



Global Communications

Issues & Perspective

Diversity Inclusive

Mass Communications 105  
**DIVERSITY  
& LIFESTYLES  
IN MEDIA**

Professor Bob Rucker

Spring, 2011

Class website: [www.profbob.com](http://www.profbob.com)

Mondays & Wednesdays

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**MCOM 105** is an upper division mass communications interactive class which focuses on advertising, public relations, journalism and online messages which incorporate concepts and issues of ethnicity & race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and disability. Careful consideration is given to the purpose, impact and potential fallout of messages targeting minority groups. This class also looks at media hiring practices and media message decision-making regarding diverse cultures and lifestyles. Upper division standing is required. This class is open to all upper class SJSU students on campus as an elective outside their major. Any student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications can meet a department elective requirement in advertising, public relations and journalism with this class.

In Diversity and Lifestyles in the Media, we work to broaden the limited thinking and study of minorities in the media to see **diversity as a way to better appreciate people** with different values and interests so to **better understand their importance and contributions** in our society.

To see diversity outreach as **“pedagogy” or outreach to community in ways media teach large populations** about cultural groups, group behavior, values and priorities.

To **identify media** efforts which knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate **stereotypes, myths, and false opinions**.

To **develop creative new thinking and strategies** which effectively utilize new technologies to inform and educate accurately about diverse populations.

To **identify and assess media response to public calls for change in coverage** of different cultures and life experiences, evaluating traditional, non-traditional and new age approaches in advertising, public relations, journalism, television, radio, movies and books.

*3 units credit. An upper division, Mass Communications elective for advertising, journalism and public relations students. General university upper division elective. No pass/fail grading option.*

## Student Learning Objectives for MCOM 105:



## Diversity & Lifestyles in the Media



To successfully complete this course, students must be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of professional ethical principles and the ability to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively and independently. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
4. Demonstrate that they have the ability to write and/or produce quality content for broadcast news or convergent media under time pressure or deadline restrictions.
5. Demonstrate the ability to develop and effectively use appropriate interview quotes and comments, paraphrase sources accurately and fairly, and attribute clearly and accurately all information used.

## Our Diversity - Do we and the media take it for granted?

It's been said because we live in a part of America where many cultures live, we think of "diversity" as a given. "It's second nature us, no big deal," one person in class once said. But doesn't that depend on who you're talking to in our community. Some people who feel they go unnoticed most of the time think they are regularly ignored or dismissed, or feel stereotyped by society. Maybe to them "diversity" means nothing if we don't get past "tolerating" people and start "appreciating" what each person has to offer.

The election of President Barack Obama, the first African-American leader of the free world, was a great step forward. Yet according to researchers who still track issues of racism and prejudice in America say there are still pockets of resistance to change all over America. Some insist even here in California there are places where hate groups thrive and promote their views openly.

Here at San Jose State University, we have people from nearly every cultural group on planet earth. There are so many opportunities everywhere on this campus for students to interact and learn from each other. Yet because of a local cultural mindset that this is a "commuter school," many people prioritize coming to campus for classes and then leaving to go to work, home, or simply somewhere else. Talk about "missing the forest for the trees!"

Yet many of us get very upset when we feel our race, ethnicity, religious culture, gender, sexual orientation or disability is misrepresented in the media. We wish someone would stop...do some basic research...listen and learn from people who live those cultural lives...and maybe the rest of America would stop holding onto stereotypes and attitudes based on a total lack of knowledge.

The media in America is the great teacher. It teaches us how to live, what is cool, what is "in" and what is "out." But it's reluctance to really talk about diversity in candid terms has taught millions of people that subject is too sensitive to discuss openly. MCOM 105 takes the opposite approach for the follow reasons.

Many of you are going into the media someday...advertising, PR, radio, TV, newspapers, magazines or photo journalism. How well you interact with a wide demographic group of people may determine how comfortable you are climbing the ladder of success. Outreach to specific groups can sometimes be delicate, especially if you know little about who they are, and what they value. Some run the risk of turning off or offending cultural groups with their media messages because they were unwilling to stop, take some time and face the reality that not everyone thinks the same way you do, or wants the same things out of life.

When you take the time to listen and learn from others, you may get a better idea why some cultures feel ignored, or unappreciated...Why tensions persist because some believe society is not interested in addressing the history and concerns a cultural group has faced for years, decades or centuries. People of color, women, religious groups, gays & lesbians, the disabled and many other forward thinking people have endured constant criticism, physical abuse and/or stressful hardships, just for shot at being recognized for what they have to offer.

Students in MCOM 105 are being asked to take time this semester to stop, assess a wide range of possibilities about powerful media messages, and then compare those findings with their own life experiences and family history. In many cases, you may find there are common experiences which could open up new ways of critical thinking about how to develop more effective outreach to a wide variety of diverse cultural groups in America.

