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Diversity and the Media

Spring 2016

Mondays & Wednesdays,

12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

427 Summerfield

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

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Office Hours:

Mondays – 10:30 – 12:30

Wednesdays, 2-3

By appointment

What is diversity?

Welcome to J534, a course on diversity in the media. In this class we're going to take a look at how the mass media affect our perspectives in a multicultural society, and we'll consider the roles the media play in challenging or reinforcing the stereotypes we have about ourselves and the people with whom we live and work.

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, class, 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 about the media images we see and 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, which includes 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 and consider how those 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 and analyzing media messages.
- 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 scholars and communication professionals 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* (3rd 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.

You'll learn best in this class if you're actively participating, so please come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and current media issues. 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 some articles or see some 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.

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 short quizzes on the readings throughout the semester. I will post these online, and you'll have 24 hours to complete them. Each will be 10-15 multiple-choice questions. You will take the quizzes on Blackboard. They will be open-book. Tentative quiz dates are: Monday, Feb. 15; Wednesday, March 9; and Wednesday, Apr. 13. These dates may change, but I'll announce any changes in class and I'll announce them in advance.

Reaction papers.

Super Bowl, Super Stereotypes. Take a look at this year's Super Bowl ads. Pick one that you like or don't. Discuss stereotypes in this ad. How do stereotypes make the ad work? How might this ad turn off/on people to the product? Write a two-page reaction paper. This is due **Wednesday, Feb. 10.**

The Oscars and Diversity Bingo. The Oscars is always a major media event that combines art, celebrity, fashion, and money. In this exercise, you want to see how much diversity there is at this awards show. You'll complete a bingo card, then write a short (no more than two-page) reaction paper. How much diversity did you see? This is due **Wednesday, March 2.**

Profile/feature article.

Listening Post. For this assignment, you need to go to a place you don't normally visit. This should be a place where people gather to talk, work, or socialize. You want to observe and talk with people you meet, then come up with a feature story idea. You'll write a story and turn it in **Monday, Mar. 28.** (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.)

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 media producers, 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 the *Days of Our Lives* soap opera; 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 over one month's time; 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 **Monday, April 11.** The final project is due by **5 p.m. Wednesday, May. 11.**

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 on Feb. 1 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.

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.

While attendance is important, participation is critical. Please plan to discuss readings and share concerns and ideas.

A few words about your assignments

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class.
- 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 broken promise to call you back are not excuses for missing the deadline. If you have a problem, 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 – 5 percent of your final grade

Super Bowl – 15 percent

Oscars – 15 percent

Quiz 1 – 5 percent

Quiz 2 – 5 percent

Quiz 3 – 5 percent

Listening post – 20 percent

Advocacy project – 30 percent

You will receive a numerical 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 (90 to 100) = Excellent. Wow, wow, and wow! The assignment is well-written or well-presented. It's clear, and concise. The student's approach shows originality and creativity. The assignment refers to concepts and ideas discussed in class and in the readings. The assignment demonstrates that the student clearly understands these concepts. The assignment is thorough; there are no unanswered questions. The student has done an excellent job researching, reporting, and presenting. Quotes and information are attributed. Sources are credible and clearly identified. Grammar and spelling are perfect. Any video or photos are composed well and tell a story. The author follows Associated Press style.

B (80 to 89) = Above average. Really nice job. The student's work shows a high level of originality and independent thought. The student has gone above and beyond what was expected of her / him. The student has presented the material well, but there may be minor unanswered questions or organizational problems with writing or video. The student has done a good job researching, reporting, and presenting. However, the student 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. The student shows 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 (70 to 79) = Satisfactory. Okay job; you cruised. The student has done 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. Information and quotes are not attributed. Sources are not credible. The student has not demonstrated a clear understanding of ideas or concepts discussed in class.

D (60 to 69) = Unsatisfactory. Are you kidding me? The work is below average. The quality of the writing and research is poor. The student did not use credible sources or did not attribute sources. There is no indication the student 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 student shows no understanding of the ideas or concepts discussed in class. (If you are taking this class, you should not get this grade.)

