Media 6: Media, Culture, and Society
Santa Rosa Junior College

- **Instructor:** Lex Pulos, Ph.D. **Email:** APulos@santarosa.edu
- **Semester:** Fall 2023 (Section 1466 T/Th (10:30-12 online) & 1574 T/TH (12:00 -1:30 p.m. Garcia Hall Room 107)
- Zoom room for class: id: 949 7201 2911
  - Password: 980398
- **Office Hours:** T/Th 3:30-5pm(Room 118), and Wednesday 11-1 on Zoom (https://santarosa-edu.zoom.us/j/91208081086 Password: 512187), but I can make other times work, please sign up for any office hour appoints here: https://calendly.com/apulos/office-hours-1.
- **Recommended Text:** All content will be available via pdf, but if you prefer a physical book:
  - Connotative: Yousman, B.; Yousman, L. B.; Dines, G.; & Humez, J. M. (2018/21). *Gender, race and class in media: A critical reader (5th or 6th Ed).* Sage.
  - Denotative: Laughey, D. (2010). *Key themes in media theory*. McGraw-Hill.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (What did I just get myself into)

Course Description

Cultural trends in our postmodern, information society have created conditions for greater cultural interpretations, representations, and dialogue. Within this context, popular mass media have become an ever-present space where experience, interpretation and meaning coalesce, and from which most people construct a sense of reality and identity. Furthermore, "The Media" is not a construct that can be studied as a standalone subject; rather, individuals are participants in the construction and development with media messages.

This class is an exploration of the role of media in the production and interpretation of symbols, images, and ideologies regarding cultural diversity in U.S. society and the world, with an emphasis on gender, sexuality, class and race. Drawing on relevant theories of mass communication and analytical techniques for media literacy, the class will investigate the economic production of, individual participation in, and the cultural contexts around the ways identity is shaped by/through different media.

Assumptions: This course has been designed with a series of expectations that are laid out within this syllabus. If you are willing to take the time and commit to these expectations, the course should be challenging, at times, and enjoyable at others. Additionally, this course, class, and instructor is dedicated to actively creating an open and inclusive environment that pushes us to explore the related content and its relation to our experiences. However, we must recognize that all experiences are not shared equally and as a class we will acknowledge the validity of these experiences, our role in perpetuating the positive and negative elements of these and learn to value and take seriously the complex nature of the human experience. While the class is dedicated to pushing each other, challenging our preconceived assumptions, and questioning ourselves, disparaging comments will not be tolerated.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Analyze various gender, racial, sexual, and cultural images in the media utilizing different
2. critical theories.
3. Evaluate media in a cultural, historical, political, social, psychological, and economic context.
4. Formulate arguments using critical theory and proper media vocabulary.
5. Identify and evaluate the contributions of mediamakers from marginalized groups.
6. The development of critical thinking skills for the analysis and evaluation of diversity in media messages and audiences.
7. Allow prospective media professionals a chance to reflect on historical trends in media production and ethical challenges with the goal of offering creative, problem-solving ideas to enhance the quality and pro-social function of mass communication.

Grades (Ok, cool, what do I have to do?)

Participation (100 points): Student comes to class prepared; contributes readily to the conversation but doesn't dominate it; makes thoughtful contributions based on the literature that advance the conversation; shows an interest in and respect for others' contributions; participates actively in all groups. Participation is essential to the course and students are therefore encouraged to participate through multiple ways: Verbal and nonverbal participation; Active listening; and Quality comments, questions, examples, references to course material. Grades will be uploaded 4 times over the semester to give students a reference point of their progress. However, if students miss large portions of the class these grades will be reduced by the following scale:

  - 2 - no penalty

- 3 - 0 on one full participation grade
- 4 - 0 on 2 full participation grades
- 5 - result in a 0 on all participation (even if grades were already assigned)

A student may be dropped from any class when that student's absences exceed ten percent (10%) of the total hours of class time, which is 280 minutes. Excessive absence are absences beyond 324 minutes.

Media Maker (30 points): An important part of this course involves the process of moving course content into the real world and vice versa. In other words, how do you see the course concepts applying to contemporary society? To help navigate these connections students will find and bring to class a contemporary example of media makers from marginalized communities to help illustrate how message and message creation is being changed/updated/resisted. The presentation may be completed with a group of no more than 3.

Reading Responses (RR) (100 points): Every week you will need to turn in a short synopsis of each of the articles. This will need to cover:
- Denotative: A short summary of the reading to illustrate your understanding of the theory description
- Connotative: Summary, reflection, insights, and questions

There are 13 total opportunities to submit a reading reflection and the lowest 3 grades will be dropped.

