

Comm 4445 STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA

SPRING 2026 (28472)

3 Credit Hours

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:20 to 3:40 p.m.

Location: Journalism Building, Room 270

Course Zoom Link: TBA

Instructor: Dr. Felecia Jones Ross, Associate Professor

Office: 3110 Derby Hall

Office Hours: Mondays, 1 to 3 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m. via Zoom, or by appointment

Office hours Zoom link: 520 741 1812 Passcode: 440837

Email: ross.256@osu.edu In the subject line, please put SP2026 Stereotypes Class

My preferred method of communication for questions outside of class is email. Class-wide communications will be sent through Announcements in CarmenCanvas. Please check your notification preferences (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to be sure you receive these messages.

I will reply to e-mails and messages in the discussion boards within 24 hours on school days. You may visit my office hours in person if you prefer. Just notify me in advance.

Course Description

Stereotypes are generalizations attributed to groups of people usually based on social identities such as race, sex, sexual orientation, physical/mental functioning, age, religion, geographic region, and nationality. The media has created, reinforced, and validated such stereotypes which have not only influenced our individual attitudes and treatment of certain people, but has also perpetuated unjust and oppressive systems.

The purpose of this course is to identify the ways in which the media have presented stereotypes and how these stereotypes have influenced us individually, collectively, and systemically. The course will explore stereotypes presented in media formats including news, advertising, entertainment, and social media, and develop strategies for the media to represent our pluralistic society more effectively and accurately.

While the structure of this course requires students to work independently, every effort will be made to address the learning needs of each individual student.

Course activities listed in this syllabus are tentative. You will be informed in a timely manner of any changes.

Mode of Delivery

This class will meet in-person twice a week and conduct other activities using Carmen as a platform to review and submit assignments and take examinations. The class will begin meeting virtually toward the end of the semester likely after the second midterm examination tentatively scheduled for **April 9**. There may be other occasions when the class will not meet in person. The professor will inform you of those occasions in a timely manner. All announcements pertaining to class policies, changes and any other relevant business will be placed on Carmen and announced in class. Pay close attention to the inclement weather policy on Page 11 of this syllabus.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will do the following:

- Understand how the media represents the realities of society
- Understand the characteristics of stereotypes
- Understand the purpose of media stereotypes
- Understand the impact media stereotypes have on individuals and society
- Demonstrate the ability to change the way the media portrays their subjects

Course Materials and Technologies

There is no text for this course. All reading materials will be posted on Carmen and are listed at the end of this syllabus.

Required Equipment and Software

- Computer: current Mac (MacOs) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication
- Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found at [Microsoft 365 Copilot](#).

Carmen Access

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article for step-by-step instructions (go.osu.edu/add-device).
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the Duo Mobile application (go.osu.edu/install-duo) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service
- If none of these options meet the needs of your situation, you can **contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP)** and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT CATEGORIES

Assignments	Points and/or Percentage
Participation and attendance	10
Weekly assignments	10
Midterm examinations	40
Expectations, IAT, and reflections	10
Stereotype example	10
Portrayals Correction Group Project	20

Participation and attendance (10%)

Attendance, as well as your contributions to class discussions, will be factors in determining your participation grade. Your introduction and the syllabus quiz are in this category. There may also be in-class group activities and pop quizzes. Attendance will be taken via Top Hat beginning with the **January 13 class**. This attendance will not count toward your participation grade. It will be used so that the professor can report to the registrar the names of enrolled students who have not attended or participated in class. Attendance will begin counting toward your participation grade on **January 22**.

The introduction assignment asks you to introduce yourself by posting on the discussion board either a video or statement using prompts to guide you. Consider this a fun, low stakes assignment, and it is due **Saturday, January 17, 11:59 p.m. EST**. To allow for late enrollments, the assignment will remain open until **January 24**.

The syllabus quiz is designed for you to know and understand the policies, expectations, and activities of this class. It is also in the participation category and is graded. You may take it as often as necessary to achieve the desired score. This quiz must be completed by **Friday, Jan 16, 11:59 p.m. EST**. To allow for late enrollments, this quiz will remain open until **Jan. 24**.

Expectations, personal biases, and reflections (10%)

At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to indicate your expectations for the class and at the end of the semester, you will be asked to reflect on what you have learned from the class largely based on course goals and learning objectives. This category also requires you to take the Implicit Association Test (IAT). Details will be provided in more detail in Carmen and during class meetings. Grading will be based on your timely completion of the assignments. Expectations assignment submission is due **Jan. 16, 11:59 p.m., EST**. The IAT must be completed by **Jan. 23, 11:59 p.m. EST**. The reflections paper deadline is **May 4, 11:59 p.m. EDT**.

Stereotype Example (10%)

This is a focused-writing assignment in which you are to provide an example of a media stereotype of a group based on race, sex, gender identity, age, physical and mental functioning, etc. This can come from any media form including news, entertainment, social media, books, advertisements, public relations campaigns. Details will be provided in separate instructions posted on Carmen. The example might become the basis of online and/or class discussions, as well as the basis for your group project.

