

Department: COMM

Course No.: 231W

Credits: 3

Title: Media Literacy and Criticism

Contact: ROSS BUCK

WQ: W

Catalog copy: COMM 2310/2310W (231/231w) - Media Literacy and Criticism. Either Semester. Prerequisite: COMM 1000; ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 3800. Open to sophomores or higher. Recommended preparation: COMM 1300, 3400, 3600.

History, analysis and evaluation of technique, content and aesthetic effect of media messages. Cultural, political, economic, and institutional factors that help define the grammar of popular mass media content; social scientific perspectives addressing how audiences learn to comprehend media content including efforts to promote media literacy.

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Course Information: Goals: To support high quality writing in a critical area in the communication field. To encourage critical skills in writing, thinking, consuming the mass media. Students work on two substantial writing assignments. They work on these papers in increments — abstract, outline, introduction, body, conclusion, and are guided through the process. It is the objective of the course to heighten critical awareness about mass media creation and media usage, through writing and discussion.

Requirements: Under guidance students chose specific topics. Students work on sections of the papers, which they work on under guidance. They draft, re-draft, polish and re-polish their sections. There are two formal rounds for each paper, where students formally turn in papers. On the second formal round, students receive a letter grade on their work.

Themes: media history, what is media literacy, the role of the critical audience, the rights of special audiences such as children, elderly, the unsuspecting public, social science theories of media consequences and effects, critically using entertainment, critical eyes on news.

W Criteria: 1. Substantial writing assignments (total 16 pages, revised and edited) to promote learning about what media literacy is and how to better critique media. For example, the first writing assignment is an 8 page survey of literature related to media literacy and criticism. This assignment asks students to understand and synthesize research articles and to present their survey of literature (lit. review) in an organized, cohesive, stylized social science essay. The

second writing assignment of 8 pages requires students to integrate literature findings in the context of a position paper, addressing an approved topic. Both assignments push the students to comprehend the debates, key areas, and cogent research findings in this area of communication. They will need to read, think, reflect, make connections between concepts and theories. Assignments are submitted twice.

2. Writing Instruction will entail commentary on drafts related to paragraph development, cohesiveness among paragraphs, and other elements, which are needed for successful writing. Students will be encouraged to improve lines of argument. Individual conferences will further elaborate on commentary on drafts, and extend formal instruction. Formal instruction will occur through lecture and question and answer periods.

3. Students have the opportunity to revise their papers twice, formally. However, they will work with instructor on several sections of their drafts during the semester. Instructor works with student to incorporate suggestions improve their writing.

4. F clause--The syllabus will state that the students MUST PASS THE W component of the course in order to pass the class.

Role of Grad Students: If the course is not taught by a faculty member as part of a rotation, the course will be taught by a supervised doctoral student. The student will participate in relevant W course training and instruction for graduate students. The student will be supervised by a faculty member who will direct the preparation of the syllabus and the course content. The student will receive periodic visits in the classroom and will undergo scrutiny by way of checking the grad student's evaluations of writing, and examining course evaluations.