Critical Analysis Project (100 points): The goal of this project is to get you to reflect on 1) the media making process (how choices are made when anything is constructed), 2) your position and engagement with mediated messages, 3) How active you are in reaffirming or resisting these constructions of reality.

The project should include:
1. A ten-minute presentation with at least 4-6 minutes being your produced text.
2. The text should be addressing at least 2-3 specific concepts from class, although you may do several.
3. This should be a clear and quality message, with a clear effort of thought and work put into the project, and a relatable or understandable message.
4. This is worth 100 points of your total grade.
    1. Alternative research assignment options are available if need be.

Topics could cover:
1. An analysis of the changing political economy of a media industry and why this matters beyond that specific industry.
2. A critique of the ways that media messages or interactions have impacted you (i.e. the consumption of persistent messages, the conditioning of your online actions, the impact of online attention, etc.)
3. A critique of the ways you have been participant in the perpetuation of media representations (i.e. the ways you perform normative expectations)
4. A compare and contrast to real life images and media representations as it relates to your experience (i.e. the reality gap between online and real life and way this matters, an insight into the labor of digital life, etc.)

Workflow

To help keep students on track there will be several checkpoints during the semester. Each check point will utilize the same project page--Media Analysis Project Workflow--where students/groups will upload their work. The goal is to help build the project over time and to ensure progress is being made, with the hope that this will make the projects stronger.
1. *Signup & Project Goals - 5 Points*
2. *Research & Progress Update - 5 Points*
3. *Detailed Outline - 10 Points*

Terminology exams (50 points each) There will be three terminology exams during this course and will be completed in class or via canvas. Exams will cover the denotative elements of a course term (definition) and the connotative elements of each term (social explanation or example).

Final (100 points): The final will be a take home and/or in class exam and will cover all the material during the class. You will need to be able to present a clear synthesis of the material, address the questions presented to you and offer a critical argument. More details will follow toward the end of the semester.

Course Assignments:

Each of the following assignments will be thoroughly detailed in class:

Participation	50 points
Media Maker presentation	30 points
10 Reading Responses (10 points each)	100 points
Media and Identity project	100 points
Workflow	20 points
2 Quizzes (50 pts each)	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Total	**500 points**

Tentative Schedule

Date	Readings	Class Questions	Pre-class Material	Assignments
Week 1 (8/29) What is theory	Introductions and Class Structure			Information sheet Theory Reading
Week 2 (9/5) Ideology/ Hegemony	**Denotative -** Hegemony - (4 in 5th) (4 in 6th) **Connotative -** Cultural studies, multiculturalism, and media culture - (1 in 5th) (1 in 6th)	DQ1: In what ways has our ability to think been colonized by ideologies? DQ2: How do we participate in ideological oppression?	TH - Black Mirror Episode	RR 1 - Due Thursday Media Maker Sign up
Week 3 (9/12) Media Economy	**Denotative -** Marxism.pdf **Connotative** - The economics of the media industry - (3 in 5th) (3 in 6th)	DQ1: What does it mean to live in a global economy? DQ2: In what ways are media industries and everyday life connected?		RR 2 - Due Thursday Media Maker presentations (MMP) 1
Week 4 (9/19) Project Overview & The Spectacle	T - Review of the larger class project **Denotative - Spectacle.pdf** **Connotative** - Olivia Rodrigro and Posting Imitation Pop on TikTok	DQ1: How is our understanding of the world mediated rather than experienced?	T-Read assignment and bring questions to class	RR 3 - Due Thursday Media & Identity Sign-up due by Friday
Week 5 (9/26) Semiotics	**Denotative -** Semiotics.pdf **Connotative -** Pepsi's new ad is a total success - (29 in 5th) (29 in 6th)	DQ1: What is the relationship between identity, signs, and products? DQ2: How do images/signs construct our understanding of the world around us?	T - Watch short video summary and rules to Concept	RR 4 - Due Thursday MMP 2
Week 6 (10/3) Audiences & Moral Panic	**Denotative -** Moral Panic.pdf **Connotative:** The Latino cyber-moral panic process in the United States – (67 in 5th) (65 in 6th)	DQ1: What are our conceptions of digital representations and Identity? DQ2: How is identity and resistance negotiated online?		RR 5 - Due Thursday MMP 3 Quiz 1
Week 7 (10/10) Habitus: Class and Capital	**Denotative** - Habitus.pdf **Connotative -** Playing "redneck": White masculinity and working-class performances on Duck Dynasty - (24 in 5th) (23 in 6th)	DQ1: In what was does class impact your understanding of identity? DQ2: How does class, outside of wealth, function?	Th - Watch short YouTube video	RR 6 - Due Thursday MMP 4 Participation 1 Update
Week 8 (10/17) Masculinity	**Connotative -** Persistent Performances of Masculinity in Crisis. **Denotative -** The Boys are not Alright	DQ1: Before reading, what is your conception of masculinity? DQ 2: What are the different ways that masculinity can be performed? What are the consequences for performing nontraditional masculinity?		RR 7 - Due Thursday MMP 5

