COMM1307.001 Media and Society

Fall 2011
MWF 9-9:50am
Bay Hall Rm. 205

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Office Hours: MW 10am-12pm, T 1-2pm, & by appointment

Course Description:
This course covers the history and development of mass media in the United States as well as the organizational, institutional, and cultural dynamics of today’s major commercial media. Included are substantial components on print media, radio, television, cinema, and computer Internet communication systems. Course themes include media production and consumption, globalization, cultural imperialism, race, class, gender in media and popular culture.

Course Detail:
Media operate in a profoundly complex relationship with a society – shaping it and being shaped by it. From oral storytelling to the written word, from the telegraph to television, media expand (and sometimes contract) the communicative possibilities for the transmission knowledge and culture. Today, media have impacts on nearly every facet of our everyday lives. In this course, we will explore the ways in which various media function to support, undermine, and/or change the social landscape, from the practices of everyday correspondence to the structuring ideologies that are often taken for granted.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
1) Gain knowledge of the historical development and of today’s media industries
2) Acquire the fundamentals of media criticism and their application
3) Analyze media texts and other popular culture phenomena

Required Materials:

Course Policies:
» Attendance is required – both physically and mentally. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your final grade for this course, with each one equaling a three-point deduction (out of a possible total of 100 points). Attendance will be taken starting exactly at 11:00 a.m. and completed within the first five minutes of class. Arrivals after that time will be considered late. Late arrivals and departures prior to the finish of the class period will count as half-absences, meaning that two of either type will be counted as a full absence.
» You are allowed three fully excused absences throughout the semester. These are to be employed at your discretion, but they should be used to cover illness, religious holiday observances, or most any other events or circumstances that cause you to miss class. Only extreme hardship with back-up documentation (e.g. a doctor's note) will allow for consideration of any additional absences being excused. Classes missed due to university-approved activities (athletic teams, student government, etc.) will also be considered excused. For those absences, please make me aware, and, in addition, I will need official TAMUCC documentation. If appropriate, you may arrange to make up quizzes or exams missed due to excused absences, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from a missed class lecture from one of your classmates.
» All absences not fitting into the excused categories described immediately above, will be considered unexcused. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
» Late work will be penalized by ten points (all assignments will be on 100-point scales) for each day it is late.
» While in class, please make sure your cell phone is off and stowed away, even during screenings.
» A note on competing media: Laptops are permitted for note taking purposes during lecture only, but please do not abuse this privilege. While you may personally feel capable of multitasking during class while still paying attention to lecture and discussion, your surrounding classmates will more likely find your in-class extracurricular activities distracting, so please, for the sake of your peers, respect this restriction. No laptop use will be permitted during screenings.
» Please remember to check your Islander email account regularly during the week and monitor the course Blackboard site for any course updates.
» If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, screenings, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during my office hours. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.
» All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, and with standard 1” margins.

**Academic Integrity:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment, at the very least, or a report to the Chair of the Department of Communication and Theatre, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and the Office of Student Affairs.

» For the purposes of citation, please follow Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Guide. For quick reference, see: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

**Dropping a Class:**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the class be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 1, 2011, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/Professional Behavior:**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
Notice to Students with Disabilities:
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Grade Appeal Process:
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Grade Scale:
A  90-100
B  80-89
C  70-79
D  60-69
F  59 and below

Grade Distribution:
» Attention & Participation (10%): Each student is expected to be attentive toward lecture and willing to participate in class discussion when appropriate. This grade will reflect how well you accomplish these goals.
Reminder: As explained above in the “Course Policies,” attendance is required. It is assumed that you will be present for all class meetings unless you have a valid excuse. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your FINAL GRADE (not only the Attention & Participation component) for this course, with each one equaling a three-point deduction (out of a possible total of 100 points).
» Online Responses (10%): Most weeks throughout the semester, students will be required to post a response/s to readings, discussions, and/or questions posed by the instructor in an online discussion forum. When assigned, students are responsible for posting an online commentary/response to their readings and engage with one another on the discussion board. Emphasis will be placed on quality of writing (over quantity) and one’s ability to contextualize readings (making responses relevant to the broader concepts being studied).
» Quizzes (20%): Quizzes of multiple choice and short answer questions will be based on readings and lecture. They will be given periodically throughout the semester on the dates noted on the syllabus.
» Topic Paper (15%): One 4-5 page paper will be assigned during the semester. It will be explained further and discussed in class well in advance of its due date (Monday, November 7th).
» Midterm Exam (20%): A midterm exam covering all topics discussed in the first half of the semester will be given in-class on October 12th (Week 8).
» Final Exam (25%): A final exam covering topics discussed throughout the semester (with particular emphasis on the second half) will be given on Monday, December 12th.
Course Schedule:
Readings are to be completed prior to first class meeting of the week under which they are listed. Also, this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1 (August 24 & 26) – Introduction, Course Outline

Week 2 (August 29, 31, & September 2) – What Is the Media?
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 1: “Media in Context”

Week 3 (September 7 & 9) – Media Genealogies
Quiz 1 will be given in class on 9/9.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 2: “Narratives of Media History”

Week 4 (September 12, 14, & 16) – Media Industries I: People and Organizations
Quiz 2 will be given in class on 9/16.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 3: “Media People and Organizations”

Week 5 (September 19, 21, & 23) – Media Industries II: Capital Flows
Quiz 3 will be given in class on 9/23.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 4: “Media and Money”

Week 6 (September 26, 28, & 30) – How Meaning Is Made through Media
Quiz 4 will be given in class on 9/30.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 5: “Meaning”

Week 7 (October 3, 5, & 7) – Analyzing Meaning in the Media
Quiz 5 will be given in class on 10/7.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 6: “The Interpretation of Meaning”

Week 8 (October 10 & 12) – Midterm Exam
Exam review on 10/10.
Exam given in class on 10/12.
No class on 10/14.

Week 9 (October 17, 19, & 21) – Ideology through Media Culture
Quiz 6 will be given in class on 10/21.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 7: “Ideology”

Week 10 (October 24, 26, & 28) – Mediated Identities I: Representing Gender, Race, and Class
Quiz 7 will be given in class on 10/28.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 8: “Producing Identities”

Week 11 (October 31, November 2 & 4) – Mediated Identities II: Taste and Consumption
Quiz 8 will be given in class on 11/4.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 9: “Consuming the Media”

Week 12 (November 7, 9, & 11) – Media Effects
Topic Papers due in class at the beginning of the period on November 7.
Quiz 9 will be given in class on 11/11.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 10: “Media and Behavior”
Week 13 (November 14, 16, & 18) – News Media
Quiz 10 will be given in class on 11/18.
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 11: “Media and Politics”

Week 14 (November 21 & 23) – Media Publics
No class on November 25 in observance of Thanksgiving
*MediaMaking*, Chapter 12: “The Media, the Public, and Normative Theories”

Week 15 (November 28, 30, & December 2) – Global Media
Quiz 11 will be given in class on 12/2.

Week 16 (December 5) – Review
Final Exam Review

Finals Week (Monday, December 12) – Final Exam
The final exam will take place in Bay Hall Room 205 from 8am-10:30am.