

Objective: This class is an examination of the interplay of media and of society. By the end of the class, you should have an understanding of issues related to the media's place and role in society, and should be able to critically look at media and your own consumption of it.

Readings: The following texts will be used in this class. They have been ordered at the University bookstore and may be bought there, or through any online dealers.

- Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture, 2nd ed. John Storey. 2003, The University of Georgia Press.
- Media and Society. Arthur A. Berger, 2003, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Channels of Desire: Mass Images and the Shaping of American Consciousness. S. Ewen & E. Ewen, 2000, University of Minnesota Press.

The readings for this class are very important. You need to do them all and keep up with them. Though I will usually try to hit on the most important elements of the texts in lectures and will always answer questions, I prefer to spend class time in discussion and doing more interactive projects than lecturing. The readings can be, at times, boring and difficult. It is recommended that you keep a dictionary and/or Google handy for some of the terminology or language that may be unfamiliar to you. Furthermore, there will be many references in the reading to various theorists or schools of thought (such as Marxism or Leaviism); you will not be held accountable for names and you are not expected to be familiar with the schools discussed; focus your attention on things that are more straightforward.

Homework: Homework is due the day specified, no exceptions. All written homework must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman or Courier font, printed in black. Assignments must be written in complete sentences. **All homework must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins.** If homework turned in does not meet these standards *it will not be accepted. Homework is not accepted via email except under extenuating circumstances and a hard-copy must be turned in at some time.*

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when you create the impression that something you present for a grade was produced by you when it wasn't. This happens when you create the impression that you read something you didn't, had an idea that wasn't yours, produced text that someone else wrote. Even if you somehow cite the source, but still create that false impression, it's plagiarism. Penalties will range from a failing grade on the assignment if any of it is plagiarized, to a failing grade in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the University if an entire assignment is a plagiarism. If you are unsure if something is plagiarism, play it safe and cite your source and/or ask questions of me. If you are using someone else's words or ideas because you think they are effective for your purposes, you need to cite the source clearly and every time you use that person's, or others', quotes or ideas; if you fail to do so, it will be considered plagiarism. **I have a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism.**

Grades: Your grades will be based on the following:

Class Participation: 20%

I will randomly call on 4 people each day that reading was due; one person will be asked to summarize the reading for the class, one person will be asked to list key points, and two people will be expected to have related questions or discussion topics for the class. Others may participate at will. If you are prepared, your participation grade will be good. Attendance is also part of class participation; if you have 3 or more unexcused absences, your participation grade will decrease by 2 points per absence. Two unexcused late arrivals count as an absence

Unit Tests: 30%

In lieu of major midterm & final exams, we will have a short test at the end of each topic area. This means there will be 12 short tests. They will be comprised of 10 multiple-choice questions and a short answer question.

Homework: 20%

Appropriate homework assignments will be given throughout the semester; these may include 1-2 page papers, questions to answer, tasks to complete, or small projects to conduct (with in-class time provided). Short homework assignments are typically graded on an A, B, C basis and longer ones are given full marks.

Term Paper: 30%

There will be one major paper for this class. It is due no later than the last day of class, but may be turned in anytime after April 12. You will be asked to tackle a media issue of your choice (with approval), to review and summarize literature on the topic, and to offer your own opinions based on the literature and your own experience or observations. More details will be provided about this paper under a separate cover in the first couple weeks of class.

Your final grade for the course will be the weighted average of the grades you earn in these areas.

Numeric grades are converted to letter grades by the following breakdown:

100-93: A	92-89: A-	88-85: B+	84-81: B	80-77: B-	76-73: C+
72-69: C	68-66: C-	65-62: D+	61-59: D	58-56: D-	55-0: E

Grade Changes: If you ever are unsatisfied with the grade you get back on an assignment and feel that I perhaps erred or missed something when grading it, you may submit the assignment for reconsideration. To do this, you must type up to a 1-page explanation and description of why you believe the grade you received is not the grade you earned. Be aware, however, that in reconsidering the grade I may find that I was too hasty or too lenient and gave you a grade that was too high and ultimately decide to lower the original mark, so be sure you are confident in the validity of your assessment.

Final grades cannot, by University policy, be reconsidered after they are submitted to the registrar, unless you believe an *error* was made in the calculation. At the end of the semester, I will schedule a time when interested persons can come in to see me, find out the grades on the last assignment(s), and review grades from the semester. This time will coincide with the University's final exam schedule for our class (though there is no final) to ensure that you have no course conflicts with the hours I have designated.

