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.
### Overview

#### MODULE

**Target Audience**

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<td><strong>Media Literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women and Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Behind the Scenes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women and Leadership</strong></td>
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<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Learn how media shapes individual beliefs and cultural norms. 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.</td>
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<td><strong>K-12 Learning Objectives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Women and Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recognize the complex ways mainstream media and advertising influence gender</strong></td>
<td><strong>Identify increasingly subtle forms of sexism and bias in the media and recognize the ways in which these biases spill into our everyday experiences.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understand that more diversity behind the scenes can change the types of images and stories shared through media outlets.</strong></td>
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**NOTE:** This module also references Gender Socialization.

**Media Literacy**

Learn how media shapes individual beliefs and cultural norms. 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.

**Women and Leadership**

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.

**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.

**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.