

INTRODUCTION TO MASS MEDIA (SECTIONS 20261, 20263)

County College of Morris
Randolph, NJ
Spring 2013

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Course Description

Introduction to Mass Media is a survey course focusing on the history and consequences of mass media for the individual, society, and culture. Specific areas of emphasis include the historical development of media forms, theories concerning the effects of media, and the evolving future of media. Special attention will also be paid to current events in the media and their social consequences.

Course Objectives

1. To improve media literacy and critical thinking.
2. To familiarize students with the history and development of mass media forms.
3. To familiarize students with the spectrum of media theories and the intellectual traditions from which they derive.
4. To instill an abiding interest in the subject of media through exposure to a diversity of programming material and theoretical perspectives through which they can be understood.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to describe the historical development and current state of specific media forms (books, magazines, newspapers, film, radio, television, the internet).
2. The ability to identify major media theories and understand their fundamental assertions.
3. The ability to maintain an ongoing discussion on a topic using an electronic forum.
4. The ability to criticize media products, including print, film, radio, television, and websites.
5. The ability to demonstrate critical writing skills through the application of media theories in an electronic forum.

Methods of Instruction

1. Lecture: A brief introduction to material that connects readings to class exercises.
2. Class Discussion: Full group discussion of topics related to specific questions, readings, media presentations and/or exam preparation.
3. Web-Based Learning: mattsmediaresearch.com, linkedin.com
4. Audio-Visual Presentations: Short presentations that are focused on a relevant topic and intended to provoke discussion.

Required Materials

Dennis, E. E. & DeFleur, M. L. (2010). *Understanding Media in the Digital Age*. New York: Pearson.

Always bring a NOTEBOOK and PEN to class for taking notes.

Additional Resources

<http://mattsmediaresearch.com>: This will serve as the official website for this class. The syllabus and other material will be made available through the “Students” hyperlink at the top of the homepage.

Course Requirements

1. *Attendance*: Students are expected to attend all class meetings.
2. *Reading and Participation*: Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topic described in the Course Calendar.
3. *Tests*: Students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge in the form of two in-class examinations.
4. *LinkedIn*: Students have the opportunity to earn extra-credit by responding to discussion threads on the professional networking website, LinkedIn.

Evaluation and Grading

1. *Attendance Policy*: All students are entitled to two unexcused absences from class. Beyond these absences, 1/3 of a grade will be deducted from the final grade for each additional unexcused absence (e.g. B- reduced to C+). Excused absences are accepted only if accompanied by documentation relating to the nature of the excuse (e.g. auto repair receipt, doctor’s note, jury duty notification)
2. *Lateness*: Roll is taken at the beginning of the class as the attendance sheet is circulated. It is the student’s responsibility to sign the attendance sheet! Students who are late must sign in at the end of class and be marked late. Two late arrivals are equal to one absence.
3. *Participation*: All students are expected to demonstrate informed participation in class discussion. Participation can include [1] initiation of discussion about an issue related to the topic scheduled for discussion for that class session [2]

contribution to an ongoing discussion through informed opinion and/or presentation of evidence. Please note that there exists a distinction between an uninformed opinion and the assertion of a particular theoretical perspective. As opposed to personal opinion that is grounded in individual anecdotal experience, the statement of a perspective implies a coherent paradigm that has application value based on functionality in other circumstances. Put simply, a perspective has demonstrated its validity elsewhere. Having made that distinction, participation will be evaluated based on the number of valid contributions that the student makes throughout the course of the semester. A minimum of 1 contribution is expected each week. Additional contributions will be added as half points to the final grade and deficient contribution points will be subtracted as half points from the final grade. For example, if a student has a final test average of 77%, but six contributions above and beyond the quota, the student will have earned an 80%. If that same student has a deficit of six points below the quota, the student will have earned a 74%.

4. *Negative Participation:* The following behavior is prohibited in the classroom: sleeping, use of electronic devices, offensive language, remarks, and/or actions. Students who sleep or use electronic devices in class risk reduction of their final grade by 1/3 for each offense. Students who make offensive remarks and/or actions risk failure and expulsion from the course in line with the regulations set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.
5. *Tests:* There will be two periods of examination throughout the course of this semester. These will be evaluated in terms of percentile and translated to a letter grade based on the grading chart below.
6. *LinkedIn:* As noted above, students have the opportunity to contribute to online class discussions for extra-credit throughout the duration of the semester. All extra-credit contributions are graded on a 0-2 point scale. Extra-credit will be added to the final grade in the form of percentage points that are equivalent to the score of the contribution. Contributions eligible for extra-credit must be submitted on time (the Saturday after they are assigned), and meet the criteria detailed in the Appendix.

