

Introduction to Mass Communication
CMN 102 | Section 302 | Spring 2016
M/W, 1:00–2:30 PM, Lincoln Park Campus, Arts and Letters Hall, Rm 313

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Byrne Hall, Rm 466

COURSE DESCRIPTION

CMN 102: Introduction to Mass Communication is one the three core courses required of all College of Communication students. This course offers students a broad overview of the mass media (print, film, video, recorded music, radio, television and the internet) with a particular focus on how these media impact our everyday lives. Students will develop critical frameworks for understanding how power operates across the media spheres of production, circulation, representation and reception. Attention is placed on how the social categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age and nationality inform each of these media spheres. The course also considers how recent developments in digital technologies, media convergence and globalization have transformed our media culture.

LEARNING GOALS

This course will analyze the relationship of culture and media through the historic development of various communication industries—motion pictures, radio, television, print journalism, advertising, social media, and the videogame industry—and their impact on the public sphere, social norms, personal values, and a larger sphere of industries within our culture. Students will be challenged to think critically about mass media and its role in creating and reflecting popular culture. Students in this class will undertake a critical investigation of contemporary media and technological evolution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students should have demonstrated an ability to:

- Describe the relationship between culture, technological development, and mass media
- Discuss their own media use in relation to mass media’s social and technological history
- Criticize media texts in relation to representation, form, and production
- Analyze the power of mass media to make meaning, to persuade, and to shape culture

REQUIREMENT FULFILLMENT: Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry

This class fulfills the Social, Cultural, and Behavior Inquiry Liberal Studies requirement for graduation. Courses in the Social, Cultural and Behavioral Inquiry domain focus on the mutual impact of society and culture on individuals, and of individuals on society and culture. Particular attention is given to human relationships and behavior as they are influenced by social, economic and political institutions, spatial and geographical factors, and the events and social and cultural forces at play in the contemporary world. The domain emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge through the development of theory and empirical investigation of the contemporary world. Courses in the domain explore such particular issues as poverty and economic opportunity, the environment, nationalism, racism, individual alienation, gender differences, and the bases of conflict and consensus in complex, urban societies and in global relations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

- 1) Attendance and class participation, including participation in in-class small group work. (Unexcused absences at 2 or more class sessions will significantly lower your final grade; continued absences will be considered reason for FX grade designation.) (25% of final grade.)
- 2) Take-home reading response quizzes, of various formats (35% of final grade)
- 3) First written assignment, 900 words (15% of final grade)
- 4) Second written assignment, 1300 words (25% of final grade)

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	81-83%
C+	78-80%
C	75-77%
C-	72-74%
D+	69-71%
D	66-68%
F	0-65%

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: “Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.”

Plagiarism, as defined here, will be considered grounds for failure of a given assignment, and, given repeated offenses, failure of the course.

Consult your student handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the course instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact should be made **as early as possible in the quarter**. Before approaching the course instructor, make sure that you have previously contacted the:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

Baran, Stanley J. *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*. Updated Eighth Edition. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2015.

This textbook is available at the DePaul bookstore. Copies (including used copies) can also be purchased online, via sites such as Amazon.com and Abebooks.com. Used copies are a terrific way to spend money; however, **I HIGHLY advise against purchasing a copy of a prior edition.** Several of the assignments and reading response quizzes will refer to exact page numbers of the Updated Eighth Edition. If a student is using a previous version, it is *their responsibility* to check in and make sure that they are reading the correct material for the week's assignments.

Any other reading materials for the course will be made available online on D2L.

TERMS OF ENROLLMENT

1. You agree that this syllabus is a contract, and that you are abiding by its terms and policies (including grading).
2. You understand that any issues or problems you have with grading will be dealt with through the policies laid out in the DePaul Student Handbook.
3. The course instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus, given that 1) new versions are made readily available upon alteration, and 2) timely notification is given to students about any alterations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction

Monday, March 28: Introduction / What Is a Medium (Mass, or Otherwise)?

Readings: None. General introduction to the syllabus, course policies, and course goals

Wednesday, March 30:

NO CLASS MEETING DUE TO PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL CONFLICT

Week 2 – Media Literacy, Newspapers, and the Tasks of Journalism

Monday, April 4: What Is Media Literacy?

