

# “ORANGE IS THE NEW MISTREATMENT?”: AN ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF INCARCERATED WOMEN AND THEIR MISTREATMENT THROUGH (NON)VIEWING OF *ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK*

By: Nikki Hoseus

Supervised by:

Dr. Bostdorff -Department of Communication Studies  
Dr. Matsuzawa - Department of Sociology and Anthropology

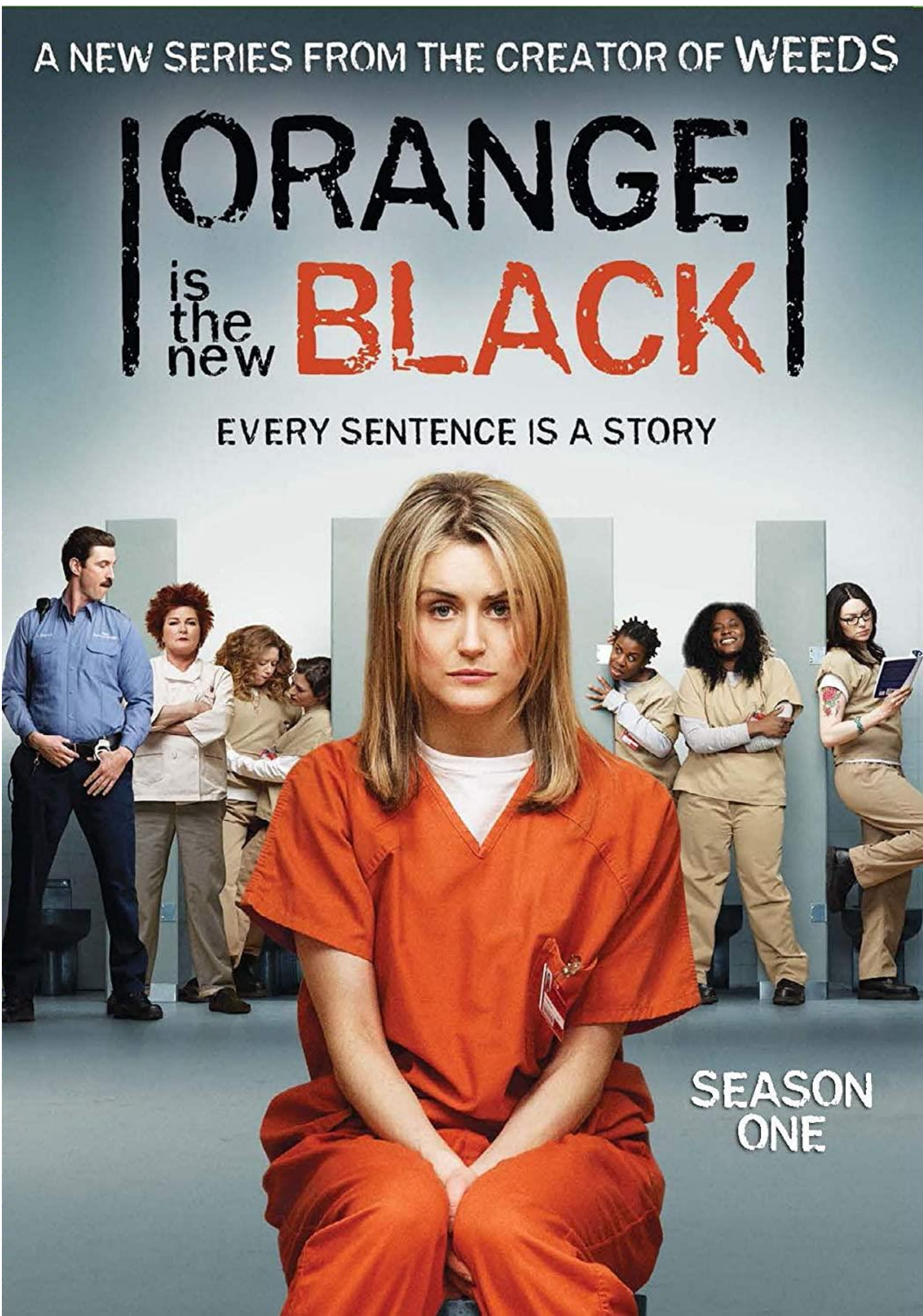


## RESEARCH QUESTION

- How are incarcerated women mistreated in the United States, what does this mean sociologically and, comparatively, from a communication studies perspective?
- Does the popular television series, *Orange Is the New Black*, contribute to midwestern liberal arts college students’ knowledge and perception (or lack thereof) of mistreatment of incarcerated women in the United States?

## THEORY

- Black Feminist Standpoint Theory discusses the ways in which women face oppression in all levels of society (Sociology).
- Cultivation Theory provides a lens to understand how television watching influences one’s perspectives, outlooks about others and the world around them (Communication Studies).



Moylan, B. (2016, June 15). *Orange is the new black: Season four will take over your life, without parole*. The Guardian. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jun/15/orange-is-the-new-black-season-four-review>



Moylan, B. (2016, June 15). *Orange is the new black: Season four will take over your life, without parole*. The Guardian. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jun/15/orange-is-the-new-black-season-four-review>



