

INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION

CJN 255-A, Spring 2007
T/Th 2:30-3:45pm, Ridgeway 400
Office Hours: T/W 4:00-5:30pm
Office: Ridgeway 410

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the social role of mass media, focusing on how relationships between mass communications and the surrounding economic structure affect ideological processes in society. This course explores the social, political and historical contexts within which newspapers, radio, television and new media technologies were created and adopted. Throughout the semester students will develop a critical framework for understanding the influential role media play in shaping individuals, society and culture.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

As a 200-level survey course, the purpose of CJN 255 is to introduce students to basic concepts, key historical moments and contentions, common themes and trends, and contemporary intellectual thought about media and its influence on people and society. Specifically, students will learn

1. **Models** – various models for understanding mass communication systems
2. **History** – key moments in media history
3. **Structure** – how the media operate and are regulated
4. **Influence** – how to assess the influence of media on individuals, society and culture
5. **Meaning** – how audiences make sense of media
6. **Criticism** – to become critical (not cynical) consumers of media

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be recorded every class, but missed classes will not be factored into your final grade. However, class attendance is directly related to exam performance. In other words, if you show up regularly (and stay awake!), you do well on exams. If you don't show, you perform poorly on exams. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to attend class. I use many multimedia examples (television shows, music clips, films, etc.) to illustrate difficult concepts. I will not put these materials on reserve or lend them to absent students. Lectures constitute approximately 50% of exam questions (the other 50% from readings), so your success in this class depends on your presence. If you expect to be absent, please notify me as soon as possible. If feasible I will give you assignments ahead of time. I will not provide copies of my lecture notes. You should find a generous classmate to lend you their notes. All make-up exams will be held during the final exam period.

CHEATING & PLAGIARISM

From the Suffolk University Student Policy and Procedures Handbook:

Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and/or improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or research papers, and the use of a single essay or paper in more than one course, without the permission of the instructor, constitute unacceptable academic conduct. It is dishonest to buy, download, borrow or lend papers. It is unacceptable to make up or falsify data that are supposed to be collected from survey, experimentation or other means. Work that is represented as one's own should be one's own; if not, the source should be properly identified. This applies to lab reports, computer projects and group projects as well as to individual assignments.

A student who has been found to have violated this rule after a hearing by the Dean of Students or by the Joint Committee on Student Conduct, which hearing has been held at the option of the student, is subject to an automatic grade of "F" in the course and to suspension, enforced withdrawal, or expulsion from the University or appropriate lesser penalties if warranted by the circumstances.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Media & Culture, 5th Edition by Campbell, Martin & Fabos - available at the bookstore.
2. Course packet - these readings will be handed out during class.
3. Note-taking materials - spiral-bound notebook or loose leaf writing paper, and a pen or pencil.
4. One hour of news/day. Read the first section a reputable newspaper (*New York Times*, *Boston Globe*), listen to one hour of radio news (NPR), or watch one hour of TV news (CNN, NECN, national network news, or even *The Daily Show*) every day. Discussion of current events and the media are an essential component of this course. Intelligent participation in class discussion requires that you know what is going on in the world.

EXAMS

Exam 1	February 15
Exam 2	March 29
Exam 3	May 2

EXTRA CREDIT

Throughout the semester I will offer several opportunities to earn extra-credit. These optional assignments will generally involve reading additional material and writing short essays. Any extra-credit earned will be applied to your exam score, not to exceed 100%. I **will not** accept late extra credit assignments.

GRADING STRUCTURE

A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 or below