F (59 or below) = Failing. Back to the drawing board. The student 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.

A	93-100	C	73-76
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A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 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 your ideas and opinions are respected. 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 Sudoku puzzles. 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.

Special needs

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special 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. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

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 is the school's official policy statement:

“The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

“Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.”

The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as “knowingly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.” The University defines fabrication and falsification as “unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.”

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 (Barack Obama 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.

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.

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.

Readings and Assignments

Below is the list of topics we'll discuss in class and the readings that will help you prepare for the discussions.

Date	Topic	Please read these assignments by the time you come to class.
<i>Introduction to diversity</i>		
Jan. 20	Introduction to the class	
Jan. 25	Why study diversity?	Lind, "Laying a Foundation ..." pp. 1–12.
Jan. 27	Minorities and majorities	"The Changing Face of America." "For U.S. Children, Minorities Will Be the Majority by 2020, Census Says." You'll find these readings on the course Blackboard site.
Feb. 1	Us and Them	Lind, "The Social Psychology of Stereotypes," pp. 17–30.
Feb. 3	SCWAMPed: Analyzing media images	Lind, "He was a Black Guy," pp. 24–30. "Crank Dat Barack Obama!" pp. 101–106.
Feb. 8	In groups, out groups	"In groups, out groups and the psychology of crowds." See Blackboard.
Feb. 10	It's a privilege	"White Privilege." "15 Powerful Ta-Nehisi Coates' Quotes." "Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person." See Blackboard. <i>Super Bowl reaction paper due.</i>
<i>Diversity in journalism, PR, advertising</i>		
Feb. 15	New markets, old stereotypes: Advertising and minorities	Advertising and Hispanic Culture," Lind, pp. 172–178. "The More You Subtract..." Lind, pp. 179–185. <i>First quiz.</i>
Feb. 17	Don't give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses: Immigration.	"What's in a name," Lind, pp. 134–148. "Donald Trump Says..." "Pew Immigration Report. On Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Please read this by the time you come to class.
Feb. 22	Laughing all the way: Media, satire, and diversity	“People Tell Me I’m White...” Lind, pp. 186–192. Watch the John Oliver video, “Migrants and Refugees,” on Blackboard.
Feb. 24	The “good” minority: Images of Asian-Americans	“Outwhiting the Whites,” Lind pp. 148–55. “Negotiating the Mediascape,” Lind, pp. 56–62.
Feb. 29	The T-word: Religion and discrimination	Lind, “How TV Makes Arabs and Muslims Feel About Themselves,” Lind, pp. 68–74. “San Bernadino Shooting: U.S. Divided.” On Blackboard
Mar. 2	Ageism: You’re not getting older, you’re getting invisible	“9 Reasons Why What You Think about Ageing Matters.” “It’s Not Easy to Be Old in America.” “Photographer Kyoko Hamada Spent Two Years Pretending...” On Blackboard . Oscars reaction paper due.
Mar. 7	Where have all the poor people gone? Class and wealth in the media	“Children in Poverty: No Shoes.” “It Can’t Happen Here.” “Wealth vs. Poverty.” “From living in poverty to living the American Dream...” On Blackboard.
Diversity in advertising and public relations		
Mar. 9	Temporarily Able Bodied: Advertising and disabilities	“Awkward Around People With Disabilities?” “A Girl With a Disability...” “Ad of the Day...” On Blackboard. Second quiz.
Mar. 14	Spring break	No class!
Mar. 16	Spring break	No class!
Mar. 21	Work day	No class. Use this time to catch up on readings, visit your listening post.
Mar. 23	Can I Spin My Way Out of This? Public Relations	“Why Are There So Many Women in Public Relations?” “Parents Out Black NAACP leader....” On Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Read this by the time you come to class.
Mar. 28	“Nobel savages:” Native Americans and mass media	<p>“Arguing Over Images,” Lind, pp. 87–94.</p> <p>“Mass Media, Mass Media Indians, and American Indians,” Lind, pp. 203–207.</p> <p>Listening post assignment due.</p>
<i>Diversity in entertainment</i>		
Mar. 30	Sour notes: Does music matter?	<p>“Gender and Race as Meaning Systems,” Lind, pp. 274–280.</p> <p>“An Open Letter to Rap Music...”</p> <p>See Blackboard.</p>
Apr. 4	Fact, fiction, blurred lines: Do media stereotypes affect children?	<p>“Race, Hierarchy, and Hyenaphobia...,” pp. 192–198.</p> <p>“Bella’s Choice,” Lind, pp. 198–203.</p>
Apr. 6	Feminism: What is it and should I be afraid of it?	<p>“It’s Okay that We Backstab Each Other,” Lind, pp. 207–212.</p> <p>“Is Daddy’s Little Girl...,” Lind, pp. 213–218.</p>
Apr. 11	Macho, macho man: Images of masculinity in media	<p>“Man Up: Viewer Responses...”</p> <p>Lind, pp. 63 –68.</p> <p>“Memo to Media...” On Blackboard.</p> <p>Final project idea due.</p>
Apr. 13	New heroes? Hollywood and Diversity	<p>“Star Wars: The Force Awakens...”</p> <p>“Why Do Most Movies Fail...”</p> <p>“Hollywood Diversity Report” (Just read the executive summary, pp. 1 – 3.)</p> <p>On Blackboard.</p> <p>Third quiz.</p>
Apr. 18	Out of the closet: Gays and lesbians in media	<p>“The New Domesticity...,” Lind, pp. 218–224.</p> <p>“Exploring Gay/Straight Relationships...,” Lind, pp. 293 – 299.</p> <p>“15 Ads that Changed the Way We think about Gays and Lesbians.”</p> <p>On Blackboard site.</p>
Apr. 20	Transitions: The T in GLBT.	<p>“Bruce Jenner Comes Out...”</p> <p>“#InTheirWords.”</p> <p>On Blackboard site.</p>

