Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies 262: Principles of Media Studies
Spring 2018 | T/Th 9:30-10:45AM | CRT 221

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:45-2:45pm, & Thursdays, 11am-noon, or by appointment

Course Description
This course is the first of two required courses in the media studies concentration for JAMS majors. It is designed to give you an overview of contemporary approaches to media studies.

This field seeks to understand the importance of media in our everyday lives and the pleasures we derive from media. But it also takes a critical perspective on media, questioning why and how media industries, media producers, and media audiences function as they do. Central to this course is the idea that media matter, both to societies and to individuals in their everyday lives. Thus, we will treat all kinds of media seriously, even that which many people consider trash. And even when a media product seems to be pure “entertainment,” we will consider its formal design, its social significance, its political and economic context, and the kinds of pleasures it offers. We will consider media in terms of three key aspects: media technologies, media texts and audiences, and media industries, and we will explore the central issues in each of these key areas.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, you will have a foundation to address the following high-level questions:

- How do media industries work?
- What are the ways media texts convey their meaning?
- How do audiences engage with media and participate in the meaning-making process?
- How do media function in people’s lives as a critical institution in contemporary society, as a means through which they make sense of the world?

That means being able to respond to the following more concrete questions:

- What is technology and technological determinism?
- What is the social construction of technology?
- How do we study media texts? (Textual analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis)
- What is the connection between media and culture?
- What is the political economy of media?
- How does ownership structure content?
- How do audiences engage with media texts?
- How do audiences shape content?

**Required Text**

All other readings will be posted on D2L.
Assignments

1. Critical TV Response Paper & Presentation (30%)
   For this assignment, you will choose a chapter from *How to Watch Television* that we are NOT reading for class. You will watch the show analyzed in that chapter or, with the instructor’s guidance and permission, another similar show (e.g., same genre or period). The assignment has two components: (1) a 1000-1500 word paper that is both a response to the chapter AND your own analysis of the text (TV shows), and (2) a brief presentation in class in which you speak informally about that show’s topic for 3-5 minutes. The presentation portion of the assignment will have different due dates for different students, and you will sign up for these in the first two weeks of class. These papers will be submitted to the D2L Dropbox as Word documents. Presentations are graded pass/fail and are worth 5% of your final grade. No credit will be given for presentations longer than 5 minutes, and no makeup presentations will be allowed if you are absent on the day of your presentation. Critical TV Response papers are due May 2nd and worth 25% of your final grade.

2. Midterm Exam (25%)
   There will be one take-home, open book midterm exam consisting of one or two essay questions. The midterm will be distributed on March 27th, and is due on March 29th.

3. Reading Responses (15%)
   Early in the semester, I will pass around a sign-up sheet. You will each be responsible for submitting reading responses on five (5) separate readings. Each response is worth three points. The responses should be approximately 200-words long and posted to the related Dropbox folder on D2L the morning before class. The responses should be a reflection of your thoughts while reading the assigned readings. Any responses sent after class will not be graded.

4. Final Exam (25%)
   The Final will be a take-home, open book exam consisting of short-answer and essay questions. The final will be distributed on May 13th, and is due on May 15th.

5. Participation (5%)
   Since we do not have any discussion sections, it is important that you actively participate in our lecture sessions by coming prepared, asking questions, making comments, and seeking clarification when you need it. If you find speaking in front of the class intimidating, please come see me and we can talk about a range of ways for you to meaningfully participate in class that are less stressful for you.

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
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<td>Critical Response Paper</td>
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<td>Critical Response Presentation</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Course Grading Scale**

A (100-93), A- (92.9-90), B+ (89.9-87), B (86.9-83), B- (82.9-80), C+ (79.9-77), C (76.9-73), C- (72.9-70), D+ (69.9-67), D (66.9-65), D- (64.9-60), F (below 60)

**Course Policies, Rules, Etc.**

1. **Attendance:**
   Your attendance at every lecture is mandatory according to the policy of the School of Letters and Science at UWM. Any more than two absences will result in a reduction of your overall grade of 2% per day. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and work to catch up. First, carefully read through all the slides for the day, which may include announcements as well as course material. Second, ask a friend if something is still unclear. Third, come talk to the professor if you have further questions.

2. **Email policy:**
   I hate email. It is a time vampire. Almost every issue that you will face during the semester can be addressed by checking this syllabus, by asking a quick question before or after class, or by scheduling a meeting in my office (in that order). I am eager to talk to you, and to help you be successful in this class, I just prefer to do it face to face rather than by email. Do not use my dislike of email as an excuse not to talk to me about issues you’re having.

