COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: This course examines two broad themes under which gender, race and ethnicity intersect with U.S. mass media: employment and depiction. In examining media employment, we will consider questions such as the decision-making status of women and people of color in media organizations. In examining media depictions, we will consider questions such as how media depictions may stereotype and trivialize women and people of color, and what social and cultural values are reflected by these media portrayals. We will critically probe a media world that can be described as follows:

“Still, studies of women’s images in film and television continue to yield a wealth of interesting facts. To wit: Elderly women are nearly non-existent in the world of prime-time television. African-American women typically portray some variation on a nurturing mammy or a sexed-up, up-to-no-good Jezebel. Women over 40 are six times as likely to play a movie villain as men of the same age or younger women. Female victims outnumber powerful women in films almost two to one. Male characters outnumber female ones in children’s TV shows. Television movies-of-the-week feature an alarmingly high number of ‘bad seed’ teen girls and women in every manner of jeopardy. Prime-time TV is dominated by thin people, and thinness is associated with positive personality traits. Three of last year’s Academy Award-nominees got their industry’s highest honor by playing prostitutes.”

– Kelly Kershner, “As the Table Turns,” Mizzou, Spring 1997, p. 32

“In stories about poverty, crime and other social pathology, blacks and Latinos are disproportionately represented. Asian Americans are still often portrayed as foreigners. And coverage of Native Americans is riddled with misinformation and stereotypes. In newsrooms, the language of bias shows up in the common use of the phrase ‘politically correct’ without quotation marks or attribution, or the word ‘preferences’ in affirmative action and gay rights stories, or the term ‘illegal alien,’ coined by government bureaucrats to dehumanize undocumented immigrants for enforcement purposes.”


REQUIRED READING: The required texts are: Media Messages: What Film, Television and Popular Music Teach Us about Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation by Linda Holtzman (2000) and Race, Multiculturalism, and the Media: From Mass to Class Communication by Clint C. Wilson and Felix Gutierrez (1995, 2nd edition). In addition, some current articles may be distributed by the professor or placed on library reserve as the semester progresses.
**COURSE STRUCTURE:** Course components count as follows in determining your final grade:

**Group Reading Project**
- Commonplace 1 notes – due March 11: 30 points
- Commonplace 2 notes – due April 8: 15 points
- Commonplace 3 notes – due May 1: 30 points
- In-class presentation: 50 points
- Group written report: 50 points
- Group contribution score: 25 points

**Journal**
- **Journal 1** – due Feb. 27:
  - Holtzman media activities (3 x 10 points): 30 points
  - Observations of current media content (7 x 10 points): 70 points
  - Media content assessment essays 1 and 2 (2 x 50 pts): 100 points
- **Journal 2** – due April 1:
  - Holtzman media activities (7 x 10 points): 70 points
  - Observations of current media content (3 x 10 points): 30 points
  - Media content assessment essays 3 and 4 (2 x 50 pts): 100 points
- **Journal 3** – due April 24:
  - Holtzman media activities (2 x 10 points): 20 points
  - Observations of current media content (8 x 10 points): 80 points
  - Media content assessment essays 5 and 6 (2 x 50 pts): 100 points
- **Journal 4** – due May 19:
  - Holtzman media activities (5 x 10 points): 50 points
  - Observations of current media content (5 x 10 points): 50 points
  - Media content assessment essays 7 and 8 (2 x 50 pts): 100 points

**TOTAL** 1000 points

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:** This is an upper-level course. That means we should have much discussion and exchange of ideas. I expect everyone to have read the assigned readings and completed the writing and research assignments when they’re scheduled, and to come to class prepared to participate at all times.

You are allowed two absences (equivalent to one week of class) for whatever reasons you choose. After you use those two absences, each subsequent absence results in a 5-point deduction from your point total in the course. Please make your own choices about attendance and live with the consequences of your choices.

