

ENG 115  
Mass Media  
Winter 2012

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*Even if this is your first class of the day, you already have been exposed to dozen of media messages. Perhaps you awoke to a radio blaring a song or newscast, watched TV as you got dressed in a shirt and shoes with company logos, read billboards on your way to class and checked your email or text messaged. The media is a big part of your day whether you realize it or not. In this class we will study the media by stopping the action to take a closer look. How does the media work? How is it influenced? Is its economic model still effective? What is the impact of the Internet on all areas of the media? What does the immediate future look like? Five years from now?*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to acquaint you with the various public information media and its influences, operations and opportunities. It provides the foundation for courses in the following programs: Journalism and Emerging Media, Electronic Media Broadcasting and Graphic Design. It also is intended for students from all fields who seek a better understanding of the complex American system of mass communication.

### Outcomes and Objectives

#### **Define basic information about print and electronic media.**

Objectives:

- A. Identify the functions of each
- B. Describe the operations of each.
- C. Outline the history of each.

#### **Analyze and research media issues.**

Objectives:

- A. Explain the media's role in society both orally and in writing.
- B. Identify major media issues and write about one in-depth.

#### **Investigate media opportunities.**

Objectives:

- A. Describe visits to media sites.
- B. Interview media professionals and write a job description.

#### **Interpret the effectiveness of the media in today's society.**

Objectives:

- A. Evaluate and write about the print and electronic media's coverage of major news events.
- B. Distinguish between strengths and weaknesses of the media.

### Text:

*Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media* by Shirley Biagi. Wadsworth. (ISBN 978-1-111-34636-2)

### ORGANIZATION OF COURSE:

Class Work: You will be given many opportunities throughout the semester to read, write, analyze, reflect, and share your views on various media topics during our time together. This will involve writing 4 Response/Research Papers, Daily In-Class Journal Writings, A Final Media

Project/Manifesto, and a Final Presentation. Good class discussion and debate will be central to our activity. Mondays will traditionally be spent reviewing the textbook theme/chapter for the week. Wednesdays will be spent amplifying and personalizing these topics via “current” examples that you will seek out yourself for informal discussion. If you don’t read a newspaper or check news websites on a daily basis, it’s time to start. The media does a good job of covering the media, and this is the way we will add to the topics in our text. Since this is a media class, we will use media in the class including occasional films and online activities. Expect to employ “research” from a variety of sources.

Response/Research Papers: You will write 4 essays on media topics, including one Personal Inventory of Media Habits, one Profile on a Media Personality/Profession, one Ethical Dilemma, and one Historical Conflict. Some of these will be purely subjective while others will require detailed research. Most of these responses will be between 3-4 pgs in length. You may continue to revise these papers throughout the term if you do not want to accept your first grade from me.

Final Media Project/Manifesto: At the end of the semester you will compile/revise some of your thoughts into one complete report (or manifesto) that reflects your findings and opinions about Mass Media. Here may take on one specific media topic that interests you, or you can intertwine thoughts and data from a variety of topics to form a “manifesto” of thought or “media philosophy.” In other words, the scope of this project can be as narrow or as wide as you wish. It must, however, be researched. Length should be around 6-10 pgs.

Final Presentation: During our Finals Week you will present your Final Project/Manifesto to the class (visual aids welcome). No more than 10 minutes each. These can be creative.

Journal: Every Monday, I will ask you to write on a variety of questions regarding our textbook chapters. This in-class writing is meant to stimulate discussion and engage us with the book content. (If it is evident that you have not read, we will turn these into graded quizzes that will factor into your grade, so read!) Since this class relies heavily on the analysis of our media culture, you are required to come to each Wednesday class with a “Media Observation” in your notebook related to the weekly chapter in our textbook (see handout). This may be an outside article or your own observation as a media consumer. I will begin each Wednesday asking for you to share these. I will collect Journals (handwritten or typed) throughout and at the end of the term to see if you have been actively adding to your Journal. This grade will be based on the percentage of pages you complete as well as your effort and enthusiasm.

Community Membership: You are expected to come to class prepared. This includes completing the readings and writings and being ready to interact with your classmates. This is *essential*, as this class cannot succeed without you. I expect each student to present at least 2 “Media Observations” to the class on Wednesdays. You will lose points through disruptions, be they vocal or mechanical.

On that note, Attendance: You get *two* absences. Choose them wisely. Or better yet, come to all classes. Your grade will almost certainly reflect your attendance. For each absence beyond two I will deduct half a letter off your Final Grade. Consistently arriving late or leaving early without contacting me first will also be reflected in lost points.

Late Work will be accepted with a full letter grade off for each date it is late. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis (but it better be a good reason!). Get work in on time! All papers must be typed, formatted accordingly, and turned in on deadline.

