

Background

The average teenager spends more than 10 hours each day consuming media—more than sleeping or attending school. Media is the messenger and an increasingly powerful one. Mainstream media bombards children and adults alike with overwhelming messages that women should be beautiful and sexy, while men should be powerful and often violent. These messages limit children's ideas of what is possible in the world and can have damaging effects on their self-esteem, health, and the way they treat others.

The *Miss Representation* curriculum equips K-12 and University students with the critical thinking skills to question the messages they see in mainstream media daily. It also gives teachers and parents the tools to spark a conversation with children and young adults about their media consumption.

Approach

Following the release of the critically acclaimed 2011 documentary film *Miss Representation*, director and filmmaker Jennifer Siebel Newsom teamed up with a diverse group of educators to design a curriculum that gives media literacy a much needed gender focus. The curriculum asks girls and boys alike to think about the effects of the images they see—particularly the ways in which media affects women and girls' ability to see themselves as leaders and be seen as leaders by others in society.

The K-12 *Miss Representation* curriculum is divided into modules. Each module includes age appropriate content, including film clips, definitions of relevant concepts, reflection exercises, discussion questions, in-class activities, and homework suggestions. The modules are sequenced to build upon the outcomes of previous lessons. Educators also receive a copy of the full-length film, which is more appropriate to use in the University setting.

Teachers can incorporate the curriculum into existing instruction or build upon it for a dedicated media literacy class.

MODULE	K-12 LEARNING OBJECTIVES			
	K-3 GRADE	4-5 GRADE	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
Media Literacy (NOTE: This module also references Gender Socialization)	Learn about different types of media. Understand that media communicates ideas and teaches individuals. Identify the ways media and advertisements portray gender. Begin to recognize that the way media portrays gender can limit the options available for both girls and boys.	Recognize different types of media. Understand that media communicates ideas and teaches individuals. Differentiate programming content from advertising. Introduce examples of how media and advertising influence the way individuals think and feel about themselves. Identify the ways media and advertisements portray gender. Recognize that the way media portrays gender can limit the options available for girls and boys.	Pay conscious attention to the way media presents women and men. Define stereotype and identify stereotypes frequently seen in mainstream media. Understand that when stereotypes are repeated over and over, individuals begin to accept them as normal or real. Think about the ways stereotypes of femininity or masculinity limit girls and boys.	Learn how media shapes individual beliefs and cultural norms. Pay conscious attention to media consumption. Define concepts such as representation, social construction, and objectification. Recognize gender stereotypes and think about their effects. Identify positive and empowering representations of women in the media.
Women and Leadership		Expand ideas of leadership to include women.	Learn the facts about how women are under-represented in the political and business sectors. Identify ways in which women leaders are treated differently in media. Understand the ways negative treatment in the media can affect a woman's ability to see herself as a leader and to obtain leadership positions. Expand ideas of leadership to include all types of women.	Make the connection between media objectification and the low numbers of women in influential leadership positions. Recognize media bias and understand how it undermines women's leadership. Define democracy and think about how disparities in women's leadership undermine U.S. democracy. Learn about important events from the women's movement and practice teaching others about women's history.
Behind the Scenes			Define diversity. Recognize that there is a lack of diversity behind the scenes of mainstream media and advertising. Understand how multiple perspectives can change a story. Practice making entertaining media with a strong social message.	Define diversity and think about the ways in which more diversity behind the scenes might change how women and girls are represented in media and advertising. Understand that what we see in the media is influenced by political and economic decisions. Comprehend that changes in the media and advertising industry have given companies more power in determining what we see and hear. Reflect on the dangerous effects of solely profit-driven media and advertising industries, the impact they have on our culture, and the news/information we are given access to. Identify ways in which individuals can influence positive change in the media, news, and advertising industries.

UNIVERSITY LEARNING OBJECTIVES				
Recognize the complex ways mainstream media and advertising influence gender norms in U.S. culture, particularly as it relates to women's leadership.	Identify increasingly subtle forms of sexism and bias in the media and recognize the ways in which these biases spill into our everyday experiences.	Understand that more diversity behind the scenes can change the types of images and stories shared through media outlets.	Connect personal experiences to the political and economic influences of media and advertising.	Realize and harness consumer power to champion good media and challenge bad media and advocate for the eradication of gender stereotypes in all aspects of our society.