## CLASS TEXTBOOK: "News in a New America," (A Free Online Download Text)

Professor Rucker will assign chapters and test students on those chapters, and other posted information assigned, throughout the semester. Look on his website for pertinent & timely class materials and links to news articles, advertisements, press releases, book excerpts, videos, etc. Always be prepared to take a class discussion deeper in thought. Challenge one another to take on sensitive topics by looking at them from a different perspective.

**CURRENT EVENTS** is stressed in all Professor Rucker classes. As President Abraham Lincoln reportedly said... "Before you shoot off your mouth, make sure your brains are loaded." Use news links online to find information. Students should DAILY read online, listen on radio or watch on television local and national news stories. We will be discussing pertinent issues in class. Saying "I didn't have time" is a lame excuse. Ignorance is too easy to see and discount in the world. Don't let people discount you. **Know what's going on every day.**

## **MCOM 105 GRADING:**

**CLASS PARTICIPATION IS WORTH 40% OF YOUR OVERALL MCOM 105 GRADE.**

You lower your participation grade if you have nothing new, pertinent or substantive to offer to forward our class discussions. Improve your participation grade by "taking the initiative" and researching something that catches your eye that is timely and pertinent to issues being discussed in this class. All students will be asked about current events and encouraged to volunteer and share life experiences pertinent to our study and understanding of diversity.

MCOM 105 students may also be asked to go out on campus and in the community to meet, and take notes on discussions with diverse groups of people. Questions will be discussed in class before any such assignment. Students must bring back proof of doing these probing interview assignments by reporting, in a written assignment, the full name, title, phone number and email address for individuals interviewed. Prof. Rucker must be able to verify these contacts.

**Students missing any class due to illness, death in the family, or some other SJSU accepted sanction MUST call Prof. Rucker's office in advance of class and identify the concern briefly.** Not all requests for excused absence will be approved. All missed assignments should be gotten from website or from a MCOM 105 classmate. Prof. Rucker will not update students with unexcused absences.

**RESEARCH / WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ARE WORTH 30% OF YOUR OVERALL MCOM 105 GRADE.**

Anything to be turned into Professor Rucker must always be type-written. **NO E-mailing assignments** unless specifically told to do so by Professor Rucker. No exceptions. On a regular basis, **All written reports must be turned in the day they are due, no exceptions.** Short papers must include required information specified by Prof. Rucker, and students must demonstrate evidence of doing appropriate and interesting research. **Sources of information, including names, titles and where the information was printed or posted (URLs) must be included in assignments written and oral.** Student opinions are never graded. How well student develop their assignment and present the info in an interesting and organized manner will be evaluated and graded. **Periodically guest speakers will address the class.** Whenever advanced notice is possible, Prof. Rucker will identify the guest's name and title in advance of the guest lecture. Students **MUST** do some research, develop an understanding of the guest's background, experience, positions or publications.

**All MCOM 105 students MUST develop, type and turn in FIVE INFORMED QUESTIONS for that guest to be used the day of the guest lecture. No late submissions. No make-ups.**

## Readings Tests/Video Reports are WORTH 30% OF YOUR OVERALL MCOM 105 GRADE.

Read carefully all ASSIGNED readings downloaded from the class website. Incorporate what you learn in your class assignments. **Students will be tested on those on readings assigned in oral and written formats.** Students will also be given opportunities to showcase what they have learned from in-class discussions, guest speakers and reading assignments in videotaped reports. These videos, in most cases will be tied to timely or breaking news events, and offer students an opportunity to conduct research on campus and in their communities. Again, these video commentaries MUST include specific names, titles and factual info from sources which can be verified by Professor Rucker if necessary.

False reporting of information or source comments is unethical, and may result in an automatic course failing grade.

### Prof. Rucker's Additional Classroom Policies: Based on Professional Standards

#### **IMPORTANT ADVISORY:**

MCOM 105 students may NOT leave early for holidays, spring break, sporting events, or be absent for non-emergency personal or family matters. Remember higher education is a great privilege which should never be devalued or wasted. Re-adjust your priorities. A class grade penalty will be imposed for unexcused absences, or disregard for this advisory.

All students are asked always to be open-minded, listen and learn about other cultures represented in the classroom. Candor is encouraged in class discussions. It's OK to ask for clarifications and to respectfully challenge viewpoints.

Personal attacks and inappropriate language are NEVER allowed.

Laptops must stay focused on class related materials and discussions. Surfing is not allowed during class time and can result in a class participation grade penalty. You may also be asked to leave the classroom which will be considered as an unexcused absence.

NO e-mailing "I'm Sick". Pick up the phone, dial 408-924-3272, and call in sick like most media professionals.

