

Media and Mass Culture

SPCM 581 | Thursdays | 5-7:30 | Life Hall 051

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Course Description: Media and Mass Culture looks at the historical influence of the various communication media (print, broadcast, Internet), on society, and culture. Media and Mass Culture will consider the strengths and limitations of various media for understanding human communication, the future of mediated communication, and the social, economic, cultural, political, and educational impact of the mass media on social groups, regions, and nations.

Objectives

- To learn about the historical development of the mass media as it relates to human communication.
- To learn about the strengths and weaknesses of various mediated communication channels.
- To learn about the current debates/ issues in the mass media (literacy, development, consolidation, etc.).
- To learn to critically evaluate mediated communication channels and messages.

Academic Dishonesty: The University is an academic community of scholars. Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense against the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated. All academic work submitted by you is assumed to be your own original work and to contain your own thought, research, and self-expression. Work that borrows the ideas, organization, or wording, from others must be properly acknowledged. Similarly, work that was conducted for another class should not be passed off as original.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and passed off as original by a writer or speaker. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else’s ideas, speech, presentation, essay, book review, or news release as original. It also includes failing to document or cite the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or written assignments.

It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize for the entire class, and to report cases of plagiarism to the university administration.

- Please come to class prepared to participate and contribute to class.
- Please submit all work in a professional “final-draft-looking” form.
- **NB:** “draft,” dot matrix, hand-written, or typewriter documents will not be accepted.
- Late assignments will be discounted 10% per calendar day.

The Department of Communication’s attendance policy: students may miss the equivalent of one week of classes without penalty. If three classes are missed (on a two day a week schedule), your final grade will be reduced by 5%; if four classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. Missing more than two weeks worth of classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

For “perfect” attendance: (including being on time for each class) you will gain an additional 3% on your final grade. No exceptions to bonus will be made for any reason.

Assignments	Points
Reaction Papers to Readings (3 pages each, 100 pts. each, x 3)	300
Book Review (4–6 pp.; 12–15 min. pres.; recent Comm. text w/ app.)	300
Presentation on Media (10–15 min. & 3 pp. of handouts)	300
Annotated Bibliography (for paper & class presentation)	200
Research/Critical Paper (13+ pp. of text + Bibliography, etc.)	500
Professionalism (Preparedness for class, participation in class, etc.)	300
Total	1,900

Note: College level writing standards are expected on all work submitted (this includes correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, careful proofreading, etc.). No spelling errors are allowed—having even one spelling error will result in a zero for the assignment in question. All assignments should be double-spaced (with 25–27 lines-per-page), have one-inch margins (1”) all around, and be written in one of the following fonts: **Bookman** or Bookman Old Style 11pt., Palatino 11 pt., New Century Schoolbook 11 pt., Garamond 12 pt., or Bernhard Modern 12 pt. For headings, use **boldface type, Ariel Black, or Helvetica Black.**

Course Schedule

Day 1:	1.17.02	Overview of Class; discuss media presentations
Day 2:	1.24	Read: Levinson: chapters 1–9 & Preface
Day 3:	1.31†	Read: McLuhan: chapters 1–18 & both Introductions
Day 4:	2.7†	Read: McLuhan: chapters 19–33
Day 5:	2.14†	Read: Bagdikian: chapters 1–7, both Prefaces, & Introduction
Day 6:	2.21†	Read: Bagdikian: chapters 8–13, & Afterward
Day 7:	2.28†	Read: Schiller: chapters 1–4 & Introduction
Day 8:	3.7†	Read: Schiller: chapters 5–8
Day 9:	3.14†	No Class—Spring Break
Day 10:	3.21† All Book Reviews due
Day 11:	3.28†	Read: Postman: chapters 1–5, & Introduction
Day 12:	4.4†	Read: Postman: chapters 6–11
Day 13:	4.11†	Read: Levinson: chapters 10–19 All Reaction Papers Due
Day 14:	4.18 Presentations: 25–30 minutes, 5+ pp. of handouts
Day 15:	4.25 Presentations: 25–30 minutes, 5+ pp. of handouts
Day 16:	5.2	No Class—“Thursday Designated as a Monday”
Day 17:	5.TBA	Final Exam Day Presentations All essays due

†: Reaction Papers may be submitted.

Bagdikian, Ben H. (2000). The Media Monopoly. Boston: Beacon Press.

Levinson, Paul. (1997). The soft edge: A natural history and future of the information revolution. New York: Rutledge.

McLuhan, Marshal. (1999/1964). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw Hill.

Postman, N. (1993). Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology. New York: Vintage Books.

Schiller, Herbert, (1991). Culture Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression. New York: Oxford University Press.