

SOC/LIB 366-01: American Society & Media (Hybrid)

Grand Valley State University F2018, R 4-5:15 pm, Eberhard 510

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Interdisciplinary approach to the ways in which mediated mass culture produces meaning in contemporary American society as evidenced through a variety of critical lenses such as political economy and socio-cultural analyses of the organization of mass media, media content, and audience reception studies of film, television, and/or music cultures.

Part of the Information, Innovation, and Technology Issue. This course meets the General Education knowledge and skills goals on the attached General Education sheet (last pages of syllabus).

Please make sure you read the following requirements prior to the second week of classes as all course expectations as well as assignment instructions are listed in the pages that follow.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role that media plays in the social construction of reality.
2. Identify and apply theories of interpretation, active audiences, and media effects in order to address the social construction of reality and social problems underpinning these mass media constructions.
3. Demonstrate and produce an interdisciplinary understanding of underlying values and ideologies of information culture.
4. Demonstrate collaborative problem solving through team project/presentation to examine complexity of media constructions of social reality.

This is an upper-division discussion-based course. Students have a responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. This means reading, thinking and writing about the material prior to class time. Be prepared for the work to be personally and academically challenging. You are expected to read, listen, and watch thoughtfully, attentively, and respectfully, and to ground your discussion in the texts and a critical integration of knowledge and experience.

TEXTS

Students need streaming access to Netflix for this course. Additional readings found on Blackboard

PROFESSOR KRISTA BENSON

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616-331-8230

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Lake Ontario Hall 241
Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00 am (onsite or virtual via Skype) and by appointment

Slack messenger is the best way to reach me and you can expect a response within 24 hours.

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COURSE DELIVERY:

This course is taught under the hybrid designation, which means that the course will combine in-person meetings on Wednesdays with online discussions, group projects, student research, film viewings, and assignments in Blackboard. A detailed calendar accompanies this syllabus and a detailed calendar of expectations and due dates can be found on Blackboard. We will use Blackboard extensively for online participation and supplements to in-person meetings. The course week will be considered Tuesday through Monday. Please refer to the Blackboard site for a detailed site map which indicates where you can find information and how you should navigate our class.

When you first login to our Blackboard course site, you will see an initial announcement inviting you to click on the “Begin Here” button. In that area you will find an orientation to our course site including where you will find what content. On a regular basis (several times each week), you will access the modules for each week and the Discussion Board on Blackboard. **Each week, you should complete the required readings PRIOR to our in-class meeting on Thursdays and there will be private journal entries, discussion boards, and supplemental activities due by Mpdays by 11 pm.**

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

We will use Blackboard as our online class environment. The class-specific technologies will be accessible there, including Google Docs for coordinating your group project, Screencast O'Matic for recording your group projects, discussion forums, readings that should be completed prior to Wednesday meetings, the gradebook, and turning in assignments. Please do not use other technologies for these assignments without speaking with me first.

You will need to be able to open PDF files and can find links to download this from the “Online Orientation” from the GVSU IT website. From the online orientation website (<http://www.gvsu.edu/online/are-you-ready-for-online-learning-5.htm>), you will find information on the self-directed Blackboard Orientation and links to additional Help documents. For technology related questions, please contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@gvsu.edu, or 616.331.2101.

The standard GVSU word processing program is Word, and that is what I will use. Word documents in the course site are as posted as .docx. Please submit your documents as Word files. I will not accept incompatible programs. As a GVSU student, you have access to Microsoft Office 365 for free. You will find the information on how to access this at <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/softwarehardware-discounts-31.htm>. Contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Students should assess whether they are ready for online learning here prior to the course starting: <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>. Please see the Blackboard site for other technology help resources at GVSU.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignment Overview

Participation & Attendance	20%
Reading Journal	20%
Media Consumption Log & Analysis	15%
Critical Media Engagement Project	20%
Slideshare Group Presentations	15%

Participation & Attendance: 20%

Active participation is a critical part of the learning experience in this course.

We will explore a variety of issues, some of them quite controversial and complicated. Thus, it's important that we all respect each other's needs, values, and views. There is no way for this class to succeed if students don't prepare materials thoughtfully and participate fully in the class. I expect each of us to arrive each week fully prepared to thoughtfully enter into an ongoing discussion.

Personal opinions play a role in class dialogues but do not substitute for a concerted effort to grasp the

scholarly material in the course. Understanding the material does not mean you have to embrace all or any of the viewpoints represented. However, it does require that you read it, think about it, and discuss it. Please keep in mind that we address this class from a perspective that assumes inequality exists.