#### **The 10 Minute Class Arrival Rule:**

No student may enter the classroom 10 minutes after class starts. Such disruptions will result in the late student being asked to leave. Late students should get notes from other classmates after class.

**NO E-mailing Homework without prior authorization.** Each class is assigned a separate e-mail address. Prof. Rucker must give permission, in advance, before any class correspondence or homework may be sent to the class assigned e-mail. Otherwise such submissions receive no credit.

Deadlines are always absolute. Expect NO extensions.



## Policies

### A. Academic Integrity Statement

"Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's Integrity Policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs." The policy on academic integrity can be found at:

[http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html)

To plagiarize is to "steal and use (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 1975). **You are committing plagiarism if you:**

- Copy phrases, sentences, or passages from electronic or print sources (journal articles, the web, etc.) into your own papers and reports without giving credit by citing the original source
- Quote someone else's exact words without giving credit to the original author
- Use someone else's specific ideas even if you restate them in your own words.

Citing your sources properly helps to avoid plagiarism. (See [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct))

SJSU regards plagiarism as academic dishonesty. Consequences include academic and other sanctions such as "grade modification." Make clear which ideas are yours and which are someone else's...don't use words or images in a way that violates the creator's rights to them.

(Plagiarism and fabrication are violations of the ethical standards of the journalism profession. In addition to plagiarizing sources, outright fabrication is equally dangerous territory for journalists. This includes making up sources and attributing information to non-existent people or printed matter.)

### B. Campus policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the DRC to establish a record of their disability."

C. You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawals, incompletes, classroom behavior, and other policies found at [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct). Also, please read the SJSU catalog thoroughly.

**University Policy S01-13**, San José State University's *Policy of Commitment to a Campus Climate That Values Diversity and Equal Opportunity*, replaces University Policy S91-1 and affirms that San José State University (SJSU) is committed to maintaining an environment free from discrimination and harassment in compliance with all laws on non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Furthermore, the university community has a responsibility to advocate inclusion, respect, and understanding at a level above that which is minimally required by law. For a full description, view [SJSU Campus Climate Policy](#).

**Executive Order 883, *Systemwide Guidelines for Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Programs in Employment***, supersedes Executive Order 774.

The California State University is committed to maintaining and implementing employment policies and procedures that comply with applicable state and federal nondiscrimination and affirmative action laws and regulations. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, medical condition, and covered veteran status is prohibited. Additionally, Executive Order 883 prohibits retaliation for filing a discrimination complaint, opposing a discriminatory act, or participating in a discrimination investigation or proceeding.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 883](#).

[NCAA Gender Equity Report](#) details information concerning SJSU's intercollegiate athletics programs under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of 1994.

Presidential Directive 97-03 describes the University's policies and guidelines for securing accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as the procedures for resolving disputes. It is the purpose of this directive to assure that SJSU continues to comply with federal and state legislation and California State University policies regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities.

For a full description, view [Presidential Directive 97-03](#).

Executive Order 926, The California State University Policy on Disability Support and Accommodations, presents policies, procedures, and monitoring for making all CSU programs, services, and activities accessible to students, faculty, staff, and the general public with disabilities.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 926](#).

In order to **observe days of religious significance**, students may occasionally be absent from class. Therefore, to address this issue, the San José State University Academic Council voted to adopt University Policy F68-8. This university policy, in conjunction with [California Education Code 89320](#), addresses campus policy on religious holidays.

For a full description, view [Policy F68-8](#).

**Presidential Directive 91-08, *Sexual Harassment and Special Responsibilities of Supervisory and Management Personnel Having Knowledge of Potential Sexual Harassment Situation***, asserts San José State University's commitment to providing all its students and employees with a comfortable and safe environment for learning and working. The President of San José State University issued this memo to clarify for all SJSU supervisory personnel the kind of conduct that is defined as sexual harassment and the responsibilities of all supervisory personnel when they have any knowledge that sexual harassment may be taking place within the campus community.

For a full description, view [Presidential Directive 91-08](#).



## Classroom Policies of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

To avoid disruptions in the classroom and to foster an atmosphere for learning, the School has established the following classroom policies.

- All cell phones must be turned off (or set to "vibrate") in the classroom. Please be forewarned that, if a cell phone goes off in class, you will be asked to leave the classroom for that particular class period.
- Latecomers may be denied entrance to the classroom. Similarly, do not disrupt the class by leaving early. Do not schedule work, personal appointments (doctor's visits), etc. so that there will be a conflict with the time the class meets.
- When in the classroom, laptops must be used for classroom-related activities only.
- Remove your personal belongings and trash from the classroom after each class.
- No food or drinks allowed in classrooms or near computers in class labs.