Readings: Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 1, “Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy”

Wednesday, April 6: Newspapers

Readings: Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 4, “Newspapers”

Week 3 – Ethics in Journalism, the First Amendment, and Free Speech in Entertainment

Monday, April 11: Journalism + Free Speech & Its Limitations

Readings: Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 14, “Media Freedom, Regulation, and Ethics” (selections)

Wednesday, April 13: From Journalism to Mass Media Entertainment

Readings: Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio US Supreme Court decision

Week 4 – Cinema, Media Literacy, and Self-Censorship**Monday, April 18: Introduction to Cinema****Readings:** Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 6, “Film”**Wednesday, April 20: Censorship, Literacy, and Artistry in Cinema****Readings:** Richard Maltby, “The Production Code and the Hays Office” (selections), *The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America*, “The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930”**Week 5 – Radio, Popular Music, and Introduction to Media Effects****Monday, April 25: Introduction to Radio****Readings:** Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 7, “Radio, Recording, and Popular Music”**Wednesday, April 27: Popular Music, Representation, and Media Effects****Readings:** Susan J. Douglas, “Why the Shirelles Mattered” (from *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*)**Week 6 – Television and Media Evolution****Monday, May 2: Introduction to Television****Readings:** Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 8, “Television, Cable, and Mobile Video”**View:** Selected television episodes**Wednesday, May 4: Internet Television and Technological Evolution****Readings:** Michael Curtin, Jennifer Holt, and Kevin Sanson, “Interview: Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer, Netflix” (from *Distribution Revolution: Conversations About the Digital Future of Film and Television*)**Week 7 – Effects, Continued ... and Advertising as Persuasion****Monday, May 9: Representation and Television Effects****Readings:** Herman Gray, “The Politics of Representation in Network Television” (from *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*)**Wednesday, May 11: Introduction to Advertising****Readings:** Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 12, “Advertising”**Friday, May 13****DUE, at 11:59 PM: First written assignment, 900 words****Week 8 – PR, from the Corporate to the Personal****Monday, May 16: Introduction to Public Relations****Readings:** Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Chapter 11, “Public Relations”**Wednesday, May 18: Personalizing PR in the Age of Social Media****Readings:** Jon Ronson, “God That Was Awesome” (from *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed*)**Week 9 – The Internet and Its Future / Making Meanings with Videogames****Monday, May 23: Internet Service Providers and Net Neutrality****Readings:** TBA. This will be a day of intense group work, and group members will be assigned different reading ahead of time to prepare for argumentation.

Wednesday, May 25: Video Games and Communication

Readings: Ian Bogost, selections from *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*

Week 10 – Closing Considerations

Monday, May 30: NO CLASS (MEMORIAL DAY)

Wednesday, June 1: Polarization and the Closing of Communication Channels

Readings: Julian Sanchez, “Epistemic Closure, Technology, and the End of Distance” (blog post), Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind” (*The Atlantic* article), Brian Grasso, “I’m a Duke Freshman. Here’s Why I Refused to Read ‘Fun Home’” (*The Washington Post* op-ed)

WEEK 11: DUE TUESDAY, JUNE 7TH – Second written assignment, 1300 words

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**Reading response quizzes**

Don’t let the name throw you: these aren’t “quizzes” in the sense of having limited time to complete them in-class. Rather, they are take-home assignments, regularly conducted as a way of ensuring engagement with the week’s reading. They will take multiple forms throughout the quarter—some will be a mix of short answer and longer-answer, others entirely based around one long answer question. Whatever their form, they will never ask you to write more than 250-400 words (the standard length I require for single long answer quizzes). At 35% of your grade, *these assignments should not be taken lightly*.

Written assignments

Students will be required to complete two longer-form written assignments, one 900 words in length and one 1300 words in length. Each written will take the form of an analysis of media personally consumed, in response to specific prompts. Students’ writing in these papers should engage with the reading materials of the course, applying methodologies studied in service of well-articulated ideas and well-crafted arguments. Papers will be graded on a rubric, with points assigned according to the **thoroughness of analysis, use of course terminology and/or conceptual frameworks, organization of argument, and style** within the paper. Papers should present clear theses, respond to each question asked by the prompt, and display basic competence in English-language composition.

Assignment lengths are given in **word counts**, rather than page counts. Assignments must **meet or exceed** the requested word count in order to qualify for full credit. If a reading from the course is directly cited or otherwise referenced, **correct citation must be adhered to**. Please refer to course policies on academic misconduct and/or University policies on plagiarism if you have any questions and concerns in this area. Since it is always better to be safe than not (and plagiarism is grounds for immediate failure of the assignment), you should feel free to email me if you have specific questions that are not addressed in either of those policies.

All papers are due electronically by the start of class on the day they are due. Preferred formats include .doc, .docx, .rtf., and posting online. PDFs are allowed, but discouraged, as they are more difficult to add marginalia to.