I will take this time to remind you to respect each other's opinions and input. If at any time anyone is disrespectful to anyone in the class, I reserve the right to remove posts and address students individually.

Students must also participate online either in the in-person meeting or asynchronously outside of the meeting using Slack: <https://lib-soc366f18.slack.com/>

Participation will be assessed both by in-person participation in the Thursday meetings and by online participation, including online assignments, #takeaways postings, online research, posting a discussion question OR a thoughtful response to a discussion question once per week (due by Mondays for that Week's discussions), and private journals.

For more information about guidelines for participation grading, please see the Participation Grading Rubric in Rubrics on Blackboard.

Reading Journals: 20%

You are required to turn in a reading journal by Thursday every week before class. These journals, submitted in the Reading Journal section of Blackboard, will consist of brief summaries of the reading/viewing/ listening assignments for each week using the Reading Journal feature in Blackboard. Each entry should summarize the readings/viewings for the week, briefly touching on each by name and summarizing their connections, comprising a 150-200 word summary of the key arguments/insights from the assignment. Entries are due by Thursday each week, prior to coming to class or completing online activities, discussions, & lectures.

Students should also copy and paste these entries into GoogleDocs or Word to facilitate access during discussions and while working on other writing projects.

Successful journal entries will do the following:

1. Identify the article/video/chapter
2. Identify the author's main argument (ex. key points). You should be able to paraphrase this argument.
3. Discuss any lingering questions they have about the reading and any connections that they see with other readings/ideas discussed in class. **This last section will be required in all entries submitted in or after Week 3.**

Media Consumption Log & Analysis: 15%

Between 9/6 and 10/25, students will track their media usage in an excel spreadsheet (provided on Blackboard). This tracking and analysis assignment is designed to raise students' awareness of the amount of media they use, how they use it, and what it costs in terms of time and money. Students should upload a copy of the tracking log and media analysis paper to Blackboard by **October 25 by 4 pm and bring a copy to class to discuss.** Further information is available in the assignment on Blackboard.

Critical Media Engagement Project: 25%

There are two options for the final project: a traditional 7-8 page media analysis paper OR a creative project option. **Project proposals will be due in the Critical Media Engagement Proposal dropbox 11/1 at 11 pm.**

Media Analysis Paper Option

7-8 pages, I will provide a list of films that you can analyze on various platforms.

Proposal must identify the film they will analyze and 2 course texts that they think may be useful in analysis. Final paper must include the film, 3 course texts used as secondary texts for analysis, and 1 new secondary text not read in class.

Critical Playlist Option

Critical Playlist: Students will integrate our course readings on media impact, diversity in media and society, and the social impacts of mass media to develop a critical critique via a media playlist. **For this assignment, you will choose a theme and**

create a “Critical Playlist” of 5 popular media texts. Your critique and analysis should explore the intersecting ideas about gender, sexuality, race, class, disability, citizenship, and other aspects of power and difference that we have been exploring in the class. With this framework, you will explore what your texts communicate about these ideas when considered as a “playlist” and your analysis must be supported using course connections, readings, vocabulary, and citation. More details will be available in the assignment detail on Blackboard.

Due by Tuesday, November 20 by 11 pm

Slideshare Group Presentation: 10%

For the last meeting during finals, groups will prepare an online presentation that analyzes a film, television show, video game, or other shared cultural artifact and the ideologies presented through that cultural artifact. The group will be expected to collaborate using a Google Docs document which the instructor will provide. Everyone is expected to contribute to the artifact, the analysis which connects it directly to the previous class’ discussions and readings, and the discussion the group will ask the class. **Members will collaborate on creating a short PowerPoint/Prezi presentation which they will record using Screencast-o-matic (<https://screencast-o-matic.com/>) and upload either to YouTube or another online platform.** Group presentations should be 13-15 minutes long and students must provide 2-3 discussion questions which should prompt 5 minutes of discussion during the final meeting. See Slideshare Group Project Assignment & Rubric for more information.

Slideshares will be presented and discussions facilitated on Thursday, 12/13 from 4-6:30 pm.

COURSE POLICIES

Access and Accommodations

We all come to learning with different needs and I strive to do what I can to make this class accommodating to a variety of needs and learning styles. If you need accommodations, either for

documented disabilities or for other reasons, please contact with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your needs. Please note that the only way to guarantee accommodated your needs in all classes is to work with Disability Support Resources.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by Disability Support Resources will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. Disability Support Resources is at 4015 James H. Zumberge Hall on the Allendale campus and can be reached at 616-331-2490 or dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu. Look at <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/> for more information.