NO GRADES WILL BE EMAILED; DO NOT ASK ME FOR THEM. If you want to see your final mark before the college releases them, or if you want to know how your mark was calculated, *you must come in at the designated time* – NO EXCEPTIONS. (I am as eager to start vacation at the end of the semester as you, and am not typically available to review grades with you if you choose to not come in when I am available.) After that time, no reconsideration of grades will, or can be, made – unless, again, a mistake was made in calculation.

Attendance: Attendance in class is necessary. Attendance will be taken and it is expected that you will be in class on a regular basis and *on time*. If an emergency takes you out of class for an extended period of time (1 week or more), you are required to contact me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements for you to stay current on the work. Punctuality is also necessary. I set my watch to the campus Bell Tower and I start class exactly on time; at 2:15 you are expected to be in your seat ready to begin. I will not tolerate chronic tardiness or students not ready to work when class begins. Also, I ask that when I take attendance, you respond to your name verbally and with wave or raised hand; I regret that I may not be able to learn everyone's names this semester and this assures that I do not miss you in class.

Excusable absences include: athletic responsibilities – with proper notification and documentation, illness that prevents you from getting to class – with medical documentation, family emergencies (such as deaths, parental illness) – with proper documentation.

Punctual attendance for exams absolutely mandatory!!! With the exception of extreme emergencies, failure to show up for an exam will result in an automatic "E" (fail) on the test. A late arrival will result in a deduction of your grade by 1 point for every minute you are late. If you do have an emergency, it is expected that you will provide adequate documentation as to your necessary absence or late arrival.

WebCT: This course will have a home on WebCT. Materials you will find on the WebCT site include, a copy of the syllabus, the course calendar, homework assignments, information about exams, and Web site URLs that you may need to use in the course. Generally, lecture and discussion notes will not be posted as WebCT is not a substitute for class attendance (sorry).

Cancellations: In the case of a class cancellation, you will find any necessary information on the WebCT – such as lecture notes and assignments. If there is a case of bad weather that does not close the campus, please check the WebCT for notices that I have cancelled this class; I live 25 miles to the northwest of the campus on a twisty country road in the hills, so I may find it necessary to cancel class in inclement weather. In the case of a cancelled class, I will post the cancellation notice no later than 1 hour before class time.

Class Etiquette: Cell phones, beepers, and alarm watches **MUST** be turned off before coming into class (unless you can provide proof of a medical reason that warrants their use). These are distracting to me and to your fellow classmates. If I hear one of these devices go off during class, you will be asked to leave class. If I see you using one for games, texting, etc. I will confiscate the device and hold it until class is over. If you are guilty of this crime 2 or more times, it will impact your class participation grade

Finally, I ask you to be civil and polite to me and to your fellow classmates. Rudeness and other displays of a bad attitude will not be productive for the class or for me and may ultimately be counterproductive for you.

Contacting Me: I will hold regular office hours during which you can come in and discuss any concerns with the class you may have. If you *absolutely cannot* make my scheduled office hours, I will make an appointment with you at a time that is convenient for both of us. Coming in to see me is the BEST way of discussing whatever class concerns or questions you may have.

I can be reached by phone at the time of my office hours, and voice mail can be left when I am not there, however be aware that I do not check the voice-mail frequently.

I can also be reached by email, but I ask you to follow a few simple steps if you contact me this way. (Please don't leave messages for me on WebCT as I may not get them in a timely manner.)

- 1) Identify yourself by first and last name. I have no way of knowing who *hotnsexy@yahoo.com*, *nakedcoed@aol.com*.
- 2) Put COM378 in the subject line so that I do not mistake an email from *hotjox@hotmail.com* as SPAM and delete it. (If I do not see COM378 in the subject line, your email may not be read.)
- 3) Use good grammar and punctuation, and write in complete sentences. I'm not hip to all computer shorthand, and using it too often becomes a bad habit (I've seen too many people spell "you" as "u" on papers and exams.

-Complaints will not be dealt with over email because there is too much room for misunderstandings that, for your sake and mine, I would like to avoid. Please come in and see me personally with any problems.

Concerns: I am always ready and willing to help you through any problems you may be having in the class. If you are having trouble keeping up, if you want help studying for tests, if you want me to look at drafts of your term paper, don't like my teaching style, or if you are finding some concepts difficult to understand – PLEASE SEE ME! I am very glad to help you through or discuss any problem and would prefer that you spoke to me before things got out of hand and the problem became worse.