Moylan, B. (2016, June 15). *Orange is the new black: Season four will take over your life, without parole*. The Guardian. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jun/15/orange-is-the-new-black-season-four-review>

## METHODOLOGY

- Focus Group 1 (Viewing group) consisted of participants who had watched at least one season of *OITNB*.
- Focus Group 2 (Non-viewing group) consisted of participants who had not watched any of *OITNB* or other popular prison-based television series (e.g., *60 Days In*, *Jailbirds*, *Love after Lockup*, *Young and Locked Up*, *Scared Straight*, etc.).

Table 1. Viewing Group (Focus Group 1) Participants’ Demographics

Name	Pronouns	Race	Class Year	Major
Adam	He/him/his	White	Senior	Chemistry
Alexis	She/her/hers	Biracial (Black and White)	Junior	Archaeology
Avery	She/her/hers	White	Senior	Communication Sciences and Disorders and Edu.
Danielle	She/her/hers	Biracial (White and Black)	Sophomore	Biology and Philosophy
Iris	She/her/hers	White	Sophomore	English
Kristen	She/her/hers	White	Senior	Communication Sciences and Disorders
Maria	She/her/hers	Asian	Junior	Psychology
Rebecca	She/her/hers	White	Junior	Education and Psychology

Table 2. Non-viewing Group (Focus Group 2) Participants’ Demographics

Name	Pronouns	Race	Class Year	Major
David	He/him/his	White	Junior	Communication Studies
Greg	He/him/his	White	Sophomore	Undeclared
Haley	She/her/hers	Asian	Junior	Psychology and Urban Studies
James	They/them/theirs and/or He/him/his	White	Senior	Communication Studies and Psychology
Lindsey	She/her/hers	White	Sophomore	Chemistry
Nick	He/him/his	White	Junior	Communication Studies
Quincy	They/them/theirs	White	Freshman	Undeclared

