Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Languages, Cultures and Communication
Communication Studies Program
Introduction to Media Studies
COM 300.501, Fall 2018
Online Course

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Course Description: Students learn basic media literacy by developing conceptual tools to think critically about cinema, television, advertising, print journalism, the Internet, etc. The course focuses on the process of reading media texts from various perspectives to explore how the mass media shape and convey meaning.

Course Objectives:
This course examines cultural, political, and economic processes and structures that affect the ways in which meaning is produced, transmitted, received, and stored by individuals and society surrounded by media. The course lays a foundation for understanding the role of media in the social construction of reality.

Required readings:
All required readings are embedded in the course lectures on D2L.

How the course is conducted
This course is modular and conducted completely online. There are no face-to-face meetings for this course. The course timeline describes the time frame and activities required for course completion. Activities for each module are due by the ending date of that module.

Program Learning Outcomes
Theory Application: Students majoring in Communication Studies will apply the major theories in the field to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.
Higher Order Thinking: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

Student Learning Outcomes
a. Define the key terms, theories and concepts related to media studies;
b. Explain the economic, social, and political forces that shape media industries;
c. Describe the various ways that audiences use media in their lives;
d. Broadly trace the historical development of the major forms of media;
e. Explain contemporary issues that will affect the future of major forms of media;
f. Apply key theoretical approaches to historical and contemporary cases.
**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/). Once this has been completed, please schedule an appointment with me so we can work out specifics about the accommodations needed.

**Student Support**

Should you have technical questions regarding part of the course requirements, please visit the Online Orientation at [http://www.sfaonline.info/supportandtutorials-](http://www.sfaonline.info/supportandtutorials-). If you still need help, please contact SFA Online at 936.468.1919.
Participation
Course participation is important for the success of the class. Sharing your experience and perspective with the rest of the class improves the quality of class discussion and makes the class more meaningful and enjoyable for everyone. You are expected to complete all class activities and assigned reading.

**Late work will NOT be accepted. At the instructor's discretion, works may be accepted only for unavoidable and extenuating circumstances that can be backed-up by written evidence, and only within one week of missing the assignment.**

Grades are not negotiable. Every student is graded by the same rubric, so never ask me to raise a grade, as it would create an issue of discrimination. See grading criteria later in this syllabus.

Learning Assumptions and Expectations:
I have a number of assumptions about your participation in this course.

- It is my belief that what you as a student get out of this course depends upon what you put in it as well as the extent to which you are willing to **critically assess your own beliefs and assumptions.**
- **Respect** is one of the foundations of an environment conducive to learning. In this class, I have a commitment to creating a positive and respectful learning environment. I expect all of us to contribute to a productive and thought-provoking learning environment, valuing each of our strengths and differences. In discussions, everyone should be courteous and respectful of others; no rude, sexist, racist, or other disrespectful or offensive comments or behavior will be acceptable.
- I have **high standards** for excellent work. To earn good grades you will need to work hard and do excellent work. Hard work is necessary, but not sufficient to receive good grades.
- The assignments in this course are **designed to challenge** you and help you learn.
- **Discussions will build from the module lectures and included readings.** So it is necessary that you complete the readings by the date due. You will be responsible for the content at all times.
- I am committed to helping you to learn. **Please ask questions** and let me know how I can support you. However, also recognize that there is some inherent ambiguity in education - there is no one right way to do most things! I may not always give you a concrete definitive answer to your questions.

Instructor Responsibility
In this course, the instructor is responsible for:

- responding in a timely manner (within 24 – 48 hours) to student emails except weekends.
- responding in a timely manner (within a week) to quizzes and exams.
- responding in a timely manner (within a week) to essays and assignments or other written work submitted except holidays.
- responding in a timely manner (within a week) to discussion board posts.
Modules
Welcome: Introduction to the course
Module 1: Why Media Studies
Module 2: Media Industry: Economic, Political Influences
Module 3: News and Journalism
Module 4: Media Representation and Identities
Module 5: Media History
Module 6: Media Effects, Meaning and Influence

Course requirements – Maximum Points:
*All assignments are subject to revision, deletion, change as per the instructor’s discretion as and when needed.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Activities</th>
<th>Possible Points per activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board posts (6 total)</td>
<td>6 x 10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total = 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (4 total)</td>
<td>4 x 15 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total = 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>4 X 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total = 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers (2 total)</td>
<td>2 X 20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Project - Final Paper</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<td>Term Project – Peer Eval</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>2 X 40 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total = 80</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>350 points</td>
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Guide to writing discussion posts:

There are five things I look for in the discussions.

1. The discussion posts address the questions raised in that discussion adequately including relevant definitions and examples from the course perspective - Remember, whenever you are talking about an issue in the discussions, you are always doing so in the context of this course – intercultural communication.
2. Whether the student is responding to other students' posts in a meaningful manner - If the student simply agrees with another student, then that is not meaningful. The student needs to demonstrate understanding of the issue raised by fellow student and has to make clear WHY he/she agrees or disagrees with the post of fellow student. At least two responses other than your own post is required.
3. Whether the example given is creative, relevant and demonstrates outside research to the issue or tangential - Sometimes, students would give examples that are far-fetched and don't really address the question or issue being
discussed. You need to show that you are bringing in your own experiences and other researched material to the discussion.

4. **How does your post compare** with those of your group's posts - If you write a post that satisfies all the things I have mentioned in the first three points and yet falls far below the depth and quality of posts by members in your group, those members will earn higher grades than you would.

5. In order for your group members to respond to your posts, you need to **post in a timely manner** – **Your first post should be at least a day before the deadline.** If you post your first post on deadline day before noon, there will be a 20% deduction. If you post your first post on deadline day after noon, there will be a 40% deduction. If you respond to only one classmate, there will be a 20% deduction.

**Note:** If no one else posts, you'll be graded on the quality of your own post. Your grades will not suffer due to the non-participation of other group members. :)

Also, make sure you type the post in a .doc file and then copy and paste it on the discussion board. This practice protects you from losing your work in case of any technology failure.

**Success in Assignments and Essays:**

- **All papers must be double-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman**

As you go through the modules, the instructions for the assignments/reflections will be embedded in those modules. For example, in module 4, the reflection assignment instruction will have its own page. Then there will be a link to the reflection assignment.

For these assignments, you need to make sure that
- you read the instructions carefully,
- provide adequate definitions and explanations of the concepts you are writing about or identified, referencing the module lectures and your textbook, as well as outside research
- provide adequate examples of the concept and their relevance for the topic being discussed (remember that your examples must relate to communicative phenomenon), and,
- identify outside research about the topic. What are other scholars/experts talking about regarding this issue/concept?
- provide in-text citations and references in APA style format.

I also look for how your assignment compares to the standards set by your peers in the course.

Make sure you type the assignment/reflection in a .doc file and then upload that document to Dropbox. This practice protects you from losing your work in case of any technology failure.

**Papers and Final Paper Instructions can be found in D2L Modules.**
All references should be in APA 6th edition format.