Date	Topic	Read this by the time you come to class.
Apr. 25	Advocacy journalism: Changing the world one story at a time.	“Lynch Laws in America” “Killers’ Confession.” Additional reading to be announced. See Blackboard.
Apr. 27	Public relations for a cause.	“Make the World Suck Less” DoSomething.org Thunderclap Project: The National Alliance for Mental Illness #GirlHero. On Blackboard.
May 2	Wanted: Change	“Love Has No Labels.” “I Am Your Father” Other readings/videos online. On Blackboard.
May 4	No class.	Meet with Prof. Barnett, work on your final projects.
May 11		<i>Final projects due.</i>

Guidelines for Response Papers

Diversity is everywhere in the media – or is it? You’ll write two response/reaction papers this semester in which you talk about examples of diversity you see in mass media. In the first paper, you’ll look at Super Bowl ads. In the second paper, you’ll look at the Oscars.

Don’t make this assignment complicated. Think of it as if you were visiting with friends in a coffee shop and you were talking about the Super Bowl or the Oscars. What would you say to them about diversity?

You’ll write response papers that are no more than two pages long. Your goal is to summarize what you saw or heard, explain how it shows diversity or not, then explain what we can learn from this media “lesson.” You can begin by reporting on something that interests you: For example, the only Oscar nomination for *Straight Outta Compton* went to its two white screenwriters. Or, you can begin by asking a question: Why are there no women directors at this year’s Oscar ceremony? Then you want to write your opinions.

You can look broadly at the topic of diversity (what references are there to #Oscarswhite?) or very narrowly at a specific issue (how does Cate Blanchett’s portrayal in *Carol* make us think about past treatment of gay and lesbians?). You might look at Twitter or Facebook posts on the Oscars or Super Bowl. You might react to a commercial (do all beer commercials feature goofy guys and sexy women?) You can be serious, sarcastic, funny. The choice is yours.

The goal of these response papers is to make you aware of diversity in media and to help you analyze what you see or hear.