I want this class to be both productive and fun. I can't achieve this without your full cooperation. I want to see everyone do well. Again, I need your cooperation. I can't guarantee that you'll like everything about the class or about me, but by following the guidelines of the syllabus and the calendar, I can make the class a little less painful for you. Thanks. I hope you have a great semester.

Spring 2005, Media & Culture Calendar

All readings are due on the day noted, unless otherwise discussed in class. It is your responsibility to keep track of the calendar and to keep up on the assigned work. Changes may be made to the calendar or readings as the semester progresses, but only if so stated in class.

1/20 syllabus, introductions, ice breakers

Introduction: This is an introduction to the ideas of society, media, and the goals of cultural studies, & of this class.

1/25 Berger 1-31

Audience: We will discuss who an audience is, what it looks like, what it thinks, what it does, and how media impacts audience members as individuals and as members of society.

1/27 Berger 53-73

2/1 Berger 75-97

2/3 Storey 139-148 HW1

Society: This section will introduce you to the concept of “society” and the interplay between society and the media.

2/8 Berger 117-133, 171-183;

2/10 Storey 152-164 SIMONE

Concerns: This topic area is a look at issues of representation in the media and concerns over depictions of violence (and other “deviant” behavior) in media texts.

2/15 Violence: Berger 135-142, 145-149 *Mortal Kombat*

2/17 Gender: Berger 161-164, 191-195; Ethnicity: Berger 199-201

Roger Rabbit, Dumbo, Peter Pan, Aladdin

MID WINTER BREAK

Ownership: A look at who owns America’s media sources and outlets, FCC regulations, and the concerns over ownership and media quality.

2/24 Berger 185-191, 197-199; *The Late Shift*

3/1 no reading *The Late Shift* HW2

Journalism, Books, & Periodicals: This topic area will deal with the role of print in society & its development through history, issues relating to journalistic objectivity and ethics, special interest periodicals, tabloid journalism, and comics.

3/3 Ewen & Ewen ch. 1(?) *headlines*

3/8 *Snowday*

3/10 Berger 142-145, 155-157, 159-160 *satire, The Anchorman*

3/15 Storey 87-109 *tabloids & Magazines – bring your favorite magazine, if available for game?*

Film, Television, & Visuals: We will examine the role of TV & movies in society, the messages they convey, how they are used & the effects they have on audiences. Discussion will also focus on aspects of camera angles, lighting, and visual composition.

3/17 Berger 33-51, 157-159
SPRING BREAK

3/24 Storey 9-34
3/29 Storey 72-86

Advertising: This topic looks at the impact of advertising on youth, on general consumption, and on American society and values.

3/31 Berger 164-169; Storey 130-139,148-150;
Merchants of Cool, Hype!
4/5 Ewen & Ewen ch. 2

Music & Radio: Here we will take a brief look at the role of the recording industry in society and media enterprises.

4/7 Storey 110-129

NMTs: We will discuss the role and uses of new media technologies, from the Internet to cell phones. Students will be asked to engage in several hands-on projects, both as participants and as researchers.

4/12 Berger 99-115
4/14 projects
4/19 projects ?????

Clothing: The clothes we wear and the hairstyles we choose... displays of individuality or conspicuous consumption? With brand name labels, we often become walking billboards. This section will look at the messages that are mediated through clothing.

4/21 Ewen & Ewen ch 4.
4/26

Wrap Up: Time to be used as needed.
4/28

5/3 Last day. Term papers due.

Statement of Understanding & Agreement:

I, _____, affirm that I have read and reviewed the syllabus. I
(first & last name)

understand the following components of the syllabus (check all that apply):

- What will be expected of me in this class.
- What the class is about.
- How my grade is computed.
- I am responsible for keeping track of the class calendar and getting my work done on time.
- Readings are important and I need to do them in a timely manner.
- Homework needs to be typed.
- Attendance in class is expected and a lot of absences or late arrivals could lower my grade.
- I can seek help from Ms. Knopf at any time.
- If I send an email to Ms. Knopf, I need to tell her my name & put COM378 in the subject line.
- I may ask for a grade change, but only in writing and with justification.
- My grades will not be emailed to me; I need to get them in person.
- Electronic devices need to be turned off when I walk into the classroom.

If I have any questions or concerns about the policies expressed in the syllabus, I will tell Ms. Knopf now: _____

Furthermore, by signing and returning this document I _____
(first name)

am acknowledging that I am now responsible for following class procedures and if I fail to do so, it may negatively impact my grade.

Signature

Date

Email Address