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to attend every class session. Students are allowed **two unexcused absences**. Please use these absences wisely. **For every additional absence you will lose three percent per absence from your overall course grade.** For example, if you miss three additional classes, nine points will be deducted from your final grade.

Please notify the professor if you have a personal emergency or health issue causing you to miss class.

Written Assignment Guidelines

Standard grammar and essay guidelines should be followed. All written assignments must be completed in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. The professor reserves the right to not accept assignments that fail to adhere to these guidelines. All citations must be standardized (i.e. please be consistent with your use of MLA, Chicago, or APA). For questions about citations, please visit sites such as Purdue OWL.

Written assignments uploaded to Blackboard, must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format. No other formats will be accepted. Please visit the following link if you have difficulty uploading your assignment to Blackboard:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/47FDD052-F754-BF04>

SAFE SPACES: This class has been built with an ethic of shared respect and a genuine desire for us to learn together well. I also encourage all students to remember that there are likely survivors of violence in our class. Though this is a space of respect, I cannot guarantee that it is a safe space. I welcome feedback from students on how to make your learning environment more welcoming, but I also encourage anyone triggered by materials/ discussions to inform me privately so that I can direct you to appropriate resources for support. If you think that there may be subjects that would be impossible for you to engage with, please let me know so that we can address the best way for you to succeed in this class.

If the professor provides you with comments or edits on paper drafts, you are responsible for integrating the feedback into your written work to enhance your paper during the revision process. Failure to do so will result in grade deductions.

Online Use and Participation Expectations:

Students are expected to access Blackboard multiple times a week—at the very least, once to download readings before Wednesday meeting and at least once after to participate in online activities and discussions. There will also be additional reasons to meet online or in person with your group for your group project.

All official Grand Valley State University email goes to your student (Gmail) account, including any email sent from Blackboard. I will send email through Blackboard, so it is very important that you check your GVSU Gmail account on a regular basis. Many times, I will send reminders, tips and general FYI information as an e-mail message.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

All students are responsible for doing their own work and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. Plagiarism, or the use of another's words without proper citation, or any form of cheating during an exam or quiz, will result in an F for the assignment and possibly the course. A report will be made to the student's dean and the Center for Academic Integrity so that they may also take appropriate disciplinary action. You may refer to GVSU Student Code Section 223.01 for GVSU's policy. All of the following would constitute plagiarism:

- Using someone else's idea without citing the source where you found that idea.
- Using someone else's structure or organizing strategy without citing it. This often occurs when a writer takes a paragraph out of a source and simply paraphrases each sentence while leaving the original author's structure intact.

A Note on Netiquette

Please see the Participation Guidelines to be reminded of the general guidelines for discussions in this class. In addition, please remember that communicating with people online outside of email is a group experience, and thus one where it is important both balance our own abilities to be free to express our thoughts AND to foster communication among the community. Please be thoughtful and remember that the same people behind those user names are your colleagues in the classroom.

Your Mental Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact University Counseling Center at 616-331-3266 for appointments at both the Allendale and Pew campuses. This service is free and confidential.

- A verbatim (copied directly) phrase or passage that is not quoted

TIPS TO AVOID PLAGARISM

Using an Author's Exact Words:

- Use quotation marks around all words copied from a source.
- Provide a citation for the source of the exact words you used immediately after the quotation.

Paraphrasing an Author's Words:

- Paraphrase an author's words by stating his or her ideas in your own words with your own phrasing. Compare your writing with the author's words to make sure you have not copied the author.
- Always provide a citation for the paraphrased ideas

Stating Common Knowledge:

- Information that is commonly known by the public or the intended readers of a paper do not need citations for sources.
- Unsure if an idea is common knowledge? When in doubt, cite a source.

Prepare ahead of time!

Studies show that students plagiarize most often when they are worried about completing an assignment.

Tips from <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/>

Grading

All assignments have a rubric provided to students and I strongly suggest students read them **before** completing the assignments. In other words, make sure you are fulfilling all of the necessary components of the assignment.