As you write your papers, think about:

- How does this ad / program relate to diversity and the ideas we’ve discussed in class?
- How did I feel about what I saw or heard? Was I outraged? Did I agree? Why?
- Did the media reinforce or challenge a stereotype?
- How can the media make this event more appealing to diverse audiences (or just one audience; for example, older women and men)?
- What have I learned? How can I link what I’ve learned in class with what I’ve seen in the media?
- Will this make me think about my work differently?

Grading Rubric For Response Papers

_____ Writing – The paper is written clearly and concisely. The paper is well-organized. The length is two pages or less. The ideas are easy to understand. The author has paid attention to word choices. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

_____ Connection – The paper refers back to ideas we've discussed in class. The writer links what s/he has seen to some aspect of our discussions on diversity. The writer understands diversity, difference in perspective. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

_____ Opinion – The writer makes a point. S/he offers reasons or evidence for his/her point of view. I know where this person stands. I can see why the writer has come to this conclusion or point of view, even though I might not agree. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

_____ Reflection – The writer explains what s/he has learned, explains if this media event has changed his/her ideas or opinions, explains how this might affect their work as a journalist. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Instructions for “Listening Post” Assignment

Instead of coming to class, Monday, Mar. 21, you can use this time to go to a community listening post – a place where you might get story ideas or get ideas for how to market or publicize a product to an audience different from you.

Think about your listening post this way:

1. It must be a place you are not likely to go otherwise.
2. It should include a group of people who are poorly understood and/or poorly covered by the media.
3. It should offer a window onto a “community” of people that might provide information on the group beyond the people who come there.

Before you go:

1. Find places where people are likely to stop and talk, mingle, share information about themselves: Barbershops and beauty salons, grocery stores, community centers. Some of the most informed people in a community are often the funeral directors, store owners, day care center directors, health clinic workers, or neighborhood association presidents.
2. Learn about the people and community you plan to visit before you get there. That way, you’ll be aware of any cultural challenges or historical obstacles you might have to meet and overcome.
3. Don’t go in a rush. Allow enough time for a leisurely visit.

While you’re there:

1. “Listen” with all of your senses. Read bulletin boards, pamphlets, leaflets.
2. Resist the temptation to interview people. Sit down and have a conversation.
3. Listen carefully to the language people use to describe themselves and what they do. Take your cue from them.
4. Be willing to be wrong about a place or person. Show up with an open mind.

Try to answer these questions:

1. Who comes here?
2. What can I learn about the community from this place?
3. What stories might I do about this place, the people who come here, or the things I’ve learned from looking around?
4. How might the people I encounter here challenge or reinforce stereotypes?

Take notes and use your notes to develop a feature story based on your experience at the listening post.

This story should be 900 to 1,200 words—three to four typed, double-spaced pages. You can mention yourself in the story—your thoughts or your reactions—but don't make yourself the focal point of the story. This should be about the people you met.

You should include quotes from people you interviewed. Be sure to explain that this is not for publication; the story is for a class assignment that only your professor will see. Be sure to include the date and time you visited the listening post, and be sure to include the names and e-mails or phone numbers of the people you talked with.

You may need to go back to the listening post, and it's fine to visit it more than once and interview different people each time.

With your feature story, again think about visual images. Attach a page that includes a brief description of at least three photos you would include with this story. You don't have to take the photos, but you do want to think about photos that illustrate the event. You should describe what you actually saw, not what you wished had happened.

You'll turn in your feature story on **Monday, Mar. 28**.

Have fun!!!!

Listening Post Evaluation Sheet

I'll carefully read your papers and write comments about what you did well and what you might do to improve your work. This sheet will give you an idea of how your work will be evaluated.

___ **Presentation** – The paper follows directions. The story focuses on a listening post – a place where people gather to talk, socialize, or work. The student has included the date and time of the event. He/she included quotes from sources and contact information for sources. The student met deadlines. (5 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Grammar and spelling** – The paper is free from grammatical and spelling errors. It follows AP style. (10 points).

