MEDIA AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY SYLLABUS

Course Description

This course takes an analytical look at media images according to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. In order to gain a full understanding of media treatment, depiction and structure the course examines the following:

• **Reconstructing knowledge**: An examination of what we have been taught and what has been omitted and/or distorted regarding the history of oppression and liberation in the U.S. \\

• **Personal experience**: An examination of life experiences with respect to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation; based on the assumption that experience, beliefs and feelings are integral to creating meaning about individuals, groups and their depiction in media. Often these discussions trigger emotional responses, which are a natural part of studying diversity and another dimension of learning.

• **Entertainment assessment theory**: An examination and application of tools that analyze images and messages in prime time television, feature film, and popular music as well as the industry itself.

Entertainment media tells many of our cultures stories about individuals and groups of people and often are the stories we believe to be the “truth”.

Studying diversity is a contested terrain in which there are many conflicting theories and beliefs. **Students are required to learn the materials but are never asked to change their beliefs.**

Objectives

Students will be able to demonstrate the following upon successful completion of the course:

• **Identification of a brief history of oppression and liberation according to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.**

• **Identification of personal experiences and “stories” and understanding the broader “stories” in history and entertainment media.**

• **Identification of the impact of political economy and the structure and culture of the media industry on entertainment media.**

• **Development of tools to critically “read” and analyze popular media.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Each class will move at its own pace. **ALL FINAL ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GIVEN IN CLASS.**
Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction /Overview/ Understanding the Other
8/26/04

Assignment: Read Chapter 1. Film analysis on American History X. Type and double space. Use text, reviews and articles from the Internet Movie Database (ImdB.com) as a resource. Use internal citations.

Class 2: Media and Diversity Theories
9/2/04

Assignment: Autobiography Answer the questions in Personal Inventory 1.2 in the text. Describe 2 or 3 cultures of which you are a part and discuss how these cultures have shaped your values and beliefs about human diversity. Feel free to “cheat” by asking family members for information that you don’t know. If it is difficult to find the answers, write about the historical issues (e.g. racism, anti-Semitism, assimilation, etc.) that may have made your family history less accessible.

Class 3: Gender, Personal Experience, and Reconstructing Knowledge
9/9/04

Assignment: Read Chapter 2. Answer gender questions. Use information from text to support your responses.

Class 4: Gender and Media
9/16/04

Assignment: Read Chapter 3. Personal inventory 3.2, Autobiography on class.

Class 5: Holocaust Museum and Learning Center
9/23/04

Assignment: E-mail assignment on the Holocaust museum by Sunday, September 16.

Class 6: Is the U.S. a Classless Society?
9/30/04

Assignment: Questions on class

Class 7: The American Dream in Media
10/7/04

Assignment: Working Girl assignment. Type and double space. When describing characters use language that is descriptive rather than evaluative or judgmental. Find the messages and values in the film and distinguish them from your own values and beliefs. Use the text, class discussion as well as reviews and articles from the Internet Movie Database as a resource. Use internal citations.

Class 8: Race, Personal Experience and Reconstructing Knowledge
10/14/04

Assignment: Read chapters 4 & 5. Answer the questions in Personal Inventory 4.3. If there are questions you can’t answer look closely at the chapter to help you understand and write about possible reasons that the information is unavailable.
FALL BREAK – WEEK OF OCTOBER 17

Weeks 9 & 10: Race, Media and “Truth”
10/28/04
11/04/04

Assignment. Questions on race. Include the question: What basic information do you think U.S. student need to have about race and racism? Mississippi Burning assignment (8-10 pages) due December 9. Use articles provided in class, Imdb and other sources. Use internal citations and bibliography.

Week 11: Sexual Orientation and Personal Experience
11/04/04

Assignment: Read Chapter 6. Complete personal inventories 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.

Week 12: Thanksgiving, Media and Diversity
11/18/04

NO CLASS ON THANKSGIVING: - 11/25/04

Week 13: Sexual Orientation in Popular Media
12/02/04

Assignment: Sexual Orientation Questions, TV analysis given in class.

Week 14: Guest Speaker on the Making of Edge of America

Assignment: Final assignment to be given in class

Week 15: FINAL FILM ON DIVERSITY – STUDENT CHOICE

Participation includes attendance and active involvement in discussion. Grades on the autobiographies and personal reflection assignments are based on thoughtful and clear analysis on the topic and may be handwritten or typed. All other written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and are evaluated according to clarity, support of positions or observations, organization, grammar and spelling. These assignments will also be graded according to a blend of personal reflection and use of readings, class discussions and other sources.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Attendance/participation 10
Autobiographies/personal reflections 30
Chapter questions 30
Holocaust Museum assignment 10
Film/TV critiques 30
Mississippi Burning Assignment 25
Final Assignment 15

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS 150

A= 135 – 150 points
B= 120 - 134 points
C= 105 – 119 points
D- 90 – 104 points
An A paper reflects clear thinking, good organization and clear writing with few spelling or grammatical errors. An A paper follows the assignment and adds some original or creative thinking.

Any assignment that is turned in on time may be rewritten any number of times. The higher grade will always be retained.

**Plagiarism Policy:** All direct and indirect quotes from books, magazines, journals, the Internet or any other source must be cited. Any paper that fails to do this will receive zero points and there will be no opportunity for a rewrite.

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations contact the Director of the Academic Resource Center, Dr. Pat McLeese, at (314) 968-7495.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Academic Resource Center as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.