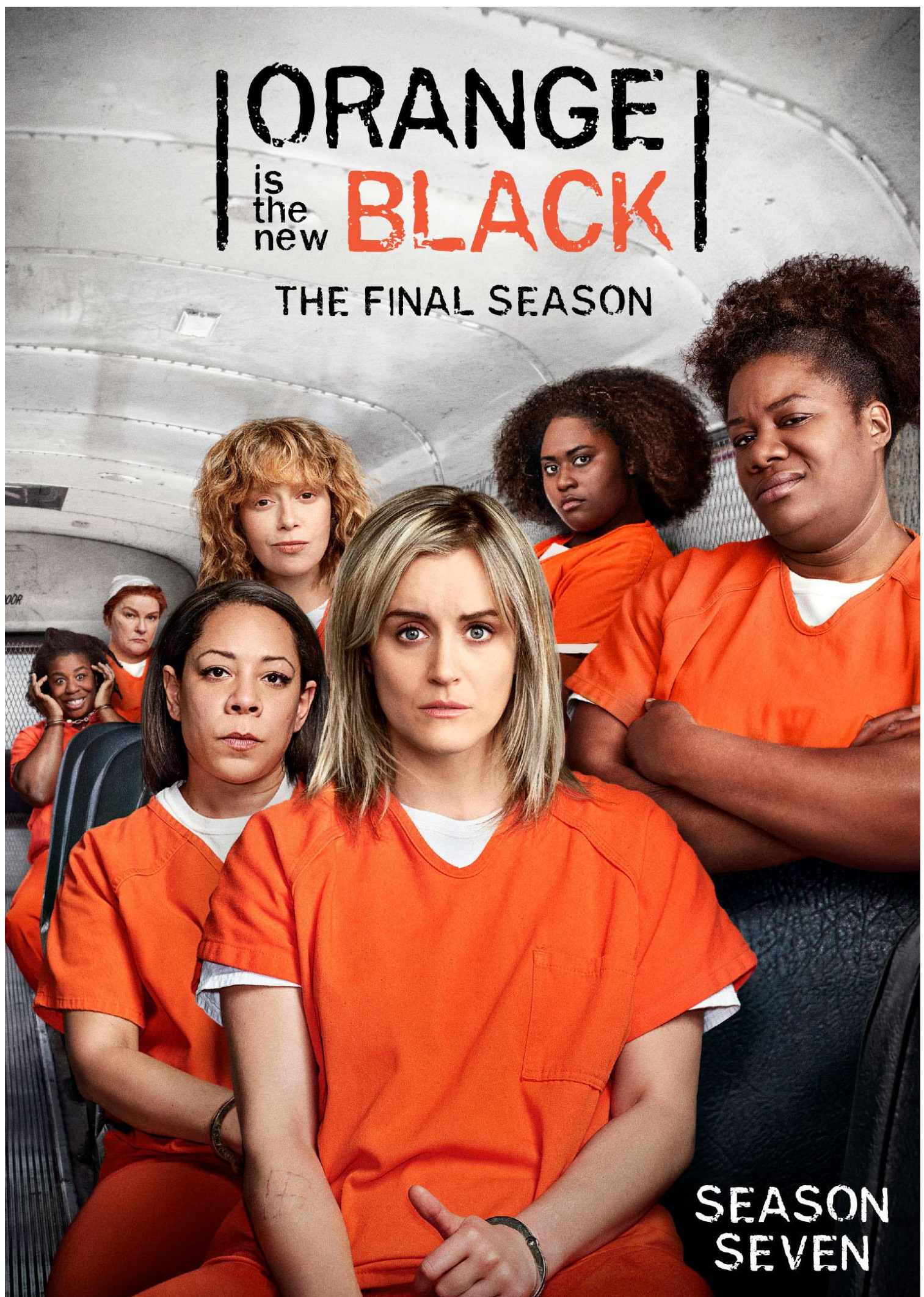
\*The names in the tables above are pseudonyms, no real names were used.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

- Midwestern liberal arts college students, regardless of their viewing habits, have encountered the standpoints of incarcerated women in some medium and developed perceptions based on such.
- Participants who viewed *OITNB* were more empathetic and responsive when given the opportunity to help incarcerated women in some way.

## IMPLICATIONS

- What people view, either in social media or on television, can have an impact on how they view others.
- The information about incarcerated women and their mistreatment participants shared implies that content creators and some portion of society value the standpoints of incarcerated women.
- My results revealed the importance of accurate and representative portrayals of women and incarcerated women on television and in the media.



Moylan, B. (2016, June 15). *Orange is the new black: Season four will take over your life, without parole*. The Guardian. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jun/15/orange-is-the-new-black-season-four-review>