Week 9 (10/24) [Male Gaze](#)	**Denotative -** Male Gaze.pdf **Connotative -** Horror's Slut Shaming Through Social Media	DQ1: In what ways does masculinity frame the world around us? DQ 2: In what ways are we encouraged to see the world through a Masculine/patriarchal perspective?		RR 8 - Due Thursday MMP 6 Media & Identity Research and Thesis Due by Friday
Week 10 (10/31) [Feminist Theory](#)	**Denotative -** Feminism.pdf **Connotative:** Inventing the Cosmo Girl: Class identity and girl-style American Dream (19 in 5th) (19 in 6th)	DQ1: Before reading, how do we conceive of femininity? DQ2: How is femininity constructed against masculinity?	Th - Watch section from Fboy Island	RR 9 - Due Thursday MMP 7
Week 11 (11/7) [Intersectional Feminism and Plastic Representation](#)	**Denotative -** Ted Talk on Intersectionality **Connotative -** In the Time of Plastic Representation	DQ1: In what ways are women, femininity, and the female body (dis)connected? DQ2: Is the commercialization of women/the female body empowerment or exploitation?		RR 10 - Due Thursday MMP 8 Quiz 2
Week 12 (11/14) [Parasocial interaction](#)	**Denotative -** Parasocial Interaction **Connotative -** The Problem with "Mom Boss" Culture	DQ1: In what ways has your sense of self and organization of identity been influenced by media and culture? DQ 2: How are contemporary relationships developed through parasocial interactions and what other structures/systems do we need to account for in modern society?	Th-Describe the ways in which your identity is connected to, developed through, and and perpetrator of mediated culture.	RR 11 - Due Thursday MMP 9 Media & Identity Outline/draft due by Friday
Week 13 (11/21) [Queer Theory](#)	**Denotative:** Queer theory SF definition.pdf **Connotative:** The Final Frontier - Imagining Queer Futurity in Star Trek.pdf	DQ1: What kind of sexuality is created through the media representations? DQ1: What are our current conceptions of LGBTQ representations in media?	Fall Break	RR 12 - Due Wednesday
Week 14 (11/28) [Whiteness](#)	**Denotative -** Whiteness Theory Definition.pdf **Connotative -** White Like Me (on Kanopy)	DQ1: What do you understand whiteness to mean? DQ2: In what ways does whiteness function as an absent center to compare other to?	Th - Watch White Lotus Episode Before class	RR 13 - Due Thursday MMP - 10
Week 15 (12/5)	T - Project Presentation Th - Project Presentation			
Week 16 (12/12) - Final		Final Exam -		Participation 2 Due Friday

Basic Grading Rubric for Work:

A   <u>Content</u>:   Shows outstanding comprehension of material covered; exceptional insight and originality. "You knocked my socks off."
           <u>Form</u>:   Superbly organized; reflects a logical, coherent flow within paragraphs and between paragraphs and major section. "A joy to read."
           <u>Mechanics</u>: Contains no major errors in grammar and form – including spelling, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure and paragraphs.

B   <u>Content</u>:   Shows very good coverage of material; Completely done but not exceptional. "You impressed me."
           <u>Form</u>:   Reflects an overall logical flow, although it could be even clearer and more coherent. "A good read."
           <u>Mechanics</u>: Contains few major errors in grammar and form.

C   <u>Content</u>:   Shows adequate coverage of material. "You completed the task."
           <u>Form</u>:   Suffers from problems in coherence and organization. "I had to work to get through it."
           <u>Mechanics</u>: Contains several major errors in grammar and form.

D   <u>Content</u>:   Shows some knowledge of material, but coverage is inadequate (incomplete or shallow). "You put forth an effort."
           <u>Form</u>:   Suffers from major problems in organization and coherence. "I really struggled to follow you."
           <u>Mechanics</u>: Contains serious persistent problems in grammar and form.

F   <u>Content</u>:   Coverage of material is unacceptable, indicating little or no comprehension of what is covered. Paper is plagiarized or was written for another course.
           <u>Form</u>:   Problems in organization render the paper virtually incoherent. Unable to open file (submitted through WebCT).
           <u>Mechanics</u>: Contains numerous major problems in grammar and form.