**HANDOUTS AND OVERHEAD SLIDES:** If you miss class, you can find the leftover copies of any materials distributed in class posted on my office door after class. It is your responsibility to secure any handouts you miss. I will project a number of overhead slides during class, and if you miss a class session, you will need to get notes from another student who wrote down the gist of those slides. In extreme circumstances, I can make photocopies of slides you missed, but please don’t ask me to become a photocopy shop for your repeated absences.
VIDEOS: We will view a number of videotapes in class. I do not devote class time to videotapes so you can relax and watch TV. I have carefully selected these videos because they feature experts whose arguments in the field are valuable to consider, or because they expose you to media content you would not otherwise observe. For instance, I can’t bring legendary White House correspondent Helen Thomas to class in person, but I can let you “meet” her and learn about her experiences via video. I expect you to critically engage with and debate the videos’ material. That means listening and watching carefully, and taking good notes, just as you would if I were presenting material to the class. To help you do that, I will provide a sheet of questions or arguments you can use to guide your note-taking during the videos.

EXERCISES: Occasionally, you will see an exercise listed in the course outline. These are personal inventory exercises included in the Holtzman text. You may prepare them and bring them to class as a way of enhancing class participation and focusing your thoughts before the class session. I will not grade them, but I consider preparing them your ethical duty as a stakeholder in the class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: I will not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form -- whether it is failing to credit the source of an idea paraphrased in your writing, fabricating data for a media content assessment, plagiarizing a paragraph from an online source, or inventing an example and presenting it as your own experience. Academic dishonesty is grounds for an automatic F in this course.

LATENESS: All assignments are due at the deadline listed on the course schedule, and assignments not turned in then will lose a minimum of 10 percent of their point value for missing the deadline. The number of points penalized for late assignments will increase by 10 percent for each 24 hours later they are turned in. Assignments will be not accepted after they are a week late.

GRADING: Written work will be graded with an emphasis on content, which measures good use of textual and research materials to support your conclusions (including selection and organization of facts, persuasiveness of argument, documentation of concepts) and good writing (including clarity, logic, organization and conciseness). Content will make up 75 percent of your written grades. Written work also will be graded for issues of mechanical accuracy – punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc. – that are critical to understanding and communicating. Mechanics will make up 25 percent of your written grades.

Grades in this course will be figured on a straight percentage basis. That means your final grade is based on the percentage of the total points in the course you earn. The grading will follow this scale:

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<thead>
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<td>100 - 93%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>82 - 80% B-</td>
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<td>69 - 67% D+</td>
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<td>92 - 90%</td>
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<td>79 - 77% C+</td>
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<td>89 - 87%</td>
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GROUP READING PROJECT: For this project, we'll be reading a contemporary book about the working poor, Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. You’ll be keeping a set of commonplace notes about specific aspects of the book and discussing them with a small group. At the end of the semester, you and your group will prepare an oral presentation and a
written report drawing on your discussions and your commonplace notes, and connecting them to a specific set of current media portrayals. You'll submit that report at the final exam period, when your group makes its 15- to 20-minute oral presentation about socioeconomic class and the media.

Specific directions for the reading project, as well as information about how it will be evaluated, is contained in a handout being distributed with this syllabus. The project will be discussed at length in class on Thursday, Feb. 13.

JOURNAL: This is a three-part record of your experience connecting course topics to the media world. You’ll submit journals for grading four times; the due dates are listed in the course structure section above and again on the class outline at the end of this syllabus. Journals will be graded for content and mechanics, as explained in the grading section of this syllabus. I will not grade for your personal reactions, so don’t worry that your reactions or feelings can get you a higher or lower grade. I do not expect you to parrot my views or those of any authors you’re reading for the course. I will grade for thoughtful connections and observations, for understanding and synthesis of class materials, and for insight supported by evidence.

Part 1: Holtzman media activities – 17 assignments over the semester.

These assignments are presented in the Holtzman text. You’ll need to complete these activities and bring them to class on the days listed in the class outline at the end of this syllabus, so we can use them in class discussion. You can then revise them before submitting them for grading on the next journal deadline. You may photocopy the pages from Holtzman and type your answers in her blank spaces, or you may type them on separate sheets of paper. Either way, do not submit handwritten pages.