## **EVALUATION:**

- 40% Response/Research Papers
- 15% Journal (collected at end of semester)
- 15% Final Media Project/Manifesto
- 10% Final Presentation
- 20% Writing Community Membership (class participation, including two observations, discussion, class activity)

To determine letter grades for evaluation, I use the following breakdown:

95-100: A	76-73: C
94-90: A-	72-70: C-
89-87: B+	69-66: D+
86-84: B	65-60: D
83-80: B-	59-0: E
79-77: C+	

I will give you letter grades on all papers and written work. I usually do not post class grades throughout the term, but I will personally update you during midterm week concerning your grade. Please do not be shy about asking me about your grade. I will gladly update you at any time.

## **PLAGIARISM:**

Plagiarism is the act of representing your work as another's. This not only includes whole papers but portions of papers. Thus, there is blatant plagiarism and accidental plagiarism. Neither will be tolerated in this class. *Please* do not be shy about questions regarding potential plagiarism (as we see many different sources). Do not attempt blatant cheating; you *will* be caught and punished by myself and the college.

*Finally*, let us Respect each other. The great thrill of a class like this is discussion and sharing. It is important that we feel comfortable sharing our thoughts. Please respect your classmates' (and humanity's) diversity. Unethical biases or bigotry will not be tolerated.

I realize it is ironic to say in a mass media class, but please turn off your phones and texting devices, unless otherwise instructed otherwise.

## Winter Weather Conditions

If the weather looks bad the night before class, please check your Delta email in the morning before coming in to class. Although Delta may be open, I may decide to cancel class if I decide conditions are too poor on the roads. So please check your Delta Email.

## **Course Outline**

(subject to change)

### **WEEK ONE:** Course Introduction

Begin discussion on Mass Media

**Homework:** PURCHASE class textbook.

Read Chapter 1 for Wednesday (wk1)

Read Chapter 2 for Wednesday (wk2)

### **WEEK TWO:**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Book Industry/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 3

### **WEEK THREE**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Newspapers/Observations*

**Paper #1 due**

**Homework:** Read Chapter 4

### **WEEK FOUR**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Magazines/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 5

### **WEEK FIVE**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Music Business/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 6

### **WEEK SIX**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Radio/Observations*

**Paper # 2 due**

**Homework:** Read Chapter 7

### **WEEK SEVEN**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Movies/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 8

### **WEEK EIGHT**

**In-Class:** Discuss *TV/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 9

### **WEEK NINE**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Web/Observations*

**Paper #3 Due**

**Homework:** Read Chapter 10

**WEEK TEN**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Ads & PR/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 11/12

**WEEK ELEVEN**

**In-Class:** Discuss *News/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapter 13

**WEEK TWELVE**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Politics/Observations*

**Paper #4 due**

**Homework:** Read Chapter 14

**WEEK THIRTEEN**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Law/Observations*

**Homework:** Read Chapters 15/16

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

**In-Class:** Discuss *Ethics/Global Media/Observations*

**Homework:** Prep for Presentations

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

**Finals Week:**           **Manifesto Due**  
                                  **Final Presentations**  
                                  **Journal Due**

(Schedule subject to change as needed)

## “Wednesday Observation” In Journal

Media Culture works as a mirror, reflecting how we live and what we value. Each Wednesday you are required to notice some new piece of media culture and comment on it. Each week will have a new theme for you to observe. Here is the weekly schedule:

Week 2: Books  
Week 3: Newspapers  
Week 4: Magazines  
Week 5: Music Recordings  
Week 6: Radio  
Week 7: Movies  
Week 8: TV  
Week 9: Digital/Web  
Week 10: Advertising & PR  
Week 11: News  
Week 12: Politics  
Week 13: Law  
Week 14: Ethics/Globalization

(These are subject to change. I will let you know at the beginnings of each week what to observe. It may be some thoughts on a current media story not related to the week's reading.)

This can be anything in the category that you find interesting and worth remarking on. I don't care what you find, but you must respond to the following in your Journal:

1. Why is this so interesting?
2. How does this reflect some sort of behavior, trend, value?
3. How might this influence others who see/hear it?
4. What is a larger media message of the finding?

These questions will help you go beyond merely “reporting.” A short paragraph for each of the above questions will do. Each student is required to share at least TWO times during the semester. Presenting can be brief or lengthy as the class will either discuss your observation or move on. Note: I may randomly call on you so be prepared. Also, don't dominate these moments, even if you always have something to share. Let others in to the discussion.

These observations may work themselves into your longer papers, but the main goal is to keep our eyes and ears open and dissect the media we see daily in our culture.

Please keep all observations bound together and dated. Remember this is 15% of your grade, along with all Monday Journal writings.