

CO 02004 - SURVEY OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Dr. Michael C. Keith
Mahoney, L525
Office Hours: Weds. 6-6:30 PM (or by apmt)
Phone: 552-8837 email - keithm@bc.edu

Classes: Wednesday 6:30 PM

Location: Fulton 115

Purpose of the Course

This course is intended to examine the nature, function, and impact of mass communication in America. By mass communication we mean radio, television, newspapers, magazines, film, and the Internet. Each plays a significant role in our culture and society. In fact, for most of us, mass communication media help define and interpret our world. Is this necessarily a good thing? Are there negative implications of being a mass “mediated” society? Has the mass media system made the world a better place in which to live, or has it distorted reality and eroded traditional values to such an extent that we are on the verge of social and cultural calamity? By studying media we may come to understand how it affects us in ways both positive and negative. We will look at the history, technology, and cultural role of mass media with the objective of gaining a fuller appreciation of what it means to be a member of the so-called “information society” in an ever-shrinking “global village.” This course begins with the premise that, as citizens within a democracy and educated people, we must have the critical tools to understand and analyze the mass media.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class (see statement attached). Attendance will be taken and absences will impact your class participation grade. Repeated lateness to class will have the same effect. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out just what it is you have missed. There will be no make-up exams administered. Keep in mind that missing one evening class is the equivalent of missing three daytime classes. (see attached)

Plagiarism

Any form of plagiarism (quoting or paraphrasing without complete source attribution) will be punished in accordance with the ethical code of Boston College (see statement attached).

Electronic Devices

No Internet browsing, emailing, or texting in class. Laptops are only permitted for note taking. Be aware that the instructor may ask to see the notes of those taking them electronically. Please turnoff cellphones.

Grading Policy (see attached breakdown sheet for grading)

Grades will be determined in the following manner:

Class Participation.....	20%
Midterm Exam.....	25%
Term Paper.....	30%
Final Exam.....	25%

(Students are responsible for all assigned readings, lectures, and handouts, since it is from these that exam questions will be drawn.)

Class participation: Includes attendance, participation in class discussions, and weekly chapter assignments. Course participation criteria sheet attached. Please read it!

Term Paper: This is an 8-page paper focused on some aspect of the mass media--as discussed in class. A style sheet will be provided and additional information will follow. Please do not ask for an extension on the submission date of the paper. If it is not turned in when due, it will suffer grade loss.

Paper due: April 25

Required Text

John Vivian, *The Media of Mass Communication*, 10th edition (Allyn and Bacon, 2011).

Other readings (handouts) will be distributed in class during the course.

Suggested Reading

Frank Luntz, *Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear* (Hyperion, 2007).

Glenn Reynolds, *An Army of Davids: How Markets and Technology Empower Ordinary People and Beat Big Media* (Thomas Nelson, 2006).

Rpbert McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (The New Press, 1999).

Tom Rosenstiel, *We Interrupt This Newscast: How to Improve Local News and Win Ratings, Too* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Richard Fox and Richard Van Sickel, *Tabloid Justice: Criminal Justice in an Age of Media Frenzy* (Lynn Reiner, 2001)

Course Schedule

Week 1 -- Introduction/syllabus discussion.

Lecture: Mass Media Literacy
Read: Chapter 1
Assignment: Respond to question 4 at end of chapter.

Week 2 -- Lecture: Media Technology
Read: Chapter 2
Assignment: Respond to question 6.

Week 3 -- Lecture: Media Economics
Read: Chapter 3
Assignment: Respond to question 3.

Week 4 -- Lecture: Print Media
Read: Chapter 4
Assignment: Respond to question 4 & 8.

Week 5 -- Lecture: Sound Media
Read: Chapter 5
Assignment: Respond to question 1.

Week 6 -- Lecture: Sound Media continued
Read: Chapter 5
Video documentary
Assignment: Respond to question 5.

Week 7 -- MIDTERM EXAM (will occur around this time)

Week 8 -- Lecture: Motion Media
Read: Chapter 6
Video documentary
Assignment: Respond to question 9.

Week 9 -- Lecture: New Media Landscapes
Read: Chapter 7
Video Documentary
Assignment: Respond to question 5.

Week 10 -- Lecture: News
Read: Chapter 8
Assignment: Respond to question 6.

Week 11 -- Lecture: Advertising
Read: Chapter 11
Video documentary
Assignment: Respond to question 5.

Week 12 -- Lecture: Media Audiences and Effects
Read: Chapters 12 & 13
Assignment: Respond to question 3 in chapter 13.

Week 13 -- Lecture: Media Democracy & Globalization
Read: Chapters 14 & 15

Assignment: Respond to question 3 in chapter 15.

Week 14 -- Lecture: Mass Law & Ethics

Read: Chapters 16 & 17

Assignment: Exam Review

Week 15 – Final Examination

(Weekly assignment questions may change at the discretion of the instructor. Pertinent video and audio will occasionally be presented as part of the weekly classes.)

(THIS COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT AND CHANGE AS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE INSTRUCTOR. IT IS BEST TO REGARD THIS AS A TENTATIVE OUTLINE FOR THE COURSE. STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OF ANY ALTERATIONS TO THIS SCHEDULE. INFORMATION REGARDING THE COURSE WILL BE CONVEYED ON AN ONGOING BASIS, BUT ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN TO THE INSTRUCTOR.)

See attachments.