Part 2: Observations of current media content – 23 observations over the semester.

Here’s where you present what you see, hear or read in current mass media and connect it to the course content. These observations can come from songs you hear on the radio, stories you see in the newspaper, ads you see in magazines, commercials you watch on television, movies you go to on the weekend, etc. You might, for instance, find a fashion magazine cover that exemplifies the concept of the “white beauty yardstick” we discuss in class. In the course outline below, you’ll see specific media categories from which you’re to make observations.

Once you find an example you can connect to the class sessions and/or readings, write a 75- to 100-word entry (typed, double-spaced) specifically explaining how the example connects to or contradicts the course materials. You could write about how the example you’re analyzing typifies a point made in one of the course texts or contradicts the findings of a research study presented in class. Then attach the example – a newspaper clipping, magazine ad, print-out of a web page – to your analysis. Obviously, attaching the example will be harder to do with some forms of media than others, but you can find creative ways to accomplish the task. For instance, if the example is a song, you could attach a copy of its lyrics. If it’s a movie, you could find a newspaper synopsis or a magazine critic’s review of the movie.
Part 3: Media content assessment essays – 10 assessment essays over the semester.

These assignments require you to conduct systematic assessments of media content and then use them to write essays connecting course readings to the media content. I’ll be looking for evidence that you carefully and systematically collected the required media content, and that you thoughtfully connected it to the assigned readings. For instance, I may assign an assessment essay about the portrayals of women in politics. The assignment might require you to use the Lexis-Nexis database to collect newspaper articles and broadcast transcripts about a female and a male politician, then compare the coverage and analyze it for your essay, which draws on the assigned course readings.

Media content assessment essay assignments will be distributed and discussed in class on the dates listed in the course outline below.

JOUR 305 COURSE OUTLINE – READINGS, TOPICS, ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

T, Feb. 4 Course introduction: introducing ourselves; discussing our experiences with regard to gender, race and ethnicity

Exercise: Complete Personal Inventory 1.1 (Holtzman pages 10-11) during class.

Th, Feb. 6 Media content assessment essays 1 and 2 will be assigned in class.

Theories and foundations part 1: defining racial and ethnic groups; reviewing population statistics

Reading: Wilson & Gutierrez preface and chapter 1

The course syllabus (I will be glad to answer any questions that arise from your reading of the syllabus at the beginning of this class.)

T, Feb. 11 Theories and foundations part 2: defining cultural effects and practices such as socialization, normalization, social learning, hegemony, privileged groups and targeted groups; defining media effects and practices such as framing, stereotyping, symbolic annihilation, cultivation, gender and race marking

Reading: Holtzman introduction and chapter 1 pages 3-32

Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 2

Th, Feb. 13 Theories and foundations part 3: assessing media employment and depiction by gender, race and ethnicity; discussing media assessment techniques, including the media content assessment essays and the group reading project.

Reading: Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 9

Holtzman chapter 1 pages 32-48
Media activities to prepare for class:
   Media Activity 1.2 (Holtzman page 44)
   Media Activity 1.3 (Holtzman page 46)

T, Feb. 18   Women in the media: considering gender theory, stereotyping and misogyny in portrayals of women over time; examining feminism and “women’s issues,” as portrayed by media coverage

Reading: Holtzman chapter 2 pages 51-71

Exercise: Complete Personal Inventory 2.2 (Holtzman page 54) as you read.

Media activity to prepare for class:
   Media Activity 2.1 (Holtzman pages 74-75)

Th, Feb. 20   Women and politics, as portrayed by media coverage: considering how female candidates have been gender marked; examining how political spouses have been “kept in their place”

Reading: Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.

T, Feb. 25   Women working in print and broadcast journalism: discussing the status of the newsroom “boys’ club”; examining the double standards on age and appearance applied to female journalists

Video: “She Says: Women in News”

Reading: Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.

