

Course: Journalism 395, Diversity Theory and Research. **Unique No.:** 08145. **Meetings:** Mondays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in CMA 6.172. **Instructor:** Dominic Lasorsa, Ph.D., Associate Professor. **Office:** BMC 3.320. **Mailbox:** Journalism Office. **Email:** lasorsa@austin.utexas.edu. **Phone:** (512) 471-1966 **Fax:** 471-7979. **Office Hours:** Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 to 10:30 a.m., and by appointment.

Course Description: This course focuses on theories of and research about diversity in society, including but not limited to diversity related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class and culture. The course will focus on this important and growing area of research in the social sciences from a communication perspective and should be of special interest to graduate students in advertising, communication studies, journalism, public relations and radio-television-film, and in the related fields of psychology and sociology. Students have the opportunity in this course to explore from a variety of theoretical perspectives prominent current social science theories relating to all aspects of diversity and to examine recent and seminal research that has contributed to our understanding of diversity across a wide array of topics. Students write a term paper on a particular topic of interest to them that advances thinking on the chosen topic. Each student works, with the instructor's guidance, to present a paper to a scholarly conference of the student's choice. Class sessions include discussions of students' ideas designed to help them obtain a broad view of diversity theory and research, and to advance their own individual work.

Course Requirements: Course assignments, fully listed in the section on "Grading" and described in separate sections immediately below, include examinations, presentations and a term paper. Assignments turned in late are penalized, depending upon lateness and the nature of the assignment. If you have any questions about course requirements, check with the instructor well before the due date. If anything interferes with your ability to learn, let the instructor know. If you have questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask. **Manuscript format:** Please **double space** all work, include **page numbers**, put **your full name** at the top of the first page, identify the assignment and **staple** in top left corner. Do not provide cover pages or other frills.

Examinations: The examinations will consist mainly of essay questions. Each exam will be 90 minutes. The first examination will be on **October 19**. The second exam will be on **November 30**. The second examination will focus on material covered *after* the first examination.

Research Article Extended Abstract Assignments: You will summarize and critique a research article from a recent (past five years) issue of an academic research journal. The article should either present original research on diversity theory/research from a communication perspective or present an essay, critique or review of theory/research on that topic. I strongly encourage you to abstract an article that relates to your term paper topic. Some suitable journals in which to find appropriate articles include: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication*, *Communication Research*, *Communication Theory*, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism Practice*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. You also may abstract a chapter from an academic book published within the past five years that fits the topic. If you choose this option be sure that the chapter can be understood independently of the rest of the book and that any references to citations mentioned in the chapter are included.

On **September 14**, submit either a complete and legible photocopy of the research journal article you propose to abstract or, if the article is readily available online, information about how to access it. If you abstract a book chapter, submit a hard copy of the chapter plus any other required pages (such as book title pages, references pages, etc.).

On **September 28**, submit your research article extended abstract. In four to five pages, provide the following information: (1) a complete article **reference** that includes the author's full name; article title; journal name, number, volume and year of publication, and page numbers; (2) the author's statements of the **hypotheses** tested **or** the **research questions** addressed, **or** **statement of purpose**, as appropriate. (3) the author's **definitions** of each of the key concepts mentioned in the hypotheses, research questions or purpose; if a key concept is not defined by the author then you define it as you think the author intended; (4) if the article presents original research, a *brief* (one paragraph) description of the **method(s)** the author used to obtain the data: simply identify the population studied, whether and how it was sampled, and the research method(s) used; and (5) a summary of the study's **results** or **conclusions** made, whichever is appropriate. In addition, if you feel comfortable doing so, you may add (6) your own brief **critique** of the article evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework, the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence presented and the importance of the findings; also feel free to include suggestions for ways to advance study on this topic.

On **October 12**, give an eight-minute presentation on the article you abstracted, accompanied with a one-page class handout that includes a complete article reference, a summary of the study's results and a brief statement of what you learned about the topic. Make sure your name is atop the handout. Make enough copies for all class members.

Class Presentations: Besides the presentations associated with the article abstract and the term paper, you will make two class presentations, each on an assigned diversity theory/research topic. The instructor will make a concerted effort to assign topics of particular interest to you. Accompany your presentation with a PowerPoint presentation sent to the instructor *at least two hours prior to the start of class* on the day of your presentation. Also bring to class enough copies for all class members of a one-page handout that highlights major points of your presentation. Please keep these two class presentations to 20 minutes each. For each of these two class presentations, submit to the instructor *at least seven days before the presentation* information on how to access freely one journal article on the topic which you want class members to read in preparation for your presentation.