Weekly Assignments (15%)

These assignments will be located in Carmen modules corresponding to the topics located in the syllabus as well as presented in class. These assignments will largely be questions and/or discussions on the readings and the audiovisual presentations. These assignments also include graded discussion posts seeking your thoughtful comments on topics (including current events) relevant to the class. Some of these posts will require you to respond to another classmate's post. Rubrics will be provided. The discussion posts are usually due on Saturdays.

Portrayal Corrections Group Project (20%)

The professor and/or Carmen will assign students to groups who will identify a problematic stereotype and develop a strategy for changing it to a more desirable portrayal for that group. This requires getting information from advocacy groups and other stakeholders to determine what a desired portrayal for that group might be. This will be done in the form of an asynchronous presentation. The presentations will begin

toward the end of the semester, likely the week of **April 21**.

Midterm Examinations (40%)

The midterm examinations will be based on reading materials and in class content that can include audiovisual presentations, guest speakers, lectures, and class discussions. There will be two midterm examinations, each of equal weight. The first midterm is tentatively scheduled for **Feb. 26** and the second midterm is tentatively scheduled for **April 9**. The exams will not cover the same material. Thus, the second exam will only cover the material that was presented after the first midterm. Both examinations will be taken online using both the Honorlock browser and the Honorlock app. As in an in-person format, you will be given 85 minutes to complete it. Because you will be taking it at different locations that may have various technological issues, the exam will open at 12:01 a.m. and close at 11:59 p.m. on their designated days. Classes will not meet on examination days.

Late Assignments

No assignments will be accepted late. This means a grade of zero for the missed assignment. Considerations will be given in instances when there are technical issues documented extenuating circumstances, and illnesses. You must inform the professor within seven days if such problems kept you from completing assignments on time. The deadlines for the syllabus quiz, introduction, and expectation assignments will be more flexible to allow for later enrollees. These assignments will **close on January 24**. Note: You are responsible for making sure that your submissions go through correctly. Be careful not to submit assignments that are blank. Blank submissions will be treated as non-submissions and result in a zero (0) grade.

Grading Scale

93–100: A; 90–92.9: A-; 87–89.9: B+; 83–86.9: B; 80–82.9: B-; 77–79.9: C+; 73–76.9: C; 70 –72.9: C-; 67 –69.9: D+; 60 –66.9: D; Below 60: E

Note: CarmenCanvas, Ohio State's learning management system, does not round fractions up. I do round fractions up in cases where students show significant participation and improvement over the semester. Please take that into account in computing grades.

Extra Credit

There will be opportunities for you to complete work for extra credit. You may earn up to **6 points** of extra credit that will be added to your examination scores. The extra credit can come from C-REP (Communication Research Experience Program) participation and/or from events/activities the professor will announce in advance. For non-C-REP activities, the professor will provide the requirements for earning the points. You are also encouraged to suggest ideas for extra credit. These ideas will be considered on the

basis of their relevancy to course goals and their accessibility to the whole class. See below for more details for earning C-REP credits.

C-REP (Communication Research Experience Program) Research Credits

Students who want to earn extra credit can participate in the Communication Research Experience Program (C-REP). C-REP is designed to give students direct exposure to the topics, goals, methods, and ethical issues of communication research. You can earn up to **6 points**. Each hour of participation is worth **1 point** of extra credit. The points will be added to your examination scores. Participation can take the form of:

- Participating in C-REP research studies, **OR**
- Completing C-REP alternative assignments, **OR**
- A combination of research studies and alternative assignments.

Completing your C-REP requirement must take place during the semester before the deadlines designated in the C-REP Student Guide. The C-REP Student Guide is posted on Carmen. If you have any questions, please review those materials.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. **Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own.** These requirements apply to all students in this class.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, **these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless the instructor specifically authorizes their use, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.**

Content Warning

Some content in this course may involve media that may elicit a traumatic response in some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, acts of war, or sexual violence and its aftermath. If needed, please take care of yourself while watching/reading this material (leaving classroom to take a water/bathroom break, debriefing with a friend, contacting a confidential Sexual Violence Advocate 614-267-7020, or Counseling and Consultation Services at 614-292-5766 and contacting the instructor if needed). Expectations are that we all will be respectful of our classmates while consuming this media and that we will create a safe space for each other. Failure to show respect to each other may result in dismissal from the class.

Copyright

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Creating and Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office:

Online reporting form at <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>,

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,

Or Email equity@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Disability Statement (with accommodations for illness)

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Grievances and Solving Problems

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate,

research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

In this course we will adhere to the 4Cs of civil discourse: **Be Curious, Be Charitable, Be conscientious, and Be constructive**. To acquaint yourself with this framework, please visit Ohio State's Center for Ethics and Human Values website: go.osu.edu/4Cs

Religious Accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the

first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#).

Inclement Weather Policy

Should in-person classes be canceled, we will meet virtually via CarmenZoom during our regularly scheduled time. I will share any updates via CarmenCanvas, email or other mode of communication.

COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Week and Class Dates	Week Overview	Assignments
1 Jan. 13-16	<p>Welcome and Introduction to the topic</p> <p>Course overview, purpose of studying media stereotypes, defining stereotypes</p>	<p>Syllabus quiz and Expectations Worksheet (due Jan. 16 and close Jan. 24, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> <p>Discussion Post introducing yourself (due Saturday, Jan. 17 and close, Jan. 24, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p>
2 Jan 20-23	<p>Effects of Media Stereotypes</p> <p>Read Steele, <i>Whistling Vivaldi</i>, Chapters 1-2, prior to Tuesday's class Types of Biases and Prejudice, discuss <i>Vivaldi</i>, review IAT assignment</p>	<p>Complete IAT (due Friday, Jan. 23, 11: 59 p.m. EST)</p> <p>Discussion Post, <i>Video Race & Sex, What We Think, But Don't Say</i> (due Saturday, Jan. 24, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> <p>Introductions, expectations assignment, and syllabus quiz</p>

		close Jan. 24, 11:59 p.m. EST.
3 Jan. 27-30	Read Banaji, Chapter 4 Discuss <i>Race & Sex</i> video; and IAT results	Weekly assignment: Croteau and Hoynes, pp. 22-33 (due Jan. 30, 11:59 p.m. EST) Discussion Post Video <i>Ethnic Notions</i> (due Jan, 31, 11:59 p.m. EST)
4 Feb. 3-6	Purpose of Stereotypes Read Wilson, Gutierrez & Chao, pp. 55-66	Weekly assignment: Watch and answer questions on <i>Latinos Beyond Reel</i> video (due Feb. 6, 11:59 p.m. EST)
5 Feb. 10-13	Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes Latino and African American stereotypes	Weekly assignment: Listen to podcast: "Stereotypes of Asian and African American Men" and answer questions (due Feb. 13, 11:59 p.m. EST)
6 Feb. 17-20	Asian and Native American stereotypes Explanation of Stereotypes Example assignment	Weekly assignment: Watch <i>Tough Guise 2</i> and answer questions (due, Prepare for Midterm 1
7 Feb. 24-27	Gender Identity Stereotypes Midterm 1 Review and Midterm 1 Midterm 1 is Feb. 26 (opens 12:01 a.m. and closes 11:59 p.m. EDT; timed for 85 minutes)	Weekly assignment: Watch <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i> . Answer questions, due Feb. 27, 11:59 p.m., EST)

8 March 3-6	<p>Gender Identity Stereotypes</p> <p>Discuss <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i> and <i>Tough Guise 2</i> and gender identity stereotypes</p> <p>Explain the Group Project</p>	<p>Group project survey is due on March 6, 11:59 p.m. EST</p> <p>No additional assignments</p>
9 March 10-13	<p>Gender Identity, and Other Stereotypes</p> <p>Discuss gender identity stereotypes</p> <p>Work on group project, assign groups</p>	<p>Submit Stereotypes Example assignment (Friday, March 13, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> <p>Discussion Post: "Let's End Ageism" (due Saturday, March 14, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> <p>Group Project Topic</p>
10 March 17-20	<p>SPRING BREAK</p> <p>NO CLASSES THIS WEEK</p>	<p>No assignments</p>
11 March 24-27	<p>Disability, Ageism and Other Stereotypes</p> <p>Discuss weekend assignments</p> <p>Work on Project</p>	<p>Weekly assignment: Read and answer questions on Advocacy: Keeping Their Feet to the Fire, Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao, 202-216</p> <p>Project check-in</p>
12 March 31- April 3	<p>Strategies Toward Truthful, Accurate Portrayals</p>	<p>Weekly assignment: Read and answer questions on Equitable Hiring Principles Elude Media Employers, Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao; 219-240</p>

	<p>AAA strategies; work on group project</p> <p>Hashtag activism and counterstereotyping</p> <p>Work on group project</p> <p>Review for Midterm 2</p>	<p>Group Project Check-In (due)</p> <p>Prepare for Midterm 2</p>
<p>13</p> <p>April 7-10</p>	<p>Debunking stereotypes and media strategies</p> <p>Work on Project</p> <p>Midterm 2 examination using Honorlock. Is April 9. The examination will open at 12:01 a.m. and close at 11:59 p.m. EDT. Exam is timed for 85 minutes</p>	<p>Group Project Check-In</p>
<p>14</p> <p>April 14-17</p> <p>Virtual class meetings</p>	<p>Work on group project; prepare for presentations</p>	<p>No additional assignments</p>
<p>15</p> <p>April 21-24</p> <p>Virtual class meetings</p>	<p>Upload and view project presentations</p> <p>Last class meeting for semester is April 23</p>	<p>Work on project as needed</p> <p>Upload presentations</p>
<p>16</p> <p>April 28- May 1</p>	<p>Group project presentations, assessments, and revisions as needed</p> <p>Spring Semester Classes end for university April 27</p>	<p>Submit reflection paper and all project-related items by May 4, 11:59 p.m. EDT</p>