Th, Feb. 27   Journal 1 due at the beginning of class. This journal includes:
   3 Holtzman media activities
   7 observations of current media content, distributed as follows:
      2 examples from print or broadcast news media
      2 examples from advertising media
      1 example from entertainment media (movies, music, sitcoms, etc.)
   Media content assessment essays 1 and 2

Media content assessment essays 3 and 4 will be assigned in class.

Women as portrayed by advertising: reviewing the history and sexism; defining theoretical concepts such as objectification, subordination, the male voice of
authority, the white beauty yardstick, and the “mirror” and “gender” assumptions; considering advertising messages’ influence on female body image and self-esteem

**Video:** “Killing Us Softly 3: Advertising’s Image of Women”

**Reading:** Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.

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**T, March 4**

**Women as portrayed by entertainment:** looking at “brave dames and wimpettes,” single mothers and superwomen; hearing about research into women and entertainment conducted by UST students

**Reading:** Holtzman chapter 2 pages 71-95

**Media activities to prepare for class:**
- Media Activity 2.2 (Holtzman page 77)
- Media Activity 2.3 (Holtzman page 81)
- Media Activity 2.4 (Holtzman page 86)
- Media Activity 2.5 (Holtzman pages 90-91)

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**Th, March 6**

**Young women and the media:** exploring the influence of media culture on the lives of girls and young women

**Video:** “What a Girl Wants”

**Reading:** Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.

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**T, March 11**

**Commonplace 1:** Bring two sets of your commonplace notes so you can submit one for grading and use the other during your group’s discussion. We’ll use the first half of class for these discussions.

**Women working in public relations and advertising:** in the second half of class, we’ll be discussing the issues that face young professional women in media careers; our guests will be several women in their first five years after graduation from UST.

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**Th, March 13**

**Men in the media:** understanding theoretical concepts such as misandry and emasculation; considering the “invisible” norms associated with masculinity; considering stereotypes such as the Marlboro man, the sensitive man, the violent hero, the sexually obsessed, the bumbler, the buffoon and the oaf

**Reading:** Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.
Mon, March 18  **Men in the media:** probing the media’s links between masculinity, physical aggression and body image

**Video:** “Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity”

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Th, March 20  **Sexual orientation and the media:** discussing media treatments such as ignoring, outing and stereotyping

**Video:** “Off the Straight and Narrow: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Television”

**Reading:** Holtzman chapter 6

**Exercise:** Complete Personal Inventory 6.1 (Holtzman pages 256-257) and Personal Inventory 6.2 (Holtzman pages 260-261) as you read.

**Media activities to prepare for class:**
- Media Activity 6.1 (Holtzman page 300)
- Media Activity 6.2 (Holtzman page 302)
- Media Activity 6.3 (Holtzman page 312)

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T, April 1  **Journal 2 due at the beginning of class.** This journal includes:
- 7 Holtzman media activities
- 3 observations of current media content, distributed as follows:
  - 1 example from print or broadcast news media
  - 1 example from advertising media
  - 1 example from entertainment media (movies, music, sitcoms, etc.)
- Media content assessment essays 3 and 4

**Media content assessment essays 5 and 6 will be assigned in class.**

**Media and sports:** considering the problems of race and gender marking

**Video:** “Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete”

**Reading:** Current articles will be distributed and/or placed on library reserve in advance of this class session.

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Th, April 3  **Race and ethnicity in media:** identifying similarities and differences in media depiction of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, and Native American Indians; reviewing media practices such as exclusion, demonization and subjugation
Reading: Holtzman chapter 4 and chapter 5 pages 209-212
   Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 3 and chapter 4

Exercise: Complete Personal Inventory 4.1 (Holtzman pages 150-151) as you read.

Media activity to prepare for class:
   Media Activity 5.1 (Holtzman page 211)

T, April 8

Commonplace 2: Bring two sets of your commonplace notes so you can submit one for grading and use the other during your group’s discussion. We’ll use the first half of class for these discussions.

