

MEJO 441
DIVERSITY AND COMMUNICATION
FALL 2017

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m.
33 Carroll Hall**

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*“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 MEJO 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.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class session. The maximum attendance score can only be earned for perfect attendance. Because some exam questions will come from material that was presented in class it is imperative that you attend each class. However, everyone may take four absences for any reason as excused absences.

- You cannot use your excused absence on the day of a presentation or test.
- If you are late to the class but arrive prior to the halfway point it will count as ½ of an absence.
- If you leave class early, but not until after the halfway point, it will count as ½ of an absence.
- **Any unexcused absence will result in a ½ grade reduction (e.g. a B becomes a B-).**

If you must miss an additional class beyond the four automatically excused absences, it can only be considered an excused absence if you provide documented proof of the reason you were absent (e.g. a doctor's note if you were sick, an obituary notice for a funeral, a mechanic/towing bill in the case of car problems). **It is your responsibility to provide such proof.**

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 class and online discussions, 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 | _____ |
| • Assignment 2 | 100 points | _____ |
| • Midterm Exam | 150 points | _____ |
| • Final Exam | 200 points | _____ |
| • Final Project | 100 points | _____ |
| • Final Project Presentation | 100 points (individual grade) | _____ |
| • Peer Evaluation | 50 points | _____ |
| • Class Exercises/Participation | 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 = 600-669 | 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. All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

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.

Diversity

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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 Accessibility Services at 962-8300 or visit the Department's website at: <http://accessibility.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 10:00 p.m. of class on the day 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 10:00 p.m. by Wednesday, October 18, 2017

- [Carolina American Indian Center](#) (113A Abernethy Hall)
- [Carolina Latinax Collaborative](#) (Craig North)
- [Carolina Women's Center](#) (Stone Center, Suite 101)
- [Sonya Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History](#)
- [UNC LGBTQ Center](#) 3308 SASB South

Campus Diversity Event (50 points)

Word count: 350-500 words

Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 10:00 p.m. by Monday, November 27, 2017

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 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 13, 2017

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.

Assignment 2 – Diversity Feature or Textual Analysis – your choice

Diversity Feature (100 points)

Word count: 1,000-1,200 words

Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25, 2017

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. You may also pitch a video diversity feature with B-roll and natural sound or an audio diversity feature with natural sound. Must be 3-5 minutes in length.

OR

Textual Analysis (100 points)

Word count: 1,000-1,200 words

Due Date: Submit to Sakai by 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25, 2017

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 (100 points) – group grade

Presentation (100 points) – individual grade

Peer Evaluation (50 points)

ALL PEER EVALUATIONS 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, November 6**.

Presentations

The presentation is an opportunity for you to sell your project to the class. Imagine that the class is a group of potential investors, studio or network execs, or the corporation whose product you are rebranding. This is your opportunity to convince them to open their checkbooks, or greenlight your project. Students should dress professionally for the presentation. Presentations will be graded individually. Presentations are scheduled for the end of the semester.

Peer Evaluation

Students will evaluate each of their group members' performance and participation in the final project. Evaluation forms will be available in November and must be submitted by the last day of class. **If you do not submit a peer evaluation for your group members, you will receive a grade of zero for your peer evaluation.**

Tentative Course Schedule

Opportunities may arise throughout the semester for special projects, guest speakers, 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. Check Sakai for updates to the schedule. Biographical information about guest speakers and panelists will be posted to Sakai.

August

Wed 23 Introduction to the Course, Diversity Exercise

Mon 28 Diversity Exercises

Wed 30 Who are the Minorities?
Read: WGC Chapter 1
In Class Exercises

September

Mon 4 Labor Day – No Class

Wed 6 Key Theoretical Concepts
In Class Exercise--Framing

Mon 11 Media Matter
Read: WGC Chapter 2

Wed 13 Disparaging the Other
Read: WGC Chapter 3
Reserve Reading (PARK LIBRARY) Carstarphen & Sanchez, Ch 1
Watch *Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a media stereotype*
<http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391190>
Autobiography is due by 10:00 p.m.

Mon 18 “Bamboozling” Stereotypes through the 20th Century
Read: WGC Chapter 4
Watch *The Slanted Screen: Asian Men in Film and Television*
<http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb6988992>

Wed 20 “Bamboozling” Stereotypes through the 20th Century (cont’d)
Watch *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*
<http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb7391185>

Mon 25 Race, Culture, and Gender in the New Media Age
Read: WGC Chapter 5
Reserve Reading: Campbell, LeDuff, Jenkins, and Brown , Chapter 5

Wed 27 Isms in the Press
Read: WGC Chapter 6
Reserve Readings: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 5
Campbell, LeDuff, Jenkins, and Brown, Chapter 2

October

Mon 2 Isms in the Press (cont’d)
Review for Midterm

Wed 4 **Midterm Exam**

October

- Mon 9 Guest Speaker
- Wed 11 Marketing and Advertising
Read: WGC Chapter 7
Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapters 7 and 9
- Mon 16 Public Relations
Read: WGC Chapter 8
- Wed 18 Group Meeting
Reflection Paper – Campus Cultural Center is due by 10:00 p.m.
- Mon 23 Advocacy
Read: WGC Chapter 9
Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 12
- Wed 25 Access
Read: WGC Chapter 10
Assignment 2 is Due by 10:00 pm.
- Mon 30 Alternative Media
Read: WGC Chapter 11
Reserve Reading: Carstarphen and Sanchez, Chapter 6
- Wed 1 Guest Speaker
- Mon 6 Film: *Smoke Signals*
Final Project Idea is due via e-mail
- Wed 8 Film: *Smoke Signals (cont'd)*
- Mon 13 Review for Exam, Distribute Peer Evaluations, Assign Group Presentations
- Wed 15 **Exam**
- Mon 20 Group Meetings
Reflection Paper – Campus Diversity Event – due by 10:00 p.m.
- Wed 22 **Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class**
- Mon 27 Group Meetings
- Wed 29 Final Presentations

December

Mon 4 Final Presentations

Wed 6 Final Presentations

Sat 9 Final Presentations (4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.)