Introduction to Media Studies
E59.0001

Course Description
This course introduces students of communication studies and journalism to the themes, issues and theoretical debates central to the modern study of mediated forms of communication. It examines the factors that influence the media and, in turn, examines the influence of media on attitudes, values and behaviors, both individual and social. Students will be expected to develop an analytical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of various media theories and to arrive at some thoughtful conclusions regarding their own theoretical preferences. A simple question guides our inquiry: what does it mean to say that we live in the age of media?

Required Texts

Reading Kit: E59.001: Introduction to Media Studies:: Professors Bai & Magder
Advanced Copy Center, 522 LaGuardia Place

Blackboard: see Course Documents
as indicated in syllabus and periodic course updates

Assignments (Details to follow)
- Quizzes: Consisting of multiple choice, true/false, short answers, and short essays
- Essay: One (1) 5-6 page (1,500 - 1,800 word) paper on assigned topic and readings
- Participation: Based upon your attendance, as well as consistent and productive contributions in tutorials

Grading
- In-class Quizzes (3 @ 20% each) 60% (see class schedule for dates)
- Essay 25% (due date: November 15)
- Tutorial Participation 15%

Evaluation Criteria
A = Excellent
This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights and well-reasoned analysis. “A” work includes skillful use of source materials and illuminating examples and illustrations. “A” work is fluent, thorough and shows some creative flair.

B = Good
This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presenting a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source material, along with examples and illustrations, are used appropriately. “B” work is reasonable, clear, appropriate and complete.

C = Adequate/Fair
This work demonstrates a basic understanding of course material but remains incomplete, superficial or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Source material may be used inadequately or somewhat inappropriately. The work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations and may be hard to follow or vague.

**D = Unsatisfactory**
This work demonstrates a serious lack of understanding and fails to demonstrate the most rudimentary elements of the course assignment. Sources may be used inappropriately or not at all. The work may be inarticulate or extremely difficult to read.

Plus (+) or minus (-) grades indicate your range with the aforementioned grades.

**Late Assignments**
Late assignments are subject to a penalty equivalent to five (5) percent for each day after the due date. Generally, this means that a one-day late assignment awarded an A will be given an A-, and so on. Teaching assistants may waive this penalty at their discretion based upon individual circumstances.

**Grade Appeals**
Contact your teaching assistant with a short note explaining your concerns about the grade in question. The teaching assistant will set up a meeting to discuss your concerns. If you are still unsatisfied with your grade, follow the same procedure with the professor.

**Academic Dishonesty And Plagiarism**
"Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do…. You violate the principle when you: cheat on an exam; submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home that calls for independent work; or plagiarize. Plagiarism, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy form you. " (See School of Education Bulletin, 2006/8, p. 172)

**Style Manuals**
Students are strongly urged to purchase at least one style manual. A good style manual will help to improve the organization and composition of your written work and, used properly, should help ensure proper citation of sources. Here are two recommendations:

### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04 September</td>
<td>Greetings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>06 - 11 September</strong></td>
<td><strong>What Are We Studying? Communication, Media and Culture</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Media/Society.</em> Chapter 1 &amp; 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Key terms:</strong> media; communication; feedback; interpersonal communication; social construction of reality; socialization; social relations; structure; agency; the American “conversation ideal”; sensory integration; primary and secondary communicative processes; the information environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18 - 20 – 25 - 27 September</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Media Industry: Economics, Organization and Culture</strong></td>
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<td><em>Media/Society.</em> Chapter 2</td>
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<td><strong>Key terms:</strong> universal communication; concentration of ownership; conglomeration; vertical and horizontal integration; synergy; homogenization hypothesis; content diversity; product placement; buying mood; audience ratings and shares; formats</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>02 – 04 October</strong></td>
<td><strong>Free Speech, Diversity, and the Public Interest</strong></td>
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<td><em>Media/Society.</em> Chapter 3</td>
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<td><strong>Key terms:</strong> The First Amendment; non-interference principle; multiplicity of voices principle; content ratings and warnings; Federal Communications Commission; regulation of ownership and content; public interest; national interest; indecency; Sidle Panel Report</td>
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<td><strong>09 October</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quiz #1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>11 – 16 - 18 October</strong></td>
<td><strong>It’s a Living: Routines and Conventions - all the news that fits, we print</strong></td>
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<td><em>Media/Society.</em> Chapter 4 &amp; 7 (pp.231–39 and 242-4).</td>
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**It’