Senior Seminar in Media Studies

Course Description:

This seminar serves as a capstone course for Communication majors in Media Studies track, offering the student opportunity to synthesize information learned in other Media Studies courses through in-depth study of a particular area. I have chosen to focus particularly on the transformational social impact of digital media currently underway. Students with advanced undergraduate standing will find the focus to be exciting, and yet, perplexing in terms of personal privacy, national security, workplace demands, promise and peril of digital media. Students will demonstrate their ability to think, write and express critically, conduct independent and collaborative research, prepare and present media productions at an advanced level.

Learning Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

--Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities to understand the foundation for studying the new digital media within media studies, media systems and practices in the context of the U.S. media and American democracy;

--Create individual and collaborative projects that demonstrate effective use of communication strategies by identifying effects of new digital media and their audiences on American cultural diversity, political practice;

--Identify and analyze issues in media ethics relating to the role new digital media—journalism, advertising, public relations, film, television, entertainment industry, music—play in American culture, politics and society; and

--Understand and apply critical theories, research methods, and/or production skills relating to the focus of the course.

Required Textbook:


Recommended Textbook:


(continued on page 2)
Major Course Requirements and Expectations:

Students will be required to attend every class period, write weekly abstracts, two think pieces/essays and a team project at the conclusion of the term. The course will be composed of instructor's lectures, class discussions relating to course materials and readings, individual and team written and oral presentations.

Students will be evaluated and their performance will be assessed based on the following criteria and grading scale:

**In-class participation/Attendance:** 15% (Discussion on assigned readings, lectures and media readings). Each student is required to complete specific readings of book chapters and journal/newspaper articles and contribute to class discussions on topics related to cultural diversity and the media.

**6 Weekly abstracts:** 25% (One-page summaries and critiques of selected readings in the news media) Analytical summaries and critiques must be submitted by each student that exhibit capacity for individual thought and critical analysis of issues and problems in global media.

**2 Think Pieces:** 30% (3-5 pages typed double-spaced commentary and critique on topics relating to media and culture). Students must submit these extended essays that exhibit ability to correlate topics and developments in new digital media and culture in the context of lectures and readings.

**Team Project/Term Paper:** 30% (Research paper on an approved topic in new and digital media and culture). Fully developed team project/term paper is expected at the end of the course that shows rigor in research and critical analysis relating to a specific topic or problem selected with approval of instructor. Oral presentation of the team term paper must be presented in class.

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

Course Policies:

**Attendance and Tardiness:** Attendance is required—both physically and mentally. You are expected to take an active role in classroom discussions. Absences, late arrivals, and chronic failure to engage in class discussion will all be reflected in your participation grade.

**Late work and make-up work**

- If there should be a legitimate reason for you missing class (illness, family emergencies, certain University-sponsored extracurricular activities), please provide the instructor with the notification prior to the event or as soon as you are able—before the missed class period. If appropriate, we can arrange alternate times for you to make up quizzes or exams, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from lecture from one of your classmates.
- Unexcused absences will be noted and reflected in your participation grade. Also, any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
- Late work for any reason considered unexcused will be penalized by at least one letter grade for each day it is late.

**Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage:** While in class, please make sure your phone is off or on silent (and in your backpack or out of sight), so it’s not heard in class. Also, limited laptop/tablet use is permitted for note-taking only, but do not abuse this privilege.

- Please remember to check your email regularly for any course updates.
- If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during office hours or set up an appointment to see me at any other time.
- Please submit hard copies of your papers, prior to the class period on the due date. Marked copies will be returned to you.
- All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, and with the standard 1-inch margins.
Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: 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 examination 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 the course grade of F.

Dropping the Course: 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 course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course 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. Please check published dates for the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

COMM 4381.001/Page 3

Preferred methods of scholarly citations

For the purpose of citation, please follow The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition, humanities style (notes and bibliography). For guidance, see: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will result in the grade of F for the course.

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.

Grade Appeals*

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.

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 361-825-3466.

Notice to Students with Disabilities and/or Returning Veterans

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualifies students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come to see me. If you are a returning veteran and experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Office for assistance. If you suspect that you may have any disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in Room 116 Corpus Christi Hall) at 361.825.5816.

Class Schedule and Assignments on following page
**Class Schedule and Assignments (subject to change)**

**Week 1: Introduction, course outline/expectations**

Jan. 23: Introduction to Course and review of textbooks

**Week 2: Towards Media Literacy: Understanding Communication Technology (Abstract 1 due)**

Jan. 28, 30: Schmidt: Introduction

**Week 3: The Future of Media (Abstract 2 due)**

Feb. 4, 6: Schmidt: Chapter 1

**Week 4: New Media and Identity Politics (Student teams for final project to be established)**


**Week 5: New Media and Citizenship (Think piece # 1 due)**

Feb. 18, 20: Schmidt: Chapter 2 contd.

**Week 6: New Media and the News Industry (Abstract 3 due)**

Feb. 25, 27: Schmidt: Chapter 2

**Week 7: New Media, Politics and Governance (Abstract 4 due)**

Mar. 4, 6: Schmidt: Chapter 3

**Spring Break: March 11, 13**

**Week 8: New Media and Revolutions in the World (Abstract 5 due)**

Mar. 18, 20: Schmidt: Chapter 4

**Week 9: New Media and Terrorism (Abstract 6 due)**

Mar. 25, 27: Schmidt: Chapter 5

**Week 10: New Media and Human Conflict (Think piece # 2 due)**

Apr. 1, 3: Schmidt: Chapter 6

**Week 11: New Media, National Security and the Military (Team oral presentation of final project)**

Apr. 8, 10: Schmidt: Chapter 6 contd.

**Week 12: New Media and Social Interventions (Team oral presentation of final papers)**

Apr. 15, 17: Schmidt: Chapter 6 contd.

**Week 13: New Media and National Reconstruction (Team oral presentation of final papers)**

Apr. 22, 24: Schmidt: Chapter 7

**Week 14: New Media and the Future (Team oral presentation of final papers)**

Apr. 29, May 1: Schmidt: Conclusion

**Week 15: Course overview May 6: (Team oral presentation of final papers) Written Term Papers due in Class**