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JRNL 301X.01: Diversity in Media

Christine L. Trudeau

University of Montana, Missoula, christine.trudeau@umontana.edu

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JRNL 301-Diversity in the Media

Fall 2022 (Subject to change)

9:30-10:50 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday

Don Anderson Hall 316

Assistant Associate Professor Christine Trudeau

DAH #406/ christine.trudeau@umt.edu

Office hours: 10 to 11:45 am & 1 to 4 pm Wednesday and by appointment

Course Description

First and foremost, we will study and learn that for the news media diversity is absolutely not a matter of being politically correct. Diversity has a utility and is a tool that directly benefits all aspects of a news outlet, from the accuracy of its coverage to its business end. We will examine the changing U.S. population, how the U.S. news media portray different ethnic groups and other diverse populations, and the importance of having a diverse workforce and diverse coverage. By studying examples of news coverage, students will develop an understanding of best professional practices in news media regarding diversity, and how to become better consumers of news and information.

"One of the diciest issues, as we reconsider our role as journalists in this moment, is that of "objectivity." Some argue that if we abandon our stance of journalistic neutrality, we let the "post-fact" camp win. I argue that our minds — and our listeners' and readers' minds — are stronger than that, strong enough to hold that we can both come from a particular perspective, and still tell the truth. And I have the sense that this distinction is important in this moment because we are going to have to fight for and defend what it means to serve the public as journalists." - Lewis Wallace, [Objectivity is dead, and I'm okay with it](#)

Course Outcomes

This course meets the University of Montana general education requirement for Group X: Cultural and International Diversity. With that in mind, by the end of this class you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of diversity, particularly as it relates to race and ethnicity, and the gender spectrum.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of assuring the presence of diverse voices and perspectives in the news, and how that relates to truth, accuracy, and fairness.
- Be able to critically evaluate how the news media portray diverse populations.
- Improve your own reporting and/or media literacy skills.

- Demonstrate an awareness of the centrality of cultural diversity to their own and other human societies;
- Demonstrate an awareness of the negative impacts upon cultural diversity of economic, social, and other forms of institutional and interpersonal discrimination;
- Demonstrate competence and effectiveness in interacting with culturally diverse people by understanding cross- and inter-cultural interaction and communication;
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for non-discriminatory policies and behaviors on their own behalf and on behalf of others, including peers, clients, and colleagues.
- Demonstrate informed and reasoned understanding of democratic ideas, institutions and practices, from historical and/or contemporary perspectives.
- Analyze and evaluate the significance and complexities of engaged citizenship.
- Articulate the causes and consequences of key historical and/or contemporary struggles within democratic systems or their antecedents, including but not limited to those pertaining to issues of diversity, equity, and justice.

Important dates

Mark your calendars now: Diverse U, the campus-wide initiative on diversity is scheduled for November. Once we get a firm date, be sure to mark them in your schedules, as they will factor heavily in this class because ...

The Big Project

A large portion of your grade will be based on the completion and presentation of a news audit during the Diverse U event. The news audit will require weeks of analyzing local news media and how well it covers the communities of color in our area. By looking through pages of the Missoulian and the Kaimin, we will determine how well a casual, but informed, reader can see the diversity of our community represented in the pages. We will then compare what we find to local Census data to measure how often local media includes people of color in its coverage. We will also analyze how these sources are used, how many are expert sources and not “holiday programming” (ie. Using Native American sources solely to talk about Native American issues.) We will present the findings of our audit to the Diverse U event on campus in November.

Suggested textbook

“The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity,” edited by Arlene Notoro Morgan, Alice Irene Pifer and Keith Woods. This book includes a DVD.

Other required readings will be assigned in class or via email.

Course Outline

Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and exercises. We will have guest speakers, which will change our course schedule, depending on their availability. We'll also keep our options open so we can react to breaking stories and issues.

Since this is a journalism class, you are expected to keep up with the news for discussion. This is truly an interesting time for journalists and how the public views people of color. The United States has a president who is extremely controversial, especially when it comes to race. While President Trump didn't campaign on the issue of race, it has been a theme throughout his presidency. Rather than avoid talking about race and ethnicity, and other diversity topics (women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities) we welcome it in this class.

Attendance

You are expected to attend each class meeting. The success of this course depends on the quality of our discussions, including discussions with guest speakers. Each unexcused absence will lower your grade by 5 points (see below for grading basis). An excused absence means you have contacted me **before class** and have an approved, valid reason, such as illness or family emergency. I will take roll in this class.

Grading

Attendance and in-class participation are part of your grade. There will be **two mid-term quizzes**, to assure that you keep up with the reading assignments, pay attention to lectures and presentations by our guest speakers. There *will* be a **final** exam. In addition, you will have assignments that get you out of the classroom attending events and interviewing other people, and that call for personal reflection. Your final grade will be based on total points earned. (For example: 90-100% of total points = A.)

Basis for Grading: Maximum possible points: 200

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| ● Quizzes | 20 points |
| ● Final exam | 20 points |
| ● First written assignment | 10 points |
| ● Final written assignment | 10 points |
| ● UM DiverseU presentation-Media Audit | 20 points |
| ● Attendance/class participation | 20 points |

Ethics/Academic Integrity

The University of Montana School of Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to a penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the university. You need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, online at:

<http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>

Class Conduct

Student participation is essential for this class to be truly effective. This class is highly interactive so we can learn from each other. I expect student participation and urge students to speak up constantly without fear of being right or wrong. I will assign participation grades based on the courage it takes to participate in discussion.

Students are also expected to set cell phones to the silent – NOT vibrate – setting while in class. You may keep your phones readily available to read incoming messages in case of emergencies, but please do not use class time to compose text messages of any type during class. Computers and tablets are welcome only for the purpose of note taking. If I see anyone using a device for any other purpose, that student will lose the privilege of using the device for the remainder of the semester.

Disability Services for Students

If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact the instructors privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised we may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, in Lommasson Center 154, please do so to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services Web site at www.umt.edu/dss/