Grade distribution:

A = 100-93	C = 76-73
A- = 92-90	C- = 72-70
B+ = 89-87	D+ = 69-67
B = 86-83	D = 66-60
B- = 82-80	F = 59-0
C+ = 79-77	

Definitions:

[A] Outstanding. Work displays thorough mastery of material, exceptionally good writing, and genuine engagement with the subject-matter. This grade is reserved for those students who attain the highest levels of excellence in thought and scholarship.

[B] Good. Work displays accurate understanding of the material; writing is clear and free of mechanical errors.

[C] Fair. Work displays basic grasp of material, though there may be the occasional misunderstanding or inaccuracy. Writing quality acceptable.

[D] Marginal. Work displays grasp of the material for credit. Quality of work indicates lack of effort or aptitude.

[F] Unacceptable. Excessive absences, assignments not completed, or assignments unworthy of credit.

COURSE PLAN

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. This document is an agreement between professor and student concerning course expectations.

All readings and most videos can be downloaded from Blackboard. Selected viewings will be available on Netflix.

Date Due	Topic	Reading/Activity Due
Week 1 R, 8/30	Framing Culture & Society: Introduction to the class and each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ BEFORE CLASS: Stuart Hall - The White of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media, pp. 89-93 <p>F, 8/11, 5 pm: 100% Tuition Refund Deadline & Last day to add/register</p>
Week 2 R, 9/6	Framing Culture & Society: Ideology & The Culture Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno – “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” pp. 41-72 • Stuart Hall – “Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse,” pp. 1-20 • Kyle Grayson, Matt Davies, & Simon Philpott, “Pop Goes IR? Researching the Popular Culture-World Politics Continuum,” pp. 155-163
Week 3 R, 9/13	Framing Culture & Society: Multiculturalism & Digital Media Studies	<p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janelle Monáe, “Q.U.E.E.N.” (6:03) • Janelle Monáe, “Many Moons” (6:31) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglas Kellner, “Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture,” pp. 9-20 • Stuart Hall - Cultural Analysis (unpublished Centre for Cultural Studies document), pp. 314-316 • Cassandra L. Jones, “‘Tryna Free Kansas City’: The Revolutions of Janelle Monáe as Digital Griot,” pp. 42-72
Week 4 R, 9/20	Culture Matters: Queer Cultures & Critical Analysis	<p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paris is Burning</i> on Netflix (66:00) • Judith Butler – “Your Behavior Creates Your Gender” (3:01) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bell hooks – “Is Paris Burning?,” pp. 145-156 • Judith Butler – “Gender is Burning,” pp. 121-140 <p>F, 9/21: 75% Tuition Refund Deadline</p>
Week 5 R, 9/27	Culture Matters: Video Games, Gamergate, and the Twine Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Chu, “I’m not ‘that creepy guy from the internet’: How GamerGate gave the geek community a bad name”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Anthropy, “What Is It Good For?,” pp. 43-67 • Alison Harvey, “Twine’s Revolution: Democratization, depoliticization, and the queering of game design,” pp. 95-107 • Evan Fuller, “Designing Queer Narratives with Twine”
Week 6 R, 10/4	Culture Matters: Writing About Popular Culture	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia Maasik & Jack Solomon – “Writing About Popular Culture,” pp. 23-36 • Amy Lin – “Barbie: Queen of Dolls and Consumerism,” pp. 37-42 • Laurie Bolovin – “House calls: And Just What Is It Saying?,” pp. 43-53 • David Goeway – “‘Careful, You May Run Out of Planet’: SUVs and the Exploitation of the American Myth,” pp. 54-64 <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Season 1, Episode 1 of <i>Luke Cage</i> on Netflix (55:00) & complete worksheet and bring to class
Week 7 R, 10/11	Culture Matters: Indigenous Storytelling Through Digital Mediums	<p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Voices, “Indigenous Language Digital Activism Network” (5:34) <p>Explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgian College, Online Resources for Learning Anishinaabe <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, Sherilee Harper, Victoria Edge, ‘My Word’: Storytelling and Digital Media Lab, and Rigolet Inuit Community Government, “Storytelling in a digital age,” pp. 127-147 <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larry Aitkens, “Thunderbird Story” (9:14) • Larry Aitkens, “Digital technology and ancient tech” (1:51) <p>Download and Bring to Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thunderbird Strike</i> (available on iOS & Android phones/tablets and Windows computers)
Week 8 R, 10/18	Culture Matters: Animation & Cartoons	<p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Simpsons</i>, “No Good Read Goes Unpunished” (21:00) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Scanlan & Seth Feinberg, “Using ‘The Simpsons’ to Teach and Learn Sociology,” pp. 127-139 • Shilpa Dave, Apu’s Brown Voice: The Simpsons and Indian American Accents, pp. 20-39 • Sam Levin, “We’re the geeks, the prostitutes”: Asian American actors on Hollywood’s barriers
Week 9 R, 10/25	Culture Matters: Black Femme Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyoncé, <i>Lemonade</i> (1:06:00) • Janelle Monáe, <i>Dirty Computer</i> (48:00)

