

JOURNALISM AND DIVERSITY: MODULE GUIDE

JO3168: Second semester 2007-8. JG3014, Fridays 12-2pm.

Module leader: Brian Cathcart.

Little more than a generation ago the great majority of journalism in this country was produced for white men by white men. Women were routinely ignored and excluded, where they were not patronised, treated as objects or confined to ghettos, while minorities, ethnic and otherwise, could freely be mocked and collectively defamed. A great deal has changed since then – the law, public discourse, the very composition of the profession and the society it serves – but no one could claim that today we have arrived at a comfortable consensus or a *modus vivendi*. In fact how journalism should function in a diverse society is a matter of everyday debate and dispute. Terms such as multiculturalism, stereotyping, institutional discrimination and political correctness are in the headlines every day and they present a challenge to every working journalist. Understanding of such issues is essential. This module analyses the fundamental principles and explores specific instances of debate and conflict from the recent past, as well as current controversies.

Aims

To help equip students to function as journalists in a diverse society;
To further develop understanding of diversity issues in modern Britain;
To foster understanding of the role of journalism both in giving expression to sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination, and in challenging them.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students will be able to demonstrate:

A grasp of the operation of prejudice at both institutional and personal levels;

Understanding of concepts such as “otherness”, “race”, “culture”, “stereotyping” and institutional discrimination”;

Understanding of common differences in the treatment of the sexes in the media and the treatment of different ethnic, religious and other social groups;

Familiarity with recent developments in media coverage in the field of diversity;

Ability to work independently and manage their time efficiently;

Ability to produce an extended essay addressing an issue in this field.

Delivery

The module is delivered in weekly two-hour sessions. A number of the lectures will involve visiting speakers. Reading materials are identified week by week, while an important part of the core reading is the daily press. Students are expected to read at least one “quality” (non red-top) paper every day. In addition, a short bibliography is given below.

Assessment

The module is assessed on the basis of a 2,000-word case study on a subject approved by and discussed with the module leader, to be submitted by 3pm on Monday 19 May.

Content

Since we have among our objectives (a) dealing with topical matters and (b) enabling students to define and develop their own areas of interest, what follows may be subject to alteration.

Sessions (BC unless specified)

Week 1. 1 Feb.	Introduction to the module.
Week 2. 8 Feb.	The otherness question (Anna Kiernan)
Week 3. 15 Feb.	The Lawrence case.
Week 4. 22 Feb.	The Danish cartoons. (Neal Ascherson)
Week 5. 29 Feb.	Women in journalism (Viv Groskop)
Week 6. 7 March.	Gays, lesbians and the media (Sara McConnell)
Week 7. 14 March.	Political correctness, and discussion of case studies
Week 9. 11 April.	The N word (Petal Felix)
Week 10. 18 April.	TBC
Week 11. 25 April	Representations of British Muslims (Rupa Huq)
Week 12. 2 May.	Winding up, and case study workshops.

Additional reading

UK Press Gazette
British Journalism Review

Academic Skills Centre

You are encouraged to make use of the ASC, which provides advice on assessments and writing skills. The ASC is located in Tower 703 and is open from week 4 to week 12 including reading week. The opening times are:

Monday to Wednesday, 10am-5pm; Thursday, 12pm–8pm; Friday, 10am–3pm. You should also make use of the Learning Resource Centre on the ground floor of the main building, open seven days a week in term-time.

The Journalism administrator is Melanie Pitman, EM305/6.