Dad says I’ll understand when I grow up. He tells me that all the time now and I want to be big like him so that I can understand everything. It must be lovely to wake up in the morning and understand everything. p. 118

You’re here to learn … and do what you’re told. You’re not here to be asking questions. There are too many people wandering the world asking questions and that’s what has us in the state we’re in and if I find any boy in this class asking questions I won’t be responsible for what happens. Do you hear me …? p. 130


COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to provide an introduction to the mass media in modern societies. Different aspects of media will be covered, ranging from the political economy of the media, to the media as news and entertainment. We will analyze the language of the news and investigate the notion of media bias or the selection and presentation of news. We will pay particular attention to issues of media representation of gender, race, class, and nation state. Finally, we will look at the internet as a new medium, its potential for the democratization of communication in a context of globalization. In the course, we will take up a range of question: Who owns the media? Does ownership affect media content? Can advertisers influence media programs? Is there more to the selection of news than time, space, and cultural constraints? Does the internet weaken large media companies’ control over information and empower people with unlimited access to alternative information? In attempting to answer these questions we will take up broader concepts, such as hegemony and ideology, and the role of language in shaping people’s consciousness.

Learning outcomes

By the end of term, students are expected to be able to:

1. To work in teams
2. To make public presentations before an audience
3. To view things from different perspectives
4. To put things in historical perspective
5. To develop critical thinking
6. To design and carry out a research project
7. To write a research report
8. To be aware of the implications of different rhetorical strategies for writing a text
9. And of course … learn something about mass media

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course requires students:
1) to take an in-class exam;
2) to carry out a group project, present it in class, and write a group project report.

Deadlines and important dates

First day of classes: August 24
Labor Day: September 5
Term break: October 10-11
Thanksgiving Recess: November 23-25
Last day of classes: December 6

In-class exam: November 16

Group projects presentations:
1. Week 6, Outline of project due (One page)
2. Week 11, Outline of project due (Three pages)
3. Weeks 15-16: In-class final group project presentations
   (20 mins each)
4. Final research report due by email

Grading

Grading will be based on the following items:

1) in-class exam (45%). Students are expected to take an in-class mid-term exam made up of long-answer questions and based on the readings, lectures, in-class discussions, and documentaries.
2) participation (10%). Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and will be evaluated on their participation.
3) group research project (45%). Students are expected to work in groups (for a total of 10 groups of 4 students each) on a research project dealing with any of the topics covered in the course.

For the group project, each group will need to submit a statement where they outline the contributions made by each member of the group (e.g., Paula: attended 1 meeting out of 4; read and summarized 3 journal articles; Kevin: attended 4 meetings out of 4; coded the data collected; Tracy: attended 4 meetings out of 4; wrote the first draft; Alexandra: never attended meetings; edited the final draft) and the percentage of effort expended by each in relation to other members (e.g., Paula 90%, Kevin 100%, Tracy, 100%, Alexandra 20%). Individual grades for the group project will reflect individual effort.
Students who are not satisfied with a grade received are welcome to ask for re-grading for well-motivated reasons. The result of re-grading may be a higher grade, the same grade, or a lower grade.

Group research project

Students are expected to work in groups (consisting of approximately 6-7 students) on a project based on the comparative analysis of a set of media news, sitcoms, talk shows, social media; groups will make in-class presentations of their projects at the end of term and submit a final research report (10-15 double spaced pages maximum). Topics not covered in this course cannot be selected (e.g., media advertisements or movies CANNOT be selected!). The research report should be of the type described in the journal articles that you have to read for the course (e.g., on the language of news, on the representation of gender and race). These articles typically take a comparative approach (e.g., across countries, over time, across magazines). Comparison will give you the best way to find different patterns in your data. For instance, you could study how blacks and whites or men and women, or the US and its allies and enemies are represented in the media. You could look at the language and rhetorical strategies the media take in approaching an issue. Once you have zoomed in on a topic, you will need to draw a sample (e.g., of news items, of sitcoms) that you will then analyze using content analysis as a technique for collecting your data. For this, you will need to design a coding scheme, based on a set of different coding categories that allow you to extract information from your adverts and, perhaps, to test specific hypotheses that you have in mind. You can put these coding categories in an Excel spreadsheet and apply this scheme consistently to each advert in your sample (putting each advert in a new column). Once you have completed data collection, you can analyze the data with simple graphical tools (pie charts or bar charts, percentages). You will report your findings in a final research report. This report should have the basic structure of any of the journal articles assigned in the course: Introduction, Literature Review/Theory, Data and Methods, Empirical Results, Discussion, Conclusions. The Introduction contains a statement of the problem (why you have chosen a specific issue to study; why it is important to study it and what your contribution to knowledge is); the Literature Review/Theory discusses how the problems has been studied already in the literature (you can use Google Scholar to find references); you may conclude this section by setting up specific hypotheses; the Data and Methods section describes issues of sample selection, coding scheme design and coding categories; in the next section on Empirical Results you report your findings; in the Discussion section you discuss what your findings mean, particularly in light of your literature review; in the Conclusions you bring it all together telling the reader what you found. In discussing your findings and drawing your conclusions, please, make sure you use the concepts and tools learned from the readings and lectures.