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Background** – The paper provides context and background to help readers understand the broader topic. This should include background on the place you visit and the diverse person or group you're writing about. (10 points).

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Content** – The student has explained well why the place he/she visited qualifies as a listening post. The author describes the place and people, and the reader gets a sense he/she is at the listening post. The student provides good quotes from sources; quotes are illustrative of what happens at the listening post. The focus is on the place and the people, not the author. (25 points)

___ **Diversity**. The student has included relevant and interesting information that informs and educates about diversity. The paper shows the student has an understanding of the key concepts and theories we have discussed in class and has applied those concepts to research and writing. This paper shows originality and independent thought. The paper shows that the student is thinking critically and carefully about diversity. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

____ **Writing** – This paper is well-written and well-organized. Writing is concise and clear. The lead is inviting and draws the reader into the story. The student tells a story in an interesting way. There are no unanswered questions for the reader. (25 points)

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

Unacceptable

Media Advocacy Report

Plan due Wednesday, Apr. 11

Report due Wednesday, May. 11

Ever wish you were in charge of what's in the media? Now's your chance to speak out.

In this assignment, you'll work as a media monitor, then write an advocacy report to a media producer. Your report will acknowledge what the media producer is doing well and make suggestions for how the producer could change the product to better incorporate diversity issues.

Start by thinking about a group you want to advocate for—a group you think is underrepresented or misrepresented in the mass media. This could be gays, the elderly, women, Muslims, or any of the groups we've discussed in class. Then think about a medium in which you're interested—social media, books, TV, magazines, newspapers, ads, news releases. Now combine the two. For example, you might decide to study romance novels for Latinas, men's portrayals on commercials, or images of gays in movies. Then, get even more specific. Some examples: Images of masculinity in Bud Light commercials, body image of women in *People* magazine, the presence or absence of African-Americans on *The Real Housewives of New York*, depictions of the elderly in Oscar-nominated movies. In your paper, you'll want to explain why this is an important topic.

Do some research on the broad topic you've chosen. You'll want to spend some time in the library and on the Internet looking for articles to give your report some background. For example: If you study ads targeted at Hispanic voters, you want to do some research on the Hispanic population in the United States, voting patterns, and ad campaigns for minority populations. You can use the articles to provide context and background for your report. Also, you may use some of the materials as evidence to support the arguments you make. Just be sure to attribute the information to the correct sources.

Once you've decided upon your topic, determine how you will study or monitor the subject. You won't be able to watch every TV show or see every movie about your topic. Instead, select a small "sample" that you feel is representative of what you're studying. This might be a week's worth of newscasts or newspapers, several months worth of magazines, a month of NBA games, five Web sites. In your paper, you'll want to explain why studying this particular topic and medium is worthwhile (Monday Night Football has an audience of 2 million viewers; these five Web sites receive more than 10,000 hits per month).

Develop a worksheet to help you keep track of what you watched, heard. Don't rely on memory. **You must turn in your worksheets with the assignment.**

You want this report to be addressed to a specific individual. It must be a real person. Somewhere in your report, indicate why you're writing to this particular individual. (As the executive producer for *The Daily Show*, you . . .)

In your report, tell the media producer what you think he / she is doing well. Give specific examples from your media monitoring notes. Tell the producer what he / she can improve to incorporate diversity. Again, give specific examples from your media monitoring notes. Finally, tell the producer what you'd like them to do from now on and be specific. Do you want them to add a Latina character to the cast of *Nashville*? Hire a woman to cover sports for the Lawrence Journal-World? These suggestions should flow logically from the research you've done.

The tone of your report can be serious or sarcastic. You can use humor, or you can play it straight. Just be sure your paper demonstrates that you have systematically monitored the media, that you understand the concepts we've discussed in class, and that you have a point to your writing. Don't just rant.

