Sociology of Mass Communication

XL M147/XL M176
Discipline: COMSTD
Reg# W3540
# Units: 4

Instructor: Richard D. Hendrickson, Ph.D.

Contact Information: By e-mail (newsprof@ucla.edu or newsprof@me.com) or by cell telephone at 323-806-1427 (texting supported).

Office Hours: Tuesdays, one hour before class (location TBA)

Dates: April 5, 2011, to June 21, 2011. Class Meetings: Tuesdays 7-10 p.m.

Course Description: This course offers a critical exploration – on both personal and objective levels – of the phenomenon conventionally labeled “mass communication.” Students examine a variety of major media institutions and their products, focusing on those organizations involved in the production of popular music and news. Topics include history and organization of major media institutions, social forces that shape production of mass media, news and entertainment, selected studies of media content and the effects of media on society.

Goals & Learning Objectives: By the end of the semester, students will be able to (1) understand the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts within which journalists and public relations practitioners work, (2) demonstrate competency in the gathering and critical analysis of information by searching primary and secondary sources, analyzing information and viewpoints of others, and writing critical essays and papers on the media.


Mass Media News: Each student is expected to be aware of articles in The New York Times (print or online) and elsewhere that refer to issues of mass communication. I will offer a few extra-credit pop quizzes on current events.
COURSE DOCUMENTS: Documents and links for each unit of this course will be available at https://public.me.com/newsprof. A password is required and access is limited to students enrolled in the class. (This course does not use the Blackboard web site.)

UCLA Extension Contact for this Course: Jenny Polutan, M.A., program representative, 310-825-1898.

Student Records: Students can access and update student records online by visiting: www.uclaextension.edu and clicking on My.Extension on the left navigation bar, selecting Student's Course Essentials, and following the directions to log in. (Student's Course Essentials lets you view your grades, request an official transcript, change credit status on a current course, obtain enrollment verification, update your personal information, and much more.)

Student Conduct: Academic honesty, expected of every student as a member of a university community, is essential to the process of education and to upholding high ethical standards. Dishonesty defrauds all those who depend on the integrity of university courses and is a serious offense covered by Section 41301, Title 5, of the California Administrative Code. Cheating, plagiarism or any other kind of unethical behavior will not be tolerated, will result in a no-makeup zero grade for the assignment and will be reported to the university for appropriate action.

All work submitted for evaluation in this course, including reading memos, response papers, tests and term papers, must represent only the work of the student unless indicated otherwise (such as in team projects). Material quoted from the work of others must be properly acknowledged; consult a good academic style manual if you aren’t sure how. Materials submitted to fulfill the requirements of another course may not be submitted to this course without prior approval of the instructor.

By enrolling in this course, all students are expected to have reviewed the Student Conduct and Sexual Harassment information provided in the current Quarterly catalog (print or online) under “General Information.”

Accommodations: If you need any accommodations for a disability, please contact the UCLA Extension Disabled Student Services at: (310) 825-7851 or via e-mail access@uclaextension.edu (and inform the instructor if it seems appropriate to do so).

Additional Information:

Writing requirements: I expect memos, comments, critiques, the term paper and any other work submitted for this course to follow the rules of the AP Stylebook. Your writing should be clear and concise. You should select the specific word that conveys the meaning you intend and spell it correctly. You should use proper English grammar and punctuation. If you are struggling with your writing, I recommend that you purchase and read “On Writing Well,” by William K. Zinsser, which is available in most book stores for $15 or less.
Keep a copy: Save all assignments until the end of the semester and make immediate backup copies of material created on computers.

Cell phones: Inevitability my cell phone will go off in class at some point during the semester, so I’m not going to get upset if yours does that. We all should remember to silence our phones at the beginning of each session and put them out of reach. On the other hand, I’m going to take a very dim view of “texting” during class, or any similar rude behavior. We’ll have at least one break that should be long enough for you to return calls.


Mass media news: Each student is expected to be aware of articles in The New York Times (print or online) and elsewhere that refer to issues of mass communication. I will offer a few extra-credit pop quizzes on current events.

AP Style: You are not required to have an AP Stylebook for this class and will not be graded on adherence to its rules, but you should be aware that such a book exists and, if you intend serious pursuit of a career in journalistic or public relations writing, you will eventually need to acquire one and use it routinely.

Grading and assignments:
Course grades will be based on the following:
Total Points for the Course: 400 (See details below)

Letter Grade Equivalent:
A  (90-100%) 360 or more points
B  (80-89%) 320-359 points
C  (70-79%) 280-319 points
D  (60-69%) 240-279 points
F  (≤59%) 239 or fewer points

All grades are final when filed by the instructor on the Final Grade Report.

