

New York University
Department of Culture and Communication
INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA STUDIES
E59.0001.001
Spring 2007
Tue & Thu 3:30 – 4.45pm
194 Mercer, Room 208

Professor	Helga Tawil-Souri
Office	239 Greene St. Room 717
Office Hours	Tuesdays 2 – 3 pm and by appointment
Phone	212.992.9437
Email	helga@nyu.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students of communication studies to some of the issues and theories that have been central to the study of mediated forms of communication. It will examine the factors that influence the media, and in turn, the influence of media on culture and society. We will try to understand what it means to live in a 'media age.' Students will be expected to develop analytical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of various media theories and to arrive at some thoughtful conclusions regarding their own theoretical preferences.

Required Texts

David Croteau and William Hoynes, *Media/Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*. 3rd edition. Available at the NYU bookstore (noted as C&H on schedule).

Articles will be available on Blackboard (noted as Bb on schedule).

Class Participation

Discussions in this course will revolve around contemporary mass media. Given this, it is important that you keep up with the workings and products of mass media in at least two ways.

First, you should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, which means having finished the readings before class. Second, you are expected to keep up with current events as presented by newspapers, local and national television news, cable news, radio programs, web sources and other sources of information that are available to you. As we will consider both news and entertainment elements of mass media, you should not limit your interactions to news sources. In your interactions with media throughout the semester you will see information that relates to the issues that are presented in class. As you become more aware of the relationships between issues from class and examples in your daily life, the input you add to class discussion will become more insightful and informative. Lastly, try not to limit your media intake to American sources, but be aware of non-English and non-US sources of media.

Attendance will be taken and class participation does count for part of your grade.

Assignments and Exams

3 Short Assignments

30%

Written think pieces on assigned topics and readings, 1-2 pages (10% each)

Oral Presentation

5%

Summarize and present readings for assigned day and lead class for 10 – 15 minutes. It will be up to you to decide how to present the major points of the readings, for example, hand out major points, bring in audio/visual examples, have a discussion or a question and answer session, have a poster session, set up a debate, act out a skit, etc. You will grade each other on the presentations. Depending on class size, presentations may have to be done in teams.

3 Tests

40%

2 mid-term exams (10% each), 1 final exam (comprehensive, 20%)
Combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answers and short essays

Participation

15%

Based on attendance as well as consistent and productive contributions in class (includes any extra assignments handed out in class and possibly pop quizzes).

Bb comments

10%

Bb comments are due on the dates marked in the syllabus no later than 2pm; about one to two paragraphs in length and deal with the issues raised in the readings. These are short think-pieces where you can elaborate on your response to the readings, raise questions for discussion or about things you are unclear about. You have freedom in the format (essay form, Q&A, in-depth critique of one reading or overview of all readings or general topic, etc.).

Grading Policies

- Students with special needs, either with physical, learning disabilities and/or religious observances must come talk to me at the beginning of the semester in order to assure any special needs: extra time for exams or papers; different settings for exams; access to materials, etc.
- Grades will not be curved. If you attend class, do the required work and have a reasonable grasp of the information, you should have no trouble earning at least a C, which indicates satisfactory work. No make-up exams will be given. Late papers and assignments will be graded down by -2 for every day late (24 hours from 3.30pm, including weekends and holidays), and will not be considered once they are more than 10 days late (24 hours from 3.30pm, including weekends and holidays) and will automatically result in an F (0%).
- You are expected to abide by the NYU's and Steinhardt's standards of Academic Integrity. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an automatic "F" on the exam or assignment. Additionally, departmental and university policy permits harsher actions, if warranted.
- Notify me in advance if you are going to miss a class or a deadline. You will need a legitimate excuse (doctor's note, etc.) before class or due dates.

Grading Scale

94-100 A; 90-93 A-; 87-89 B+; 83-86 B; 80-82 B-; 77-79 C+; 73-76 C; 70-72 C-; 67-69 D+; 63-66 D; 60-62 D-; 0-59 F

Grading Standards

A = Excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Work demonstrates comprehensive understanding and presents thoughtful and creative interpretations, well-focused and original insights, well-reasoned commentary and analysis.

B = Good. Work demonstrates complete and accurate understanding of course materials, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding.

C = Adequate. Work demonstrates adequate understanding but remains superficial, incomplete, vague or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations; writing may be vague or hard to follow.

D = Unsatisfactory. Work demonstrates a lack of understanding and fails to express basic aspects of the course. Participation was inadequate or superficial.

F = Failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to parameters (page length, topical focus, types of sources), or completely failed to express the most basic and elementary aspects of the course.

Schedule

The syllabus is a roadmap at best. While it is intended that the course will follow the schedule below, modifications along the way are **inevitable**. I will notify you of changes in class and/or Blackboard.

DO NOT USE THIS PRINT-OUT AS THE FINAL VERSION OF OUR READING SCHEDULE. ALWAYS CHECK ON BLACKBOARD!