Race, ethnicity and stereotypes in broadcast news: examining the problem of racism in crime coverage

Video: “America in Black and White”

Reading: Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 7

Th, April 10

Gender, race and ethnicity in print journalism: studying the role of specialty newspapers such as Minnesota Women’s Press, Asian Pages and La Prensa de Minnesota

Reading: Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 8

Exercise: Bring at least two copies of specialty newspapers to class. (You can find several of these papers on the racks outside the post office in Murray-Herrick.)

T, April 15

Advertising to “the new majority”: focusing on the practice of targeting messages by class, race and ethnicity, and considering concepts such as commodification of culture, subordination and victimization

Reading: Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 5 and chapter 6

Th, April 17

African Americans and entertainment media: reviewing the history and racism; examining gender stereotypes, such as the mammy, the matriarch, the “ho,” the gangsta rapper and “boys in the ‘hood,” often applied to African Americans

Video: “Color Adjustment”

Reading: Holtzman chapter 5 pages 230-253

Media activity to prepare for class:
Media Activity 5.4 (Holtzman page 246)

T, April 22  Native American Indians and the media: reviewing the history and the stereotypes, such as the mascot, the comic relief, the savage and the primitive; considering the problems of ignorant news coverage and uninformed journalists

Reading:  Holtzman chapter 5 pages 212-219

Th, April 24  Journal 3 due at the beginning of class.  This journal includes:

2 Holtzman media activities
8 observations of current media content, distributed as follows:
   2 examples from print or broadcast news media
   2 examples from advertising media
   2 examples from entertainment media (movies, music, sitcoms, etc.)
   any 2 additional examples from media content/formats of your choice

Media content assessment essays 5 and 6

Asian Americans and the media: reviewing the history and the stereotypes, such as the exotic, the dragon lady, the geisha girl and the “model” minority

Video:  “Slaying the Dragon”

Reading:  Holtzman chapter 5 pages 219-224

T, April 29  Latinos and the media: reviewing the history and the stereotypes such as the greaser, the bandit, the Latin lover and the tempestuous woman; examining why Latinos are absent from news in staggering misproportions

Reading:  Holtzman chapter 5 pages 224-230

Th, May 1  Latinos and the media, continued

Commonplace 3:  Bring two sets of your commonplace notes so you can submit one for grading and use the other during your group’s discussion.  We’ll use the second half of class for these discussions.

T, May 6  Socioeconomic class and the media: focusing on the intersection of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and the media myths of the “classless” society and the American Dream
**Video:** “People Like Us: Social Class in America,” part 1

**Reading:** Holtzman chapter 3

**Exercise:** Complete Personal Inventory 3.1 (Holtzman pages 100-101) and Personal Inventory 3.3 (Holtzman page 103) as you read.

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**Th, May 8**

**Socioeconomic class and the media, continued**

**Video:** “People Like Us: Social Class in America,” part 2

**Media activities to prepare for class:**
- Media Activity 3.1 (Holtzman pages 120-121)
- Media Activity 3.2 (Holtzman page 122)
- Media Activity 3.3 (Holtzman page 122)
- Media Activity 3.4 (Holtzman pages 126 and 127)
- Media Activity 3.5 (Holtzman page 128)

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**T, May 13**

**Group project work period.** You do not have to come to the classroom on this day, but each group is responsible for sending me an e-mail message confirming that the group met and summarizing the work it did toward the final project. I’ll be available in my office if you wish to confer with me.

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**Th, May 15**

**Possibilities for change:** considering media activism, offering ideas for altering media content and reflecting on what we’ve learned about our mediated reality

**Reading:** Wilson & Gutierrez chapter 10 and chapter 11

**Exercise:** Bring a draft of media content assessment essay 8 to class to share.

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**M, May 19**

**Journal 4 due at my office by 1 p.m.** If I am not in my office, please drop your journals into the box outside my door. This journal includes:
- 5 Holtzman media activities
- 5 observations of current media content, distributed as follows:
  - 2 examples from print or broadcast news content
  - 2 examples from advertising content
  - 1 example from entertainment media (movies, music, sitcoms, etc.)
- Media content assessment essays 7 and 8

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8 to 10 a.m.  **Final exam period:** Group reading projects are due, and group oral presentations will be made during the period.