Term Paper: You will write a term paper of about 15 pages, including any bibliography, notes, illustrations, appendices, etc. In writing your term paper, you may take one of two approaches: (1) ***The Topical Paper***. Select a single major *topic* relevant to diversity theory and research from a communication perspective and propose *different theories* that help explain that topic or some aspect(s) of that topic. Identify at least two theories relevant to your topic and describe what aspect(s) of diversity theory/research each of these theories addresses; (2) ***The Theory/Model/Concept Paper***. Select a single *theory, model* or *concept* related to diversity theory/research from a communication perspective and provide a critical literature review of this one theory, model or concept. A critical literature review identifies, organizes and presents the existing literature, and then offers a critique of that literature, with the goal of illuminating directions for future research.

On **October 26**, submit a term paper prospectus. In your prospectus, outline your topic and identify which of the two approaches you intend to take. Also note what library research you have done to date and attach a tentative bibliography. Your prospectus should be at least five pages but consider this assignment as an opportunity to present a complete draft of your term paper. The more you give me (up to 15 pages) on October 26, the more feedback I can provide and the easier the final term paper assignment will be.

On **November 23**, submit your term paper and give an eight-minute presentation on the paper, accompanied by a one-page class handout; make enough copies for all class members.

Grading:

Examination One	20 percent
Examination Two	20 percent
Research Article Extended Abstract & Presentation	10 percent
Term Paper Prospectus	10 percent
Class Presentation One	10 percent
Class Presentation Two	10 percent
<u>Term Paper & Presentation</u>	<u>20 percent</u>
TOTAL	100 percent

Course Materials:

There is no textbook for this course. We will read journal articles, book chapters and other materials related to diversity theory and research from a communication perspective.

Course Schedule: (Subject to change as the need arises)

August 31

Introduction to Diversity Theory & Research

September 7. Labor Day Holiday

September 14.

Cultural Diversity and Media Portrayals of Minorities

What is cultural diversity? What are some of the patterns we can see in the media portrayals of selected cultural minorities? What interesting questions for study do these patterns suggest?

Cultural Globalization

Cultures exposed to outside influences ignore some, adopt others, and almost immediately start to transform them. Transnational media culture entered a new stage with the advent of the Internet. So, where do the media fit into cultural globalization today?

Copy of article to abstract is due.

September 21.

How the Internet Affects Communication in Developed & Developing Nations

A comparison of how the Internet has affected communication in wealthier and poorer regions of the world generally. Can those in poorer conditions improve their power to define themselves? How?

Different Approaches to Achieve Diversity

A survey of the different approaches to achieve diversity in media organizations, such as affirmative action, FCC quotas, ASNE parity, and a critique of the effectiveness of these approaches.

September 28.

News Media Portrayals of Arabs and Israelis

The Arab-Israeli conflict has continued for many years. How have news media portrayals of Arab-Israeli hostilities changed over time? How has public opinion changed over time? Is there a relationship between changes in media framing of the Arab-Israeli conflict over time and changes in public attitudes toward the Arab-Israeli conflict over time?

Representations of Poor Women in Different Countries

A comparison of how poor women are portrayed in different media in different countries and what poor women can do to improve such portrayals.

Article abstract is due.

October 5.

Guest Presentation

Prof. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez

October 12.

Class Presentations on Academic Articles

Article abstract presentation is due.

October 19.

Examination One

October 26.

Discussion of Term Paper Proposals

Term paper prospectus is due.

November 2.

Gender Representation in Media

A variety of theoretical perspectives (for example, feminism) have been proposed to guide our understanding of media representation patterns of gender, of males and of females. How then might we best understand these media representation patterns? What effects could gender portrayals in the media have on audiences?

News Media Portrayals of African-Americans

How African-Americans are portrayed in the news media and how that affects the credibility of the news media among African-Americans and other race/ethnic groups.

November 9.

Poor Communities Use Technology to Create News

How those living in impoverished regions of the world are using communication technologies to provide news to their communities. A comparison of efforts in poverty-stricken regions around the world. Examples of how poor communities in different countries are using communication technologies to make, report and disseminate news.

Interaction of Cultures

Cultural interactions can produce a variety of effects. One process that has been observed when two cultures interact is what is known as *hybridity*. What is hybridity and what do communication channels have to do with it? Since “soft power” represents a way to persuade other powers without the use of coercion or force, can hybridity be facilitated through soft power? How?

November 16.

The Tension between Cultural Heritage & Professionalism in Reporting News

In school and on the job, journalists learn how journalists act. It’s called professional socialization. But journalists are people, too, with real families, friends and interests. Journalists’ group memberships are a part of them. To what extent do a journalist’s cultural heritage affect the journalist’s news reporting? To what extent should it? These are the questions explored here.

Audience Responses to Media Portrayals of Minorities: Some Conclusions

The effects of media portrayals of selected minorities on audiences, as well as consideration of the effects of these portrayals on members of the minorities themselves.

November 23.

Class Presentations on Term Papers

Term paper, class presentation and one-page class handout on term paper are due.

November 30.

Examination Two

Religious Holy Days Observance Policy: The Texas Education Code specifies that an institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi03-04/ch4/ch4g.html#attendance>

Students with Disabilities: Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

The Honor Code: The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.