Class Policies

CLASS PARTICIPATION
This is a discussion-based course, so your participation will help make the class run.
     (a) **Attendance:** Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class session and attendance will be given to the college for registration and enrollment purposes. I will assume that your attendance means that you want to be in the class and will therefore expect you to come prepared and ready to participate in class. If students are unable to follow the course guidelines or disruptive, I reserve the right to remove them from class for the day, if you are or unprepared then stay home, if your Snapchat streak is more important than class then feel free to do that instead, but if you come prepared to learn then so will the professor.
         a. <u>SRJC Non-Attendance Policy</u>
         Faculty may report students who do not attend the first-class meeting of the semester/session as non-attending if they have not contacted the faculty member. Faculty are compelled to report students who fail to attend the first two classes as non-attending if they have not contacted the faculty member. All non-attendance for the full semester must be reported by the end of the add/drop period but should be reported as soon as two classes are missed. For online classes, faculty are compelled to report students who do not log into Canvas during the first week of class as non-attending.
     (b) **Technology Policy: Cell:** Students are simply not allowed to use a cell phone during class lecture or after a quiz, if I see that you are using a phone the professor reserves the right to read the texts to the student's peers, send the phone around to have peers post on the students Facebook wall, incinerate the phone or dissolve it with acid. We will have breaks during the class time in which you are free to use your phones then. **Tablets/ Computers:** Students may utilize these to take notes but if your technology becomes a resource for distraction, they may lose these privileges for yourself or the class.
         a. Importantly: I do not want to have to manage your screen time, so please do not make me.
(c) **In-class involvement:** Student contributions to class discussions are vital and individual comments, questions, and examples are highly encouraged. The professor recognizes that we all come from different cultural backgrounds and have unique learning styles and encourages you to engage class material through these perspectives. It is my goal that you learn as much as possible, and this may require students to move outside of their comfort zone at times.
(d) **Class citizenship:** Individuals that are chronically late to class, tune out regularly during lectures or activities, or are impolite to fellow students (or me!), will be ask you to leave class for the day and I reserve the right to drop you from the class.
(e) For athletes, college events, medical emergencies or disability services individuals must provide an official written documentation and schedule of anticipated absences (if applicable) within the first week of the semester.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
The maintenance of academic standards and integrity includes the obligation not to cheat or plagiarize. A student who uses dishonest or deceitful means to obtain a grade is guilty of cheating; a student who submits another's work as one's own without adequate attribution is guilty of plagiarism. Identical work will earn a grade of zero. Students are fully responsible for learning the course content and material disseminated in the class.

Technical difficulties do not release you from this responsibility. In addition, the instructor and class will follow a code of conduct that respects individual identities, sexualities, belief systems, cultural backgrounds and perspectives. The class will support an open and friendly space to encourage and discuss topics, and often challenge perspective, but will never attack or limit the agency or voice of other students.

PLAGIARISM
Presenting another's ideas as your own will not be tolerated. Plagiarized work will result in a failing grade for the assignment, a referral to the appropriate college officials for disciplinary review, and possible dismissal from the course.

STUDENTS WITH COGNITIVE VARIANTS
Santa Rosa Junior College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with Disability Resources. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper DPS forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester. More information on Disability Services can be found at https://drd.santarosa.edu/ .

SYLLABUS CHANGES
This syllabus is subject to change at the professor's discretion. Students will be informed immediately of any changes to the syllabus and/or schedule, and changes will always benefit the students, not the professor.

CLASSROOM DECORUM
Please inform the professor if an emergency might require electronic contact during a class meeting. I will return this courtesy.
There are certain basic standards of classroom civility that should be adhered to, particularly in a communication course. Civility does not eliminate appropriate humor, enjoyment, or other features of a comfortable and pleasant classroom community. Classroom civility does, however, include the following:
1. Displaying respect for all members of the classroom community.
2. Attentiveness to and participation in lectures, group activities, and other classroom exercises.
3. Avoidance of unnecessary disruptions during class such as private conversations, reading the newspaper or doing the crossword puzzle, or doing work for other classes.
4. Avoidance of negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom community.

Diversity
Diversity describes an inclusive community of people with varied human characteristics, ideas, and world views related, but not limited, to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, color, creed, national origin, age, disability, socio-economic status, geographical region, or ancestry. Institutions that value diversity provide a supportive environment that respects those human differences. It is our responsibility as citizens of the SRJC community to promote and value a campus environment and classroom climate that is antiracist, safe, fair, respectful, and free from prejudice.

Allied Zone
I am a member of the Allied Zone community network, and I am available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As an Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

Name / Pronoun
My gender pronouns are he/she, him/her, his/hers. I will gladly honor your request to address you by your name and/or gender pronouns. Please advise me of these early in the semester.