Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies 262:
Principles of Media Studies
Spring 2020 | T/Th 9:30-10:45AM | BOL B64

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & 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?

There is one REQUIRED TEXT

All other readings will be posted on Canvas