**Media Analysis Paper (150 points)**

People in the United States watch a lot of T.V. (It is the #1 leisure activity in the U.S.) and they watch a lot of movies. Given that watching all of this media seems so central to our culture, your task will be to examine one media product (noted below) and analyze how issues of race or class or gender or sexual identity or disability or religion or age are discussed **and** how these portrayals work to resist or reinforce certain systems of power.

**Step 1**: Choose a media artifact from one of the three media contexts listed below:

1. Film (Hollywood or independent film) – (e.g., Lord of the Rings, Hunger Games, Twilight etc.)
2. Sporting event (professional/amateur) – college or professional sports for women/men
3. Television sitcom (e.g., Will and Grace, The Big Bang Theory, Grey’s Anatomy, Sex and the City, The Bachelor, Keeping up with the Kardashians )

**Step 2:** Choose oneof the topics that we have discussed in class (race, sexuality, gender, class, ability) that you believe will be represented frequently in the media artifact that you have chosen. For example, you may choose Hunger Games and then decide that class is the best fit for that media artifact. You might choose Will and Grace and discuss sexuality. Or, you may choose Keeping up with the Kardashians and discuss how gender is conveyed. You get the idea.

**Step 3:** Once you have chosen your media artifact and your topic (race, gender, sexual identity, class, ability), identify the two groups that make up your population, and which group is dominant (agent) and which group is subordinate (target). For example, let’s say I am choosing to analyze an episode of *The Bachelor* and I am interested in exploring how gender is conveyed. My dominant group would be men and my subordinate group would be women.

**Step 4:** Before watching the show, make a list of as many questions you can think of to help guide your analysis and careful viewing. Here are some example questions:

How are women portrayed? How are men portrayed?

What are they doing? What are they saying?

What jobs do they have?

Where are they most often portrayed? In the home? Bedroom?

What are they wearing?

How do they meet up with “traditional” standards of beauty?

What systems of power are either challenged or upheld with such portrayals?

How are people with a lower socioeconomic status portrayed? People with a higher socioeconomic status?

What are they doing? What are they saying?

How are they treating one another and interacting with one another?

What jobs do they have?

Where are they most often portrayed?

What are they wearing or doing?

What systems of power are either challenged or upheld by such portrayals?

What do sportscasters say about women when they cover womens’ sports at the collegiate and professional levels?

What do they say about women in relation to their personal lives? About men in relation to their personal lives?

How are men and women constructed in terms of sports coverage?

What systems of power are either challenged or upheld by such portrayals?

What are they doing (e.g., activity, occupation)? What are they not doing?

How are they shown in relation to one another? Or, are they never shown interacting?

Where are they shown (e.g., home, work, kitchen, bedroom)? Where are they not shown?

What are their (approximate) ages?

What races and ethnicities/social classes/sexual orientations appear to be represented? What are not represented?

What body sizes or range of physical abilities/limitations?

How do these categories and classifications intersect with other identities?

**Step 5:** Watch the show while taking copious notes on how (race, gender, sexuality, class, ability) is being portrayed. Be sure to note how both dominant and subordinate groups are portrayed. As you watch the program you have selected, focus on how for example, women, men, and other genders are portrayed, as well as how they are *not* portrayed. At this point, pretend like you are watching the show for the first time (even if you have already seen it). You are now wearing a different lens, that of critical scholar rather than passive viewer. Put yourself in the shoes of the leisure anthropologist. Take notes in order to get at a “thick description” of what is going on with your population.

**Step 6:** Analysis. Re-read the section of the book that has to do with your population group. Re-read your viewing notes and think about the following question: (You might want to watch the show again while you think about these three questions.)

* How might the portrayal of your chosen topic in this show affect its intended audience?
* What systems of power are either challenged or upheld with such portrayals?

**Step 7:** Write a **5-7** page media analysis (not including cover page or reference page). Engage **in depth** with at least **three different readings from our class text** to help shape your paper and guide your analysis. You must cite each reading both within your paper and in the reference list. Also, if you use other sources/references, please be sure to also include the full references in your reference list.

Your analysis should include the following elements:

1. Introduction (**15 points)**
2. Set the context for the paper
3. Introduce your media artifact and your issue (race, gender, class….etc.)
4. Explain briefly why you have chosen both.
5. Provide your thesis: Outline your argument for the reader. Here is an example:

In this paper, I contend that the way gender is portrayed in *The Bachelor* works to perpetuate harmful stereotypes, keeping women in a subordinate role in society. I will begin by giving an overview of the premise of the television show and its intended audience. This will be followed by a critical analysis of the ways that gender is portrayed within the show and the (sometimes hidden) messages sent to women viewers. In this section, I discuss the ways women are expected to act around the bachelor, the ways women are portrayed interact with one another, and how women’s bodies are portrayed. I will conclude the paper by pointing to the many ways these specific portrayals perpetuate a particular system of power.

1. Body **(120 points total)**
2. Description-Set the stage by describing the gist of the plot of the show in order to give your readers the gestalt. Also, be sure to describe the show’s intended audience. This will most likely require outside research (make sure you cite). **(15 points)**
3. Analysis Point #1-(Do this with each element or point about the show that you bring up. You should provide and thoroughly analyze **at least three** specific examples worth **25 points each**….**75 points total**)
4. Give a specific example from the TV show/movie/sporting event that supports your thesis and main point for this section.
5. Analyze it based on the readings that we have done.
6. Interpret it not only using your own ideas, but **also those from the readings using direct quotes from the readings in our class text**. Make sure you make connections with the “so what?” Meaning, how does this example work to reproduce or resist a certain system of power?
7. Analysis Point #2 (repeat above)
8. Analysis Point #3 (repeat above)
9. The Big Woo- After looking at the various ways (race, gender, sexuality, age,

ability, religion, class) are portrayed within your media artifact, what does it all mean? What does it say or imply about our culture, desires, aspirations, assumptions, or expectations? How does it work to either keep a certain group in power or to challenge a power structure in society? What impact might this show have on its viewers? **(25 points)**

III. Conclusion. Tell ‘em what you told ‘em. Remind ‘em of the big woo! (**10 points)**

IV. APA formatted cover page and reference list (these are not counted in your total page number for content which is 5 complete pages minimum to 7 complete pages maximum). (**10 points)**