Your final report should be 10 to 12 pages, typed and double-spaced. You will turn it in instead of taking a final exam. The paper is due **Wednesday, May 11, by 5 p.m.**

A word of caution from someone who spent many years of her life as a student: Give yourself plenty of time to research and write this assignment. Don't wait till the week before and frantically try to put your paper together. You want to monitor the media, then give yourself some time (at least a few days) to think about what you saw and heard before you start writing. You are welcome to ask someone else, including students in this class, to read a draft of your paper.

Evaluation Sheet for Media Advocacy Report

___ **Presentation** – The paper followed directions. The student selected an appropriate topic and time frame. He / she met deadlines for the plan and the final paper. He / she has submitted notes or worksheets. (10 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Grammar and spelling** – The paper is free from grammar and spelling errors. It follows AP style. (10 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Context** – The papers provides relevant background. It clearly explains why this topic is important to study. It synthesizes information from a variety of secondary sources. (10 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Content** – The report is thorough. It offers a representative sample. The paper demonstrates careful and thoughtful monitoring of a media issue. The work demonstrates independent and original thought, creativity. The student has provided notes of his / her monitoring activity. The analysis is systematic—not random thoughts. (20 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Application** – The paper demonstrates that the student understands key concepts of diversity discussed in class and is able to apply them in another setting. The paper demonstrates critical thinking about a media issue. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

___ **Persuasiveness** – The paper uses evidence (from secondary research and personal observations) to make critical points. Arguments are logical, well-thought-out. If I were the media producer, I'd be convinced, and I'd start making changes. (25 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Guidelines for Tumbling Dice Project

Would you go to a movie about a romance between two 70-year-olds? Maybe not. Your grandparents might enjoy this, but you – not so much. Media consumers like to see people like themselves in movies, on TV, or in the news. For some groups, those images are everywhere; for others, those images are harder to find.

Your assignment is look for yourself—your new identity—in mass media images. Keep track of whether you see your new “self” in movies, on the news, on your favorite TV show. Do you see yourself? If so, how are you portrayed?

You’ll want to write five short blog posts (you don’t actually have to post them) about media portrayals of your new identity. These entries should be three to five paragraphs and include appropriate links. You can write in first-person about what you see and your reactions. Could the media do a better job of representing your new self? How. Give examples. Your blogs can be funny or serious or a combination of both.

In your blog entries, consider:

- How do the media present the new you?
- Where and when do you see yourself?
- What is your role?
- Are the media portrayals of you flattering, demeaning, funny?
- How might the media incorporate you into a news cast, or a TV program, or a movie?

This assignment is due **Wednesday, Feb. 13**, at the beginning of class.

Blog Grading Rubric

Each blog entry should be approximately 300 to 500 words. Your entries should explore topics related to diversity. You might want to respond to something you've seen or read. You might want to pose a question, then discuss answers to the question. You should feel free to explore a variety of writing styles—humor, satire, serious. You can write in first-person, but you also will want to include the opinions and ideas of others. You can interview friends and family and include their comments as well.

You'll turn in five blogs but receive one grade on the five.

Writing

The writing is clear, coherent, and concise. There are no factual errors. The blogger offers original ideas and a unique perspective. This is easy to read and easy to understand. (20 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Focus

The blogger makes a clear point. The blog offers an opinion and logical arguments to support his/her claims. The blogger offers factual evidence to support claims. (20 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Diversity

The blog explores some aspect of diversity. The blogger is clear in explaining how this issue is related to diversity. The blog tries to improve our understanding of this issue or of a diverse population. The blogger refers to issues we've discussed in class. (20 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Research and sourcing

The blogger uses a variety of sources to create the blog. The blogger uses formal sources (articles from our textbooks or class readings, journalistic articles, websites and blogs) but also informal sources (individuals who offer opinions or who have "lived experience" with a diversity issue). (20 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Analysis

The blog makes an attempt to analyze the topic, not just report. The blogger presents facts and opinions then explains “so what?” The author explains why readers should care or be interested in this topic. (10 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

Links

Blogs contain links that are active, current, and relevant. (10 points)

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable