments is attached to this syllabus.

Please be aware that the course schedule is subject to change—you will be notified in advance of any changes.

* Instructions for specific assignments can be found under the “Assignments” section of Sakai.

All assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on the date they are due. You will lose 20% of your grade for each day your assignment is turned in late. **Assignments must be submitted under the appropriate assignment in Sakai (e.g. Feature, textual analysis).**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reflection Papers (350-500 words)**

Reflection papers explore personal insights on a topic or issue and how it does or does not affect you. This semester you will write two reflection papers—one will require you to visit a campus cultural center (listed below). The other reflection paper requires you to attend an event on campus (speaker, film, etc.) that explores diversity. The paper should include the following:

* Description of center or event
* Any assumptions you had prior to the experience (visit or event).
* What did you learn as a result of visiting the center or attending the event?
* Changes in perception, beliefs, etc. as a result of visiting the center or attending the event.
* Arguments on the issue raised by the speaker or film (event).
* Relevant points not explored by the speaker or film.
* Any questions you may have about the center, or issue explored in the event.
* Your overall feeling and interpretation.

**Campus Cultural Center visit (50 points)**

**Word Count: 350-500 words**

**Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 2014**

* [Carolina American Indian Center](http://americanindiancenter.unc.edu/) (113A Abernethy Hall)
* [Carolina Latina/o Collaborative](http://clc.unc.edu/) (Craige North)
* [Carolina Women’s Center](http://womenscenter.unc.edu/) (Stone Center, Suite 101)
* [Sonya Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History](http://ibiblio.org/shscbch/)
* [UNC LGBTQ Center](http://lgbtq.unc.edu/) 3226 SASB North

**Campus Diversity Event** **(50 points)**

**Word count: 350-500 words**

**Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16, 2014**

You may attend any campus lecture, film, or other event that explores diversity for this assignment. Events will be posted to Sakai.

**Autobiography (100 points)**

**Word Count: 750-1,000 words**

**Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2014**

Your autobiography should explore your biological, anthropological, sociological, and psychological identities and how they, along with media have shaped your perspective of diversity in America. Explore the following: What is the race and ethnicity of your parents and grandparents? (biological); What cultural expressions and experiences are part of your life? (anthropological); How do others see you and treat you? (sociological); What does all of this mean and how do you see yourself? (psychological). How is any of this influenced by the media you consume? Make sure you hook your reader with the introduction.

**Diversity Feature (100 points)**

**Word count: 1,000-1,200 words**

**Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24, 2014**

The feature story is a human interest story that relates to your assigned group and meets the class theme of dispelling myths and challenging stereotypes. It must be about a person, event, organization, or situation on the UNC campus. In previous semesters students have written excellent feature stories on students, faculty members, events like Holi Moli, campus organizations and other campus issues.

**Textual Analysis (100 points)**

**Word count: 1,000-1,200 words**

**Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 31, 2014**

Each student will be placed in a group (African-American, Arab-American, etc.), which will explore the ways in which that group is portrayed in mainstream mass media. For this assignment, each student in the group will examine a different and specific media text (e.g., an **episode** of a TV show, a film, a magazine ad, etc) and write a textual analysis. An analysis of a television series (as opposed to a single episode), or the films of a particular actress or director (as opposed to a single film) are beyond the scope of this assignment and course. **All papers require bibliographies using APA style. Guidelines for citing Audio/Visual sources in APA are posted in Sakai. There will be an automatic 10 point deduction on all papers that do not include a bibliography.**

**Final Project/Presentation/Peer Evaluation (250 points)**

**Final Project (150 points)—group grade**

**Peer Evaluation (100 points)**

**ALL PEER EVALUTIONS ARE REQUIRED AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Based on the group members’ findings in the feature story and textual analysis, each group will create a new media text, which they feel more accurately portrays that culture. The new text may be an original TV show, film, magazine, rebranding of a product, etc. Your group may also propose a different type of project than those listed. Examples of previous final projects are on reserve in the Park Library.

*Magazine*

The group should create 24 pages of a magazine, which will include a front cover, table of contents, sample advertisements, editor’s letter, sample articles, sample regular features. This may be submitted electronically.

*TV Show*

The group should create a 3-5 page character bible, a list of 10 episode titles and subjects, a 5- page treatment (outline), and 10 pages of a sample script.

*Film*

The group should create a 10-page treatment (outline) and 10 pages of a sample script.

\**Guidelines for character bibles and treatments will be posted on Sakai*

*Rebranding of Product*

The group should create a brochure 16 or more pages in length and other related press materials.

Each group should submit their final project idea (one to two paragraphs is sufficient) to me via e-mail by **Monday, March 24**

**Peer Evaluation**

Students will evaluate each of their group members’ performance and participation in the final project. Evaluation forms will be available in April and must be submitted by the last day of class.

**Tentative Course Schedule**

Opportunities may arise throughout the semester for special projects, and other innovative activities as we progress through the semester. Some topics may require more discussion than anticipated. For those reasons, this schedule is tentative and changes to enhance your learning experience may be made. Throughout the semester each module will be posted to Sakai and contain online lectures, discussion questions, and class exercises. **Each module will include due dates for exercises as well as reminders for any assignments which are due during that time frame.**

**Module 1** Introduction to Course

Diversity Exercises

Instructions for NBC Learn

**Module 2** Who are the Minorities?

Key Theoretical Concepts

In Class Exercise--Framing

**Read: WGC Chapter 1**

**Module 3** Role of Media in our Society

Media Matter

**Read: WGC Chapter 2**

**Module 4** Imagery, Representation, & Stereotypes

**Read: WGC Chapters 3 & 4**

**Reserve Reading (PARK LIBRARY) Carstarphen & Sanchez, Ch 1**

**Watch *Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a media stereotype***

[**http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391190**](http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391190)

**Watch *The Slanted Screen: Asian Men in Film and Television***

[**http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb6988992**](http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb6988992)

**Watch *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People***

[**http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391185**](http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391185)

**Module 5** Race, Culture, and Gender in the New Media Age

**Read: WGC Chapter 5**

**Reserve Reading: Campbell, LeDuff, Jenkins, and Brown , Chapter 5**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

**Module 6** Isms in the Press

**Read: WGC Chapter 6**

**Reserve Readings: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 5**

**Campbell, LeDuff, Jenkins, and Brown, Chapter 2**

**Module 7** Marketing and Advertising

**Read: WGC Chapter 7**

**Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapters 7 and 9**

**Module 8** Public Relations

**Read: WGC Chapter 8**

**Module 9** Diversity and Media Advocacy

**Read: WGC Chapter 9**

**Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 12**

**Module 10** Diversity and Media Access

**Read: WGC Chapter 10**

**Module 11** Diversity and Alternative Media

**Read: WGC Chapter 11**

**Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 6**

**EXAM**

**Module 12** Final Projects—Due by 5:00 p.m. on April 24

**Assignment Due Dates**

January 29 Autobiography

February 24 Diversity Feature

March 5 Reflection Paper (Campus Cultural Center Visit)

March 24 Final Project Idea

March 31 Textual Analysis

April 16 Reflection Paper (Campus Diversity Event)

April 24 Final Project and Peer Evaluations

**\*Remember, class exercises are also required throughout the semester. The due dates for these individual and group assignments will be posted within the module.**