Grading Chart

A (93-100)	C (73-76)
A- (90-92)	C- (70-72)
B+ (87-89)	D+ (67-69)
B (83-86)	D (63-66)
B- (80-82)	D- (60-62)
C+ (77-79)	F (below 60)

Course Calendar

1/23

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Fill out index cards.
 - Personal introductions.
 - Introduction and overview of the course.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - mattsmediaresearch.com
 - linkedin.com
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Questions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read the syllabus.
 - Obtain a copy of the textbook.
 - Open LinkedIn account.
 - Read Chapter 1: Understanding Communication Concepts in the Internet Age.

1/28

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Are you living in a computer simulation?
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Are you living in a computer simulation?
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 2: Navigating Change.

1/30

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Chapter 2: Navigating Change.
 - What media changes have you noticed throughout your lifetime?
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Excerpts from Printing Transforms Knowledge Part I (VC 893)
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Discussion of Oral and Literate media.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 3: Books.

2/4

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Chapter 3: Books.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Excerpts from Printing Transforms Knowledge Part II (VC 893)
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - The Printing Press.
 - Current Events in the Media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

2/6

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Photography.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - The Impact of Photography.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

2/11

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Photography.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 4: Newspapers.

2/13

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Newspapers, Magazines, & Blogs
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Newspapers.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 5: Magazines.

2/18

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Newspapers, Magazines, & Blogs
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Magazine comparisons (Powerpoint).
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Magazine comparisons.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 7: Radio.

2/20

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Chapter 7: Radio.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Empire of the Air (Ken Burns).
 - Selected clips of historic radio broadcasts.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Radio History: Invention and Innovation.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

2/25

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Discussion of Chapter 7: Radio.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Selected clips of historic radio programs.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Radio as a Medium.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 6: Motion Pictures.

2/27

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Chapter 6: Motion Pictures.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Selected clips from When Movies Began.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Film History.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

3/4

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Discussion of Chapter 6: Motion Pictures.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Film as a Medium.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 8: Television.

3/6

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Chapter 8: Television.
 - Broadcast Journalism.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Modern Marvels: Television
 - The Edward R. Murrow Collection
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Television History.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

3/11-3/16

Spring Break!

3/18

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Discussion of Chapter 8: Television.
 - Entertainment Programming
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Classic Television
 - Clips from contemporary television programs.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Television as a Medium.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

3/20

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - The Internet.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Internet: Behind the Web
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - History of the Internet.
 - Current events in the media.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

3/25

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: The Internet.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Futurism.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

3/27

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Review for Midterm Exam
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Review for Midterm Exam
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Prepare for **Midterm EXAM**.

4/1

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - **Midterm Exam**
- ❖ **Media:**
 - N/A
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - N/A
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Read: McLuhan Chapter (online).

4/3

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Media Form Effects
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Die Eier von Satan
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Media Form Effects.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

4/8

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Media Form Effects
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Media Form Effects.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Read: Chapter 14: Media Effects

4/10

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Media Content Effects
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Media and Antisocial Behavior (Powerpoint).
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Media Content Effects
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

4/15

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Media Content Effects
- ❖ **Media:**
 - TBA
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Media Content Effects
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Read Chapter 11: Advertising

4/17

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Discussion of Advertising
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Print and Television Advertising.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Psycho/Socio-dynamics in print and television advertising.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - N/A

4/22

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Discussion of Advertising
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Digital Advertising.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Market research and social media.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Read Chapter 12: Public Relations

4/24

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Public Relations
- ❖ **Media:**
 - The Corporation.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - What is a corporation?
 - What is “public relations?”
 - Why do they need each other?
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

4/29

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Continued: Public Relations
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Case Studies
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Case Studies
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - Read: Marx Chapter (online).

5/1

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critical Studies.
- ❖ **Media:**
 - Country Music Recordings.
- ❖ **Discussion:**
 - Marxism.
 - Hegemony.
- ❖ **Assignment:**
 - TBA

5/6

❖ **Overview:**

- Continued: Critical Studies.

❖ **Media:**

- The Secret Millionaire
- Extreme Makeover: Home Edition
- Undercover Boss

❖ **Discussion:**

- Marxism.
- Hegemony.

❖ **Assignment:**

- Review for final exam.

5/7-5/10

Final Exam Week.

5/13

Last Day of the Semester.

Appendix

LinkedIn discussion posts are graded on a 0-2 scale. Scores of “1” indicate that all the basic requirements have been met while scores of “2” indicate high quality contributions. Scores of “0” indicated that the basic requirements have not been met.

To meet the basic requirements and earn a score of “1,” students must (1) answer the question in sufficient detail to address all of its components in depth, and (2) use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If either of these two criteria is not met, a score of “0” will be assigned.

To earn a score of “2” students must integrate a theory in answering the question. That is, students must answer the question using an idea discussed in class or read in the book. If this is done and all of the requirements of (1) and (2) are met, a score of “2” will be assigned. However, if this is done, but the requirements of either (1) or (2) are not met, a score of “0” will be still be assigned.

As the semester progresses, examples of high-quality discussion threads will be shared with the class.