SYLLABUS: COMM 2367 Spring 2017

Dr. Ethan Thompson Office: BH 3.31
Class: EN 108, TR 12:30-1:45 ethan.thompson@tamucc.edu
Office Hours: MW 2-3:00/TR 11-12:30 Office Phone: 825-5993
and by appointment

Course Catalog Description: Examination of the media industries, including how they have evolved and now operate, as well as broader theoretical and practical implications of changing media organizations and practices. Includes instruction in researching contemporary and historical modes of media production, distribution, and exhibition.

Learning Objectives:
After taking the course, the student will be able to:

- Describe the development and contemporary operation of media industries
- Apply research skills to collect information on historical and contemporary media
- Analyze historical and contemporary media industry operations and media texts as the products of those operations

Required Text/Materials:

- The Business weekly podcast by KCRW. Subscribe through iTunes or listen here: http://www.kcrw.com/news-culture/shows/the-business

Course Assignments & Grade Structure:

- Midterm Exam: Multiple choice and short essay questions. (20%)
- Final Exam: Multiple choice and short essay questions. (20%)
- Issue Paper: See description below. (20%)
- Career Path Paper: (20%)
• In-class Attendance & Participation: (10%)
• Online Discussion Participation. Every week, you will participate in online discussions related to the podcast you must listen to. Initial comments are due by Wednesday before midnight, final comments before midnight Friday. (10%)

Grade Scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and under.

DESCRIPTIONS OF PAPERS:

Issue paper: This assignment requires that students write a well-researched 3-5 page paper that explores a current issue in a particular media industry. This is primarily a descriptive paper, you need not take a position on the issue; a strong paper will concisely explain the various perspectives that are in conflict. Your paper should explain the issue, provide relevant background, relay the most recent information, and explain the significance or relevance of this issue to the industry. “Trade” sources are likely to be valuable for offering the most recent developments.

Career path paper: The goal of this assignment is for you to become more familiar with the job opportunities, and requirements for the job opportunities, in an area of the media industries that you may be interested in. You will pick an area of the media industries you are interested in (film, television, music, video games) to research and write a paper summarizing your findings on available positions and necessary skills and experience.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Two absences are acceptable, but any additional unexcused absences will cause a two-point deduction from your final grade, and you may not make up any missed work. Excused absences require official documentation. Two “lates” (or leaving early) equal an absence.

E-Communication Policy:

• CONTACT ME THROUGH BLACKBOARD MESSAGES FOR THIS COURSE.
• I will respond to messages within 24 hours (usually sooner), except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
• I will be happy to talk on the phone, instant message, Facetime etc with you during my office hours.
• I am also happy to meet with you in person during office hours or some other time arranged in advance!

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 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 an automatic zero on the assignment and further disciplinary action.

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.

Dropping a Class

Events sometimes occur that make dropping a course seem 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.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Students are expected to:

1. Take ownership of your education. It will not be handed to you. You must build it.
2. Silence and put away cell phones. Texting (including the reading of texts!) is not allowed in class. Your social life will survive until the break, I promise.
3. Come to class on-time. Do not get up and leave early.
4. Participate in class discussions. In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion.
5. Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.
6. Complete readings and assignments as assigned. All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed. Exams may not be rescheduled. Do not make travel plans that conflict with exams.
7. Proofread all work before turning it in. Really.
8. Seek help with writing if necessary. The Writing Center of TAMU-CC, located in GSSC 112, provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. More information is available at the Center for Academic Student Achievement website, casa.tamucc.edu.
9. Properly cite sources. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and further disciplinary action. A useful guide to citing references in APA style is located at http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm.
10. Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students. I expect students to participate in
discussion, and I expect students to respect each other’s (hopefully well-informed) opinions.
Grades and course performance are considered private information. Students are not to
openly to discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
11. Meet with the instructor during office hours. I will not discuss individual student
grades in the classroom. I will, however, be happy to discuss grades on papers,
exams, course performance, etc. during office hours. I also do not allow the following
topics to be openly discussed in the classroom: student opinions about other faculty,
student opinions about other students, student grades in other classes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Understanding Media Industries* is abbreviated UMI below.

NOTE: THE READING IS DUE THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK (TUESDAY.) WE WILL HAVE
GUESTS MOST THURSDAYS FOR DISCUSSION AND Q&A.

**Week 1: R 1/19: Introduction to the course.**

**Week 2: T 1/24 & R 1/25**

Reading: UMI Chapter One: Key Concepts in Media Industry Studies

**Week 3: T 1/31 & R 2/2**

Reading: UMI Chapter Two: Media Industry Mandates

**Week 4: T 2/7 & R 2/9**

Reading: UMI Chapter Three: Technological Conditions of the Media Industries

**Week 5: T 2/14 & R 2/16**

Reading: UMI Chapter Four: Regulation of the Media Industries

**Week 6: T 2/21 & R 2/23**

Reading: UMI Chapter Five: Economic Conditions in Media Production

**Week 7: T 2/28 REVIEW & R 3/2 MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 8: T 3/7 & R 3/9**

Reading: UMI Chapter Six: Creative Practices and Roles Involved in Making Media

SPRING BREAK

**Week 9: T 3/21 & R 3/23**

Reading: UMI Chapter Seven: Distribution and Exhibition Practices
Week 10: T 3/28 & R 3/30
Reading: UMI Chapter Eight: Auxiliary Practices

Week 11: T 4/4 Peer Review & R 4/6 Issue Paper Due

Week 12: T 4/11 & R 4/13
Reading: UMI Chapter Nine: The Growth of the Symbolic Economy

Week 13: T 4/18 & R 4/20
Reading: UMI Chapter Ten: Digitization

Week 14: T 4/25 & R 4/27
Reading UMI Chapter Eleven: Globalization

Week 15: T 5/2 Forces of Change Paper Due & Exam Review
FINAL EXAM at assigned date and time.

About the Professor:

Ethan Thompson (Ph.D., University of Southern California) is the producer and director of TV Family, a feature-length documentary, the author of Parody and Taste in Post-War American Television Culture, and the co-editor of the books How to Watch Television and Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era. He spent the fall 2015 semester as a research and teaching fellow with the Peabody Awards program in Athens, Georgia.