Course Description:
This course is intended to immerse students in the leading theoretical and methodological approaches employed within the field of media studies to gain understanding of media texts, popular culture, and audiences. Closely affiliated with cultural studies, qualitative research methods will be a primary focus. Readings and case studies will offer students insight into the way these methods are being used in the field, including their limitations and strengths. A series of assignments will allow them to propose, design, and conduct multiple sample research projects and analyze data in ways that engage with a variety of theories.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
1. understand, explain, and apply leading theories in the field of media studies;
2. identify and evaluate the applicability of qualitative research methods within media studies;
3. design and execute research projects examining media texts, popular culture, and audiences; and
4. prepare and perform a public report of findings from a media research project.

Required Materials:
» Brennen, B. S. (2017). Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies (2nd ed.). New York and London: Routledge. (Henceforth referred to as QRM. It is available through the campus bookstore and other online retailers.)
» Ouellette, L., & Gray, J. (2017). Keywords for Media Studies. New York: New York University Press. (Henceforth referred to as Keywords. It is available through the campus bookstore and other online retailers.)
» All additional materials will be made available via links on Blackboard

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 25-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points). Attendance will be taken starting exactly at the designated class start time. Arrivals after that 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 two automatic fully excused absences throughout the semester. These are to be employed at your discretion but should be used to cover illness, religious holiday observance, or most any other event or circumstance that causes 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 a deduction in points equaling ten-percent of the points possible for the assignment for each day it is late. Late work will not be accepted more than 4 days past the original due date.

» While in class, please make sure your cell phone is off and stowed away, even during screenings.

» A note on competing media devices: Laptops are permitted for note taking and reference 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.

» A note on media content: Various works screened for this course may contain strong language, nudity, sexual situations, violence, controversial subjects, and complex philosophical ideas that might be disturbing to you. While I think there is great value to experiencing new (to you) media content with fresh eyes and ears, if you feel that you may be adversely impacted by certain types of content, it may be helpful to read story synopses available on the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org), or other review websites in order to prepare yourself. If there are particularly acute reactions that you feel you may have, I encourage you to let me know so that I can advise you about any potential trouble spots and, if necessary, arrange for alternative 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, at the very least, in receiving no credit for the assignment or test in question. Any repeat offenses will result in failure of the course.

» For the purposes of citation, please follow American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guide. For reference, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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. November 9, 2018 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. 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.

Notice to Students with Disabilities
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.
Grade Appeal Process:
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Grade Scale:
A  900-1000 points
B  800-899 points
C  700-799 points
D  600-699 points
F  599 points and below

Grade Distribution:
» Attention & Participation (100 points): 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: Attendance is required. It is assumed that you will be present for all class meetings and screenings 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 25-point deduction (out of your possible total of 1000 points).
» Project 1 - Defining a Research Topic (150 points): Each student will identify a general area of media activity to examine and define it. From there, each student will devise a research question and appropriate research approach/methodology. Due September 21.
» Project 2 – Literature Review (150 points): Each student will be assigned a topic and/or area of media/cultural theory to further investigate through secondary literature. This should consist of 10-12 sources outside the course’s already scheduled readings. Due October 12.
» Project 3 – Evaluating Methodology (150 points): Each student will propose three different, distinct methodological approaches that might be used in answering a single research question and then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses associated with each. Due November 21.
» Project 4 – Applying Theory (150 points): Each student will gather qualitative data and analyze it in light of a student-chosen thread of media/cultural theory. Due December 5.
» Theory and Concepts Exam (200 points): A midterm exam covering an overview of theoretical approaches to understanding media and associated concepts will be due via Blackboard during Week 8.
» Project Presentation (100 points): Each student will make a short presentation to the class of project 2, 3, or 4. The schedule will be determined early in the term.
Course Schedule:
Required readings and homework screenings are to be completed prior to the first class meeting in the week under which they are listed, unless otherwise noted. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1 (August 27 & 29) – Introduction, Course Outline, Preliminary Discussion
Introductions, Review of Syllabus, Preliminary Discussion
QRM, Chapter 1 (Read for August 29)

Week 2 (September 5) – Conceptualizing Media Research
No Class Meeting on September 3 for Labor Day
Required Reading:
QRM, Chapter 2: “Making Media Matter”

Week 3 (September 10 & 12) – Media Theory and Concepts I
Required Reading:
Keywords, Pages 1-38

Week 4 (September 19) – Media Theory and Concepts II
No Class Meeting on September 17 to allow for time to work on Project 1
Required Reading:
Keywords, Pages 39-80
Project 1 will be due this week.

Week 5 (September 24 & 26) – Media Theory and Concepts III
Required Reading:
Keywords, Pages 81-120

Week 6 (October 1 & 3) – Media Theory and Concepts IV
Required Reading:
Keywords, Pages 121-160

Week 7 (October 8 & 10) – Media Theory and Concepts V
Required Reading:
Keywords, Pages 160-200
Project 2 will be due this week.

Week 8 (No Class Meeting) – Media Theory and Concepts Exam Week
Theory Exam must be completed and submitted on Blackboard during Week 8.

Week 9 (October 22 & 24) – Media Theory and Concepts Presentations
Select Project 2 Presentations will take place this week.

Week 10 (October 29 & 31) – Research Methods: Interviews & Focus Groups
Required Reading:
QRM, Chapters 3 & 4

Week 11 (November 5 & 7) – Research Methods: History
Required Reading:
QRM, Chapters 5 & 6
Week 12 (November 12 & 14) – Research Methods: Ethnography and Participant Observation
Required Reading:
*QRM*, Chapter 7

Week 13 (November 19 & 21) – Research Methods: Textual Analysis
Required Reading:
*QRM*, Chapter 8
Project 3 will be due this week.

Week 14 (November 26 & 28) – Research Methods: Comparing, Contrasting, Combining
Select Project 3 Presentations will take place this week.

Week 15 (December 3 & 5) – Interpreting Data
Project 4 will be due this week
Select Project 4 Presentations will be given during the TAMUCC appointed final exam time on Friday, December 7.