Supervisor's Name	Anne MacLennan
Supervisor Email Address*	amaclenn@yorku.ca
Supervisor's Department	Communication Studies
Project Title	Protesting Poverty

Description of Research Project (1500 characters maximum)

Despite the pervasive and persistent nature of poverty, media attention and government focus tends to be on the placement of the poverty line rather than solutions. Poverty persists globally despite centuries of efforts to erase or eradicate it. Unlike other global problems for which solutions are sought, poverty is a problem for which blame is assigned. In striking contrast to disease or natural disaster the victims of

poverty are not viewed exclusively as victims. Despite recent efforts to dislodge these dominant views of poverty and the poor, the mediatized portrayals and framing of the poor have supported the long-held views of the poor and have not reinforced the change to attack the increasingly urgent problem of poverty. Hegemonic views of the distribution of wealth and power have been disrupted by most recently

by movements such as Occupy Wall Street, Arab Spring Spain's Indignados Movement, and the UK anti-austerity protests. Historically larger challenges to the status quo have surfaced in radical change such as the French revolution. The acceptance of poverty has persisted and the tendency, especially in

the Western Hemisphere to blame the poor for their conditions is pervasive. The representations of the poor, as failing to uphold their responsibilities as both consumers and citizens, are constantly reinforced in popular culture (Bauman 2005 Gans 1995; Katz 1990). Culturally-embedded notions of the poor have not changed significantly for centuries, despite contestations, so protest and change has been slow

(see Lister 2004; Piven and Cloward 1997; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Katz 1990; Golding and Middleton 1982; Rose 1972; Struthers 1983; Fingard 1974; Greenhouse 1968; Struthers 1979). While high unemployment rates, cuts to social, health and education, environmental change have been documented

by the news media, the notions and images of the poor and "worthy or deserving" poor remain and are reinforced by representations in popular culture. Our notions of deserving poor dominant narratives of popular culture, in particular, are reinforced constantly in the media through film, television, music, and advertising. While the news chronicles policy, government, statistics and the shifting poverty line, popular culture repeats the refrain is that the poor must solve their own problems relying on the myth of rags of riches rather than seek systemic change. This research investigates the foundation of the mediatized images of poverty for protests or lack thereof, through an examination of products of popular culture. The work is based on a global sample that includes advertising, television, film, and music. It will be contextualized with interviews and views of poverty as framed in the news media (Iyengar 1990). Media representations vilify the poor and blame them for government deficits. Previous work demonstrates the ways neo-liberalism infiltrates popular culture and conventions through scripted and reality television, film, advertising and other media (Featherstone 1997; Dunn 1998; Davis 2000; Corner and Pels 2003; Miller 2007; McMurria 2008; Wood and Skeggs 2009; Murray and Ouellette 2009; Skeggs and Wood 2009; Morley 2009;

McAlister 2010; Couldry 2010; Craig 2012; Odih 2013). This work will examine the link between the repeated dominant narratives of poverty in the news media and popular culture and their link to the widespread complacency of the general population, especially in North America, about the persistence

of poverty. The exceptions are the vehement protests against poverty around the world in the wake of the disruptions in the global economy in the last decade. The intersection of the Occupy Protests and other protests, the complacent and the media will be determined for action and change.

Undergraduate Student Responsibilities (1500 characters maximum)

The position entails working towards assembling bibliographic searches and literature reviews pertaining to both primary and secondary sources, understanding statistical and archival data collection through spreadsheets, utilizing techniques related to library research, interviewing and supporting work on an international journal and an ongoing international edited book collection, as well as any other tasks that pertain to the projects. This position in particular will be involved with a project about the role of community radio in Canadian communities, in a modern context.

The research assistant will support ongoing research and time sensitive work, prioritized by deadlines and the amount of work available in each area.

Candidates will have the opportunity to work in and learn about communication work by performing various research tasks including, assembling materials for conference presentations and publications, working with spreadsheets, microfilm, library research, online research, and bibliography compiling.

This research assistant will acquire a high level of proficiency with qualitative and quantitative research as Professor MacLennan, the principal investigator, teaches methods at the undergraduate, MA and PhD levels. This position is part of a larger research team,

working with and supervised by the principal investigator, project manager, and other senior research assistants, who will assist in providing the necessary training and support required for the research assistant to successfully perform the activities associated with the research project. The checks and balances of working on a team will keep the research assistant on track.

The work is an immersive research experience, engaging the student on a deep and transformative level of learning. The research will be conducted on a high-level including the undergraduate student at the same level as graduate students as their ability permits. The student's contribution will be a core element of the work, because it depends on empirical data drawn from archival collection, data in spreadsheets, developing spreadsheets, data analysis on a variety of levels, microfilm, CRTC materials, possibly interviews, and other related components of the work.

Qualifications Required (750 characters maximum)
It is preferred if the student has high academic achievement, has familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. While these skills are preferred, all students will be trained if necessary. Because this research is global, students with fluency in another language aside from English are preferred.