Instructor: Dr. Donald Fishman  
E-Mail: fishmand@bc.edu  
Office: St. Mary's Hall 441  
Office Hours: M/W 1:30-2:45 p.m.; immediately after class; and by appointment  
Telephone: 617-969-4190  
Class Times: Wednesdays 6:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.  
Room: Stokes 141N

Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual idea of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit University, it is rooted in a worldview that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and values systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

This course will examine the nature, scope, and function of mass communication in America. The focus of the course is on print, electronic, digital, and several hybrid media, and an attempt will be made to formulate interpretations about the impact of mass communication on various segments of American life. Among the topic considered are media economics, legal regulations of mass
media, and the political, social, and cultural forces that have shaped mass communication. Special emphasis also will be given to intellectual property, new technologies, convergence, and media and social change. The approach is multi-dimensional, drawing upon the literature of communication and the related arts and sciences.

**Course Objectives**

1. Students will be able to identify the role of mass communication in society at large and understand its historical and economic development.

2. Students will be able to understand the role of social media in altering several conventional protocols for distributing news and information.

3. Students will be able to demonstrate an ethical knowledge of and an understanding the legal context of emerging media as demonstrated in the readings and class discussions.

4. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of mass communication across cultural settings and will explore the impact of technology on the uses of both mainstream and emerging media.

**Computation of the Course Grade**

The approximate breakdown of points awarded during the course is as follows: Midterm Examination, forty percent; Final Examination thirty percent; Media Presentation; twenty percent; Class Participation, Ten percent. Excessive absences during the semester will be cause for automatically lowering the final grade.

**WCAS Grading System**

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00) B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1/33). D (1.00), D- (.67) passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00) course dropped without notifying office; W (.00) official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00),
A- (3.67) excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (0.00) failure.

Grade reports: All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (A BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Written Work

There will be a media presentation dealing with new technologies and the distribution of information in a changing society. Students will submit a report based upon the project presented in class.

Text/Readings (Required)

Each student should have a copy of the following book: Donald A. Fishman, Readings in Mass Communication (BC Press, 2015) and Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin and Bettina Fabos, Media Essentials, A Brief Introduction, 2nd edition (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2013). Reading assignments should be completed on or before the dates listed on the last page of the syllabus, and students should be prepared to discuss intelligently the materials they have read.

Examinations

There will be two examinations in this course: a Midterm Examination and a Final Examination. The examinations will include objective questions, identification questions, and essay questions. A more precise description of each examination will be presented during an in-class prep session that will be held prior to each examination. There also will be a prep sheet distributed prior to each examination that contains sample questions.
Scholarship/Academic Integrity

It is expected that all students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes but is not necessarily limited to cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. All such cases will be referred to the Dean of WCAS for disciplinary action. Cases of plagiarism will lead to an automatic failure in the course.

Disability Statement

Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Connors Family Learning Center office about accommodations for this course. Telephone appointments are available as needed. Appointments can be made by calling 617-552-8903. You may also make an appointment in person. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she will be responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties, and corrective are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, students should consider withdrawing from class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of different backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult faculty
members promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements that are missed due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

**Deadlines**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.

**Course Schedule**

January 14: No Reading Due

- Lecture on Emergence of Mass Communication

January 21:

Fishman/Stigwood
Fishman/Walt Disney
Fishman/Alex Haley

January 21:

Fishman/ET; George Harrison
Fishman/Columbia Pictures v. Redd Horne
Fishman/Sony v. Universal Studios
Fishman, ASCAP Readings
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Fishman/Werlin v. Reader's Digest</td>
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<td>Fishman/Zacchini v. Scripps</td>
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<td>Fishman/Presley v. Russen</td>
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<td>Fishman/Vincent Canby, &quot;Colorization is Defacing Black-and-White Films Classics&quot;</td>
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<td>Fishman/Deborah Bouchoux, Foundations of Copyright</td>
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<td>February 4</td>
<td>Fishman/Sellers v. ABC</td>
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<td>Fishman/Bette Midler v. Ford Motor Company</td>
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<td>Fishman/Basic Books v. Kinko's</td>
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<td>Fishman/Diamond v. Chakrabarty</td>
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<td>Fishman/Quality Inn v. McDonald's</td>
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<td>Fishman/Whose Bright Idea</td>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Fishman/William Fisher, New Technologies</td>
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<td>Fishman/Los Angeles Times v. Free Republic</td>
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<td>Fishman/Deborah Bouchoux, Foundations of Trademark</td>
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<td>February 18</td>
<td>Record Industry</td>
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<td>Campbell, 127-159</td>
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<td>Fishman/Rich Gordon, Meaning of Convergence</td>
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<td>Fishman, &quot;Five Years from Now--No CD Stores&quot;</td>
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<td>February 25</td>
<td>Books and Magazines:</td>
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<td>Campbell, 33-59; 95-121</td>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>No Class: Spring Vacation</td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
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March 18: Midterm Examination

March 25: Film Industry and Radio:
Campbell, 193-223
Campbell, 161-191

April 1: Television and Advertising
Campbell, 225-261
Campbell, 321-353

April 8: First Amendment in a Digital Age
Campbell, 415-441

April 15: Project Explained; Internet and Society

April 22: No Class: Instructor at the Eastern Communication Association Convention

April 29: Media Presentations

May 6: Final Examination