Groups are expected to turn in two project descriptions on weeks 6 and 11 and in-class presentation on weeks 15 and 16.

1. **Week 6.** The first one-page document illustrates the project, briefly describing what the group will work on (e.g., media news, sitcoms) and what basic literature is available (a good research tool for this purpose is Google Scholar).
2. **Week 11.** The second three-page document goes more in-depth on the project. By this time, groups will have to have a concrete plan for the sample of material and coding scheme of data collection.
3. **Weeks 15-16.** At the end of term, groups are expected to make a PowerPoint presentation of their project, illustrating the overall project and its findings to the class.
Readings

Readings for the course come from books and journal articles or book chapters. All reading material has been placed on reserve.

Readings have been separated in the syllabus into Required Readings and Suggested Readings. Suggested readings are only meant to provide a minimal bibliography. For the purpose of your grade, you are not expected to read them (unless, of course, you are a glutton for punishment! Although … it is also true that the more you read, the more you know… and the better you would do in exams).

Required books


Honor code

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult the Emory website on the honor code.

For the group project, each group will need to submit a statement where they outline the contributions made by each member of the group (e.g., Paula: attended 1 meeting out of 4; read and summarized 3 journal articles; Kevin: attended 4 meetings out of 4; coded the data collected; Tracy: attended 4 meetings out of 4; wrote the first draft; Alexandra: never attended meetings; edited the final draft) and the percentage of effort expended by each in relation to other members (e.g., Paula 90%, Kevin 100%, Tracy, 100%, Alexandra 20%). Individual grades for the group project will reflect individual effort.
COURSE OUTLINE

1. Welcome! (week 1)

2. Media as business: The political economy of the media (weeks 1-3)
   a. Who owns the media?
   b. Globalization and the media

3. Media as news (weeks 4-6)
   a. Bad news?
   b. More bad news?
   c. The media and democracy

4. The language of the news (weeks 7-9)
   a. News as stories
   b. The structure of news
   c. Language and media bias

5. Television entertainment. More to it than laughter and tears? (weeks 10-11)
   a. Sitcoms
   b. Talk shows
   c. Gender and race in the media

6. New media: The Internet (weeks 12-14)
   a. The political dimensions of the Internet
   b. The Internet and the social

7. Group projects presentations (weeks 15-16)
August 24
Week 1
Welcome!

Introducing the course and the people in the course.

Weeks 1-3
1. Media as business: The political economy of the media

August 29-31
Week 2
2.a. Who owns the media?

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


September 5-7 September 5 Labor day!!!
Week 3
2.b. Globalization and the media

Required readings:

Suggested readings:


Weeks 4-6
4. Media as news

September 12-14
Week 4
4.a. Bad news?

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


September 19-21
**Week 5**

4.b. More bad news?

*Required readings:*


*Suggested readings:*


September 26-28

**Week 6**

**4.c. The media and democracy**

**Required readings:**


**Suggested readings:**


**Weeks 7-9**

**3. The language of the news**

October 3-5

**Week 7**

**3.a. News as stories**

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


October 10-12 **October 12 Term break!!!**

**Week 8**

3.b. The structure of news

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


October 17-19

**Week 9**

3.c. Language and media bias

Required readings:


Suggested readings:

Weeks 10-11
5. Television entertainment. More to it than laughter and tears?

October 24-26
Week 10
5.a Sitcoms and shows

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


Required readings:


Suggested readings:


November 7-9

**Week 12**

5.c. **Gender and race in the media**

**Required readings:***


**Suggested readings:***


Stuart Hall, Chas Chritcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. 1978. Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order. New York: Holmes & Meier.


**Documentary Color Adjustment.** 1991. Directed by Marlon Riggs (88 mins.)

**Weeks 13-14**

6. New media: The internet

November 14-16

**Week 13**

6.a. The political dimensions of the Internet

**Required readings:**


**Suggested readings:**


November 21-23 **Thanksgiving!!! November 23-25**

**Week 14**

6.b. The Internet and the social

*Required readings:*


*Suggested readings:*


November 28-30

**Week 15**

*Group projects presentations*

December 5 **Last Day of class!!!**

**Week 16**
Group projects presentations