Reading and “Monday memos:” Our Tuesday evening classes will include a lecture on the topic of the week, discussion of the material and a group activity. You are expected to have read the assigned textbook chapter in advance. For weeks 2 to 11, inclusive, you must write a “Monday memo,” identifying two points in the reading that you found most significant or interesting, two more things that surprised you, and two challenging media-related questions you have that could prompt class discussion. I would like these memos sent to me by e-mail by Monday evening, so I can see your questions in advance and offer answers when we discuss the topic during Tuesday’s class. The 10 reports will be worth up to 8 points each, or a total of 80 points (20% of the final grade).

Participation: Attendance will be taken for every class and the instructor will be observing individual participation in discussions and activities. For showing up and taking an active part you may earn up to 8 points for each of the 12 sessions, or 96 points (24% of the final grade).
Media criticism: Once during the first part of the semester (due April 26) and again during the second part (Units 6-12) you will be expected to select an article or an audio or video recording (such as something from “On The Media” or YouTube) and write a two-page (1.5-spaced 12 pt. Cambria or Times New Roman) critique of the credibility, balance and context of the report, explaining why you think it relevant to our study of mass communication. I will select the most interesting of these for students to present for the class. These reports are worth 20 points each, or a total of 40 points (10% of the final grade).

Term paper: Every student will identify a mass communication topic for individual research and write an 8-page (1.5-spaced 12 pt. Cambria or Times New Roman) report and analysis with citations and a list of “works cited.” I will suggest some possible topics, but you may also propose one. This project must be started no later than the third week and it is due on June 7. The paper will earn up to 44 points (11% of the final grade), including 4 for turning in – by the beginning of the third week -- an initial memo describing your topic and offering a preliminary bibliography, 30 points for the content and writing of the final paper, 5 points for meeting the deadline on that and 5 points for having a variety of properly cited sources in your final list of “sources cited.”

You must have at least eight sources, with no more than half of them from the Web. Examples of non-web sources include non-fiction books such as “The Elements of Journalism” by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel; newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor and New York Times; journalism reviews such as Columbia Journalism Review, Quill and American Journalism Review, scholarly journals such as Newspaper Research Journal and Journalism Quarterly, and popular magazines such as Mother Jones, The New Yorker and Rolling Stone. Do NOT use Wikipedia.

“Routine” tests: About every other week – five times in all -- you will take a multiple-choice and short-answer essay test in class on the material covered in the preceding weeks. These tests will be worth 20 points each, for a total of 100 points (25% of the final grade). [Sample multiple choice question: The process of “show, don’t tell” in journalistic writing means (a) using lots of photos with a story, (b) describing behaviors instead of stating conclusions, (c) not revealing the climax in a movie review, (d) preferring quotes to paraphrases.] Sample short-essay question: Based on our class discussion and notes that I provided on a recent lecture by Ariana Huffington, how would you expect the media to fit into our lives?

Final exam: Comprehensive final exam, worth 40 points (10% of the final grade).

Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>QUIZZES/EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1 INTRO April 5</td>
<td>COMM. THEORY, SOCIOLOGY AND JOURNALISM</td>
<td>COPELAND AND HATCHER 1</td>
<td>YOUR MEDIA USE (IN-CLASS WRITING AND DISCUSSION)</td>
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<td>WEEK 2 HISTORY AND EFFECTS April 12</td>
<td>HISTORY OF MEDIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY</td>
<td>C&amp;H 2 AND 19</td>
<td>MONDAY MEMO CH 2 &amp; 19 FIRST TEST</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Law and Politics</td>
<td>Freedom brings responsibility, oils democracy</td>
<td>C&amp;H 3 and 6</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Economics and News</td>
<td>Will the Internet mean the end of newspapers?</td>
<td>C&amp;H 4 and 5</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Books May 3 (No meeting, lecture on line)</td>
<td>E-books: the death of print?</td>
<td>C&amp;H 7</td>
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<td>May 10</td>
<td>Magazine types and trends</td>
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<td>C&amp;H 9</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Radio and Television May 17</td>
<td>Regulation and the role of ratings</td>
<td>C&amp;H 14 and 15</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Advertising and Public Relations May 24</td>
<td>Selling images to America, and crisis media relations</td>
<td>C&amp;H 10 and 11</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Movies May 31</td>
<td>Cultural impacts and exports</td>
<td>C&amp;H 12</td>
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<td>May 31</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Music June 7</td>
<td>Marketing and downloading “Lady Gaga”</td>
<td>C&amp;H 16</td>
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<td>June 14</td>
<td>Personal Media</td>
<td>New technology and mass media: Are we still “Bowling Alone?”</td>
<td>C&amp;H 10 and 11</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>June 14</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Media and Society June 21</td>
<td>Audiences and effects, summing up</td>
<td>C&amp;H 18 and 19</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
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It is estimated students will spend approximately 4-6 hours outside class each week completing class assignments, readings and studying for exams.

Course Syllabus Subject to Update by the Instructor
Last update 040111