Jan. 16	Welcome & Introductions
Jan. 18, 23 Jan. 18	What Are We Studying? Communication, Culture and Media C&H, Chapter 1 (Bb comments due @2pm)
Jan. 23	Bb: R. Avery & T. McCain "Interpersonal and Mediated Encounters: A Reorientation of the Mass Communication Process" in G. Gumpert and R. Cathcart, Eds. <i>Inter/Media</i> , 1982.
Jan. 25, 30, Feb. 1 Jan. 25	Media Industry, Economics and Organization C&H, Chapter 2 (Bb comments due @2pm)
	Bb: Who Owns What & The Big Ten
Jan. 30	Bb: T. Magder "The End of TV 101: Reality Programs, Formats and the New Business of Television" in <i>Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture</i> .
	Bb: Assignment on who owns your favorite media
Feb. 1	Bb: D. McQuail "Western European Media: The Mixed Model Under Threat" in John Downing et al., Eds. <i>Questioning the Media</i> , 1995
	Bb: A Citizen's Guide to the Airwaves
	** Assignment 1 DUE – Feb. 1**
Feb. 6, 8 Feb. 6	Legal Aspects of the Media C&H, Chapter 3 (Bb comments due @2pm)
Feb. 8	Bb: Richard Campbell "Legal Controls and Freedom of Expression", <i>Media and Culture</i> .
	Bb: 'Betamax was a stepping stone' by Fred von Lohman
	Bb: 'The Legality of File Sharing'
Feb. 13, 15 Feb. 13	All The News That Fits, We Print: Routines and Conventions C&H, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7, pp.231-239 and 242-244 "Agenda Setting" (Bb comments due @2pm)
Feb. 15	Bb: Harvey Molotch & M. Lester "News as Purposive Behavior: on the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents and Scandals." In S. Cohen and J. Young, Eds., <i>The Manufacture of News</i> , 1981.
	Bb: A. Rodriguez "Control Mechanisms of National Newsmaking: Britain, Canada, Mexico, and the United States" in John Downing et al., Eds. <i>Questioning the Media</i> , 1995
Feb. 20	Test Review and Film
Feb. 22	Test 1 In Class

Feb. 27, Mar. 1 Feb. 27	Re-Presenting the World C&H, Chapter 5 (Bb comments due @2pm)
Mar. 1	Bb: M. Sturken "Camera Images and National Meaning" <i>idem. Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering</i> , 1997.
Mar. 6, 8 Mar. 6	Race, Gender (Mis)Representations, and the International 'Other' C&H, Chapter 6 (Bb comments due @2pm)
	Group 1 Reads: Bb: L. Van Zoonen "Gender, Representation, and the Media" in John Downing et al., Eds. <i>Questioning the Media</i> , 1995
	Group 2 Reads: Bb: H. Gray "The Politics of Representation in Network TV" in H. Newcomb, Ed. <i>Television: the Critical View</i> , 2000.
Mar. 8	Bb: A. Sreberny-Mohammadi "Global News Media Cover the World" in John Downing et al. <i>Questioning the Media</i> , 1995.
	Bb: Carol Stabile & Deepa Kumar "Unveiling Imperialism: Media, Gender and the War on Afghanistan"
	** Assignment 2 DUE – Mar. 9**
Mar. 20, 22 Mar. 20	Media Effects C&H, Chapter 7 (Bb comments due @2pm)
	Bb: M. Defleur and S. Ball-Rokeach "Mass Society and the Magic Bullet Theory" in <i>Theories of Mass Communication</i> , 1989.
Mar. 22	Bb: Jack McLeod "On Understanding and Misunderstanding Media Effects" in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch, Eds., <i>Mass Media and Society</i> , 1991
	Bb: S. Lowery and M. Defleur "The Invasion from Mars: Radio Panics America" <i>Milestones in Mass Communications Research</i> , 1988.
Mar. 27, 29 Mar. 27	Active Audiences C&H, Chapter 8 (Bb comments due @2pm)
Mar. 29	Bb: Ellen Seiter "Don't Treat Us Like We're So Stupid and Naïve: Toward An Ethnography of Soap Opera Viewers" in <i>Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power</i> , 1989.
	Bb: David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green "Gotta Catch 'em All: Structure, Agency and Pedagogy in Children's Media Culture" <i>Media, Culture & Society</i> , 25 (3), 2003.
Apr. 3	Test Review & Film
Apr. 5	Test 2 In Class
Apr. 10, 12 Apr. 10	The Future of Technology: Surveillance and Spectacle C&H, Chapter 9 (Bb comments due @2pm)
	Bb: Oscar Gandy "Tracking the Audience" in John Downing et al., Eds. <i>Questioning the Media</i> , 1995

- Apr. 12 Bb: Mark Andrejevic "The Kindler, Gentler Gaze of *Big Brother*" *New Media & Society* 4(2), 2002.
- Bb: Anonymous "The Revolution will not be Tivo'ed"
- Apr. 17, 19**
Apr. 17 **Globalization**
C&H, Chapter 10 (Bb comments due @2pm)
- Apr. 19 Bb: A. Appadurai "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" in L. Parks and S. Kumar, Eds., *Planet TV*, 2003
- Bb: Peter Hessler "Straight to Video" *New Yorker*, October 15, 2001.
- ** Assignment 3 DUE – Apr. 19****
- Apr. 24** **Conclusions & Test Review**
- Apr. 26** **Final Test**
In Class