		<p><i>In lieu of Reading Journal, complete viewing worksheet</i></p> <p>Bring Media Consumption Log & Analysis to Class</p> <p>Media Consumption Log & Analysis Due on Blackboard by 4 pm</p> <p>F, 10/26: Last day to drop with a “W”</p>
Week 10 R, 11/1	What We Know and How We Know It: News Media & Media Literacy	<p>Listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the Media, “Breaking News Consumer’s Handbook: Fake News Edition” (9:27) Citations Needed, “Episode 06: The Media’s Default Setting of White Supremacy” (1:11:23) <p>Read/Take</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the Show Notes for Episode 06 and at least 2 linked resources Pew Research Center, “Quiz: How well can you tell factual from opinion statements?” <p>Due by 11/1 by 11 pm: Critical Media Engagement Project Proposal Due on Blackboard</p>
Week 11 R, 11/8	Group Project Work Day	<p>NO CLASS: GROUP PRESENTATION MEETING</p> <p>Students should use this as an opportunity to visit the library. To document your class participation, one student from each group must email me a summary of your group meeting by 11:59 PM EST. Your group members must be copied on the email.</p>
Week 12 R, 11/15	What We Know and How We Know It: Disability on Television	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerard Goggin & Christopher Newell, “Disability in Its Social Context,” pp. 19-38 Eli Clare, “The Mountain & A Note About Gender,” pp. 1-14 Kate Ellis, “Among the Leading Characters on Television,” pp. 80-99 <p>Watch</p> <p><i>Friday Night Lights</i>, “Crossing the Line” (43:00) for free on Hulu or Prime</p>
Week 13 R, 11/22	Tuesday, 11/20 by 11 pm: Critical Media Engagement Project Due on Blackboard	
<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>		
Week 14 R, 11/29	What We Know and How We Know It: Netflix, Streaming Television, & “Niche” Media	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mareike Jenner – “Is This TVIV? On Netflix, TVIII, and Binge Watching,” pp.257-273

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cael Keegan – “Tongues Without Bodies: The Wachowski’s <i>Sense8</i>,” pp. 605-610 • Benji Wilson, “How Netflix Changed the Way We Watch” • Krista Benson, <i>Sense8</i> Background & Characters <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Season 1, Episode 6 of Sense8 on Netflix
<p>Week 15 R, 12/6</p>	<p>What We Know and How We Know It: Social Media & Society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy K. Baym & danah boyd – “Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction,” pp. 320-329 • Verne G. Kopytoff, Blogs Wane as the Young Shift to Sites Like Twitter • Taylor Lorenz, “Teens are Debating the News on Instagram” • Elliot Soloway, “How the Nintendo Generation Learns,” pp. 23-26, 95
<p>Week 16 R, 12/13</p>	<p>Finals</p>	<p>4:00-6:30: Group SlideShare Presentations and Q&A</p>

GVSU's General Education Program

The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

The program is designed to increase your knowledge and skills in the following areas:

Issues Skills goals:

1. Collaboration is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives.
2. Problem solving is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals.
3. Integration is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations.

Ensuring that undergraduate students receive a broad general education has been a primary goal of colleges and universities since their inception. In this era of increasing specialization and growing demand for professional expertise, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the value of general learning.

GVSU maintains that a complete education involves more than preparation for a particular career. A career occurs in the context of a life, and a sound general education helps one “make a life” as well as “make a living.” The university is committed to assuring that all undergraduate students, regardless of academic major, receive a broad education rooted in the arts and sciences.

Teaching in the liberal tradition is at the heart of Grand Valley's identity, and this focus is critical in our General Education Program. Liberal education transcends the acquisition of information; it goes beyond the factual to ask important evaluative and philosophical questions. Liberal learning holds the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge up to inquiry, question, and discussion. It helps a person recognize the assumptions under which he or she operates and encourages the examination and questioning of those assumptions. Liberal learning begins in the General Education Program and continues through the more specialized studies comprising each student's major and minor areas of study.

Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.