3. **Getting to Class Late and Leaving Early:**
   Late arrivals and early departures distract and disrupt class. Your professor and teaching assistants find them especially annoying. If you know that you have to leave early, simply let me know before class and please leave the classroom quietly. Sit by an aisle and close to the door. Everyone occasionally runs late. It’s okay. Just be courteous. If you make a habit of being late or leaving early, however, it will affect your grade. Arriving substantially late or substantially early may use up one of your 2 free absences. Please do not begin rustling your bags and coats before class ends. I know you're busy and have places to be, so if I lose track of time, raise your hand and let me know.

4. **Electronics policy & readings:**
   The research on computer use in the classroom is definitive. It distracts everyone around you, it distracts you, and produces poorer quality notes than if you took notes by hand. But to ensure that people with legitimate accessibility issues are not disadvantaged by a blanket “no laptop” policy, I will agree to post my complete lecture slides to D2L if you agree to not use a laptop, phone, or tablet during lecture. Further accommodations are possible with proper documentation. Occasionally, electronic devices will be allowed for class activities. You will not be penalized if you do not have one. At that time, students are expected to use the devices for the course activity only. Not for email, messaging, etc. Students are required to bring a hard copy of the pertinent readings for each class session.

5. **Assignments and Extensions:**
   All assignments are listed on the syllabus and will be announced well before they are due. EXTENSIONS MAY BE GRANTED IF SOUGHT BEFORE THE DUE DATE. Late
assignments without prior approval will lose 5% per day for 7 days (including weekends), and then it will get an automatic 0%.

6. Grades:
I work hard throughout the semester to ensure that grading is consistent. I use a grading rubric for written papers so that I am applying the same standards for evaluation when reading these papers. This grading rubric is based on the grading criteria on the assignment sheet.

I grade assignments on performance, not effort, and your grade is relative to the other students in the class. Fulfilling the assignment requirements earns you an average score, while producing exceptional work will earn you an above average score. Do not expect an “A” simply for fulfilling the requirements of the assignment. Please visit me during office hours to ask questions when you are working on an assignment or reviewing material. If you have questions about a grade, please see me as soon as you have received the grade to get further feedback. If you have problem with mechanics, I recommend the Writing Center (http://uwm.edu/writing-center/). The Writing Center is staffed with highly qualified tutors who can make a difference.

I will hold you to university-level written communication.

These are the circumstances under which I would change a grade: (a) if I have made an error, or (b) if I have failed to hold you to the same standard as everyone else. If you believe that you have received an undeserved grade, you should make your case in writing to your professor within two weeks of receiving the grade.

7. Incompletes:
A notation of “incomplete” may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.

8. Students with disabilities:
If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. I am happy to work with you. SAC forms are needed for acquiring a note taker. Please obtain the forms you need to hire a note taker from the SAC and bring them to lecture as soon as possible. Recording lectures may also be an option.

9. Academic misconduct:
Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. If you need helping learning to summarize, paraphrase, attribute, or cite sources, please see the professor or visit The Writing Center. You should familiarize yourselves with UWM’s description of academic misconduct. For more information, see http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/.

10. Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment):
The University will not tolerate discriminatory conduct. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.
11. Announcements:
Any changes to the syllabus, class cancellations, or other matters pertaining to the class will be posted on the D2L website for the course. You should check this website at least once a week.

For further information about university policies, please see the Secretary of the University’s Syllabus Links: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf

Student Workload Statement
- This class will meet twice weekly, for 75 minutes per meeting, for a total of 37.5 hours of required class time.
- You should expect to spend approximately 60 hours this semester reading the course book and other required materials.
- There is one medium sized writing assignment which should take approximately 35 hours of reading, research, and writing.
- There are five reading responses, which should require 5 hours of research and preparation total.
- Preparing for the midterm and final exam should take a total of 15 hours.
- All told, this class should require approximately 152.5 hours of your time.

COURSE CALENDAR

NOTE: Calendar is subject to change. This is a media course and we will regularly update readings depending on what is in the news. Please check the D2L site and your email regularly.

Section 1: Technology

Week One: Intro to Course

Date: January 23rd
Lecture: Introduction to Course – Syllabus, Policies, etc.

Date: January 25th
Lecture: What is Media Studies?

Week Two: Social Construction of Technology

Date: January 30th
Lecture: Do Artifacts Have Politics?
  - Langdon Winner. “Do Artifacts Have Politics?”

**Date: February 1st**  
**Lecture:** What is Technological Determinism?  
• Merritt Roe Smith, “Technological Determinism in American Culture.”

**Week Three: Technology, Work, Privacy, and “Big Data”**

**Date: February 6th**  
**Lecture:** AirBnb, Uber, and The Anonymization of Commerce  
• Steven Hill, *Raw Deal: How the Uber Economy and Runaway Capitalism Are Screwing American Workers.*

**Date: February 8th**  
**Lecture:** Technology, Privacy, and Big Data  
• Vincent Mosco, *To the Cloud: Big Data in a Turbulent World.*

**Week Four: Technology, Automated Labor, and Information Monopolies**

**Date: February 13th**  
**Lecture:** Amazon and Labor Automation  
• Andrew Calabrese and Tyler Rollins. “Amazon.com.”

**Date: February 15th**  
**Lecture:** Technology and Information Monopoly  
• Mickey Lee, “Google: Information Organizer.”

**Section 2: The Basics of Media Criticism**

**Week Five: What is “Good” Media?**

**Date: February 20th**  
**Lecture:** Class Distinctions in Media  
• Renee M. Sgroi, "*Joe Millionaire* and Women's Positions: A Question of Class."

**Date: February 22nd**  
**Lecture:** Cultivating Taste  
• HTWTV: Michael Newman “*Everyday Italian*: Cultivating Taste.”

**Week Six: Ideology in Media**

**Date: February 27**
Lecture: Ideological Messages in the Media
• HTWTV: Roberta Pearson, “Star Trek: Serialized Ideology.”
• HTWTV: Jason Mittell, “Phineas & Ferb: Children’s Television.”

Date: March 1
Lecture: Ironic Sexism
• HTWTV: Susan Douglass, “Jersey Shore: Ironic Viewing.”

Week Seven: Representing Gender & Race

Date: March 6
Lecture: Representing Gender
• HTWTV: Elana Levine, “Grey’s Anatomy: Feminism.”

Date: March 8
Lecture: Black families on American Television
• HTWTV: Christine Acham, “The Cosby Show: Representing Race”

Week Eight: Stereotypes and Advertising

Date: March 13th
Lecture: Challenging Stereotypes

Date: March 15th
NO CLASS
• Analyzing Advertising: Watch Sut Jhally’s film The Codes of Gender.

Week Nine: Midterm Review and Exam

Date: March 27th
• Exam Review and Exam Distributed

Date: November 29th
• Midterm Due (NO CLASS)

Section 3: Media Industries and Political Economy

Week Ten: Marxism and Critical Theory

Date: April 3rd
Lecture: Marx, Commodities, and Labor
• Karl Marx, Capital.

Date: April 5th
Lecture: Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School
• Adorno and Horkheimer, “The Culture Industries.”

Week Eleven: The Public Interest

Date: April 10th
Lecture: The Public Interest

Date: April 12th
Lecture: Public Media
• Paul McCauly. “Leveraging the NPR Brand: Serving the Public While Boosting the Bottom Line.”

Week Twelve: Audience Commodity Theory and Social Media

Date: April 17th
Lecture: Generation “Like”
• In-Class Screening

Date: April 19th
Lecture: Is Facebook Work?
• Nicole S. Cohen, “The Valorization of Surveillance.”

Week Thirteen: Working in the Media Industry

Date: April 24th
Lecture: “Cool” Jobs and Video Game Labor
• Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter. “EA Spouse’ and the Crisis of Video Game Labour: Enjoyment, Exclusion, Exploitation, Exodus.”
• Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter. “Empire@Play: Virtual Games and Global Capitalism.”

Date: April 26th
Lecture: Media Activism
• Sarah Florini, “This Week in Blackness, the George Zimmerman acquittal, and the production of a networked collective identity”
• Christine Bacareza Balance, “How It Feels to Be Viral Me: Affective Labor and Asian American YouTube Performance

Week Fourteen: Media Industries

Date: May 1st
Lecture: Immaterial Labor and Reality TV
  • Laurie Ouellette, “*America’s Next Top Model*: Neoliberal Labor.”

**Date:** May 2nd  
**Critical TV Essay Due**

**Date:** May 3rd  
**Lecture:** Product Placement  
  • HTWTV: Sandler, “Modern Family: Product Placement.”

**Week Fifteen: Audience Participation**

**Date:** May 8th  
**Lecture:** Identity Politics  
  • HTWTV: Victoria E. Johnson, “*Monday Night Football*: Brand Identity.”  
  • HTWTV: Ron Becker, “*Glee/ House Hunters International*: Gay Narratives.”

**Date:** May 10th  
**Lecture:** Intertexts  
  • HTWTV: Scott, “*Battlestar Galactica*: Fans and Ancillary Content.”

**Week Sixteen: Final Exam**

**Date:** May 13th  
**Final Exam Distributed**

**Date:** May 15th  
**Final Exam Due**

For full citations for all the readings noted above, see the electronic version of this syllabus on D2L.