



The Lack of Asian-American Representation in Hollywood and in the Media

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Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

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Project Description

- Lack of Asian American Representation and whitewashing of Asian characters
 - Limited opportunities for Asian-Americans affect self-perception
- Effects of being stereotyped and marginalized
- **Goal:** Expose people to Asian American talent, highlight the accomplishments of many Asian American actors, artists, comedians, etc.



ASIAN AF

- **ASIAN AF** (Asian As F^{***}) is an Asian American variety show at the UCB Theatre in Los Angeles.
- Asian AF was created as a way to showcase comedic Asian American talent.
 - Created by actor Will Choi, Asian AF spotlights the best Asian American actors, stand-up comedians, improvisers, sketch performers, musicians, dancers, and storytellers. The show has been featured on several news sites such as NBC News, ABC News, LA Times, LA Weekly, and many more.
- Due to its immense popularity in Los Angeles, ASIAN AF was brought out to New York in June 2017.



www.AsianAFshow.com





Blog: LetsTalkRepresentation.weebly.com

- Important articles about the lack of representation
- Tweets from famous Asian American actors and actresses
- More information about ASIAN AF
 - Event at Rutgers
- Videos

LET'S TALK ABOUT REPRESENTATION



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www.AsianAfshow.com

Henry Golding Talks 'Crazy Rich Asians' and Asian Casting



Project Foundations

All American Girl (1994)



All American Girl



- The failure of this show conveys the Institutionalised racism and sexism of the US entertainment industry
- not relatable for many people



“Model Minority” Stereotype

- **A model minority** is a demographic group (whether based on ethnicity, race or religion) whose members are perceived to achieve a higher degree of socioeconomic success than the population average.
 - This success is typically measured relatively by income, education, low criminality and high family/marital stability.
- There is a misunderstanding of the marginalization and oppression of Asian Americans because they are considered extremely affluent and as a highly educated group of people.
 - Appear to be very privileged on the outside.



Lack of Asian American History in Curriculum

- American curriculum studies rarely include the history of Asian Americans, creating a gap in literature.
- Compared to other groups of color, Asian Americans and their perspectives have rarely been given attention to in curriculum studies.
- There are negative consequences of leaving out important parts of the history of a marginalized group, which can be a contributing factor as to why there is a lack of representation of Asian Americans in the media.

Racial Differences in Comedy



Naturalizing Racial Differences Through Comedy: Asian, Black, and White Views on Racial Stereotypes in Rush Hour 2

- This article analyzes the racial differences and stereotypes that are apparent in comedic films such as Rush Hour 2, and emphasizes how viewers were not offended by these racial stereotypes.
- The generic conventions and textual devices of comedy encouraged its viewers to naturalize these stereotypes instead of challenge them.



“Critical views on race in comedy posit that racial stereotyping serves an ideological function, normalizing racially defined characteristics and legitimizing the racial hierarchy. Critical scholars claim that in a social environment in which racism is deeply rooted, racial jokes and stereotypes inevitably reinforce hierarchically structured racial differences.”



Lessons and Insights Gained

- **Dangers** of giving a different ethnicity their own narrative without giving them a chance to actually represent themselves
 - Feelings of psychic dislocation
- **Importance** of seeing people who look like you in the media
- **Speaking up**
 - *“There’s an age-old stereotypical notion that Asian-American people don’t speak up, but we’re really getting into people’s faces about it.” - BD Wong*



Women's Leadership

- **Women, especially women of color, always seem to come second.**
- While male Asian American actors are starting to be given more roles that are not so stereotypical, the roles given to Asian American actresses are still very limited.
- Gender and Race Imbalance in Hollywood

Chloe Bennet

- Previously known as **Chloe Wang**
- Changed her last name in order to be given more diverse roles in Hollywood films and television series
- *What prompted you to change your last name?*
 - “You know it was really just a really organic thing. An uncomfortable amount of my feedback had to do with the fact that I didn’t look like what they expected me to look like. **I had a casting director tell me 'You're not quite white enough for the role, but you're not quite Asian enough for the best friend role.'**”





Impact

I am hoping that more people become aware of the institutionalized racism apparent within Hollywood and how this affects not only the Asian-American community and its youth, but other minority groups as well.

With the blog and the upcoming event, I hope that the exposure of Asian American talent will encourage other Asian-Americans as well as people from other minority groups to not be ashamed of their ethnicity or culture, and realize that they do have a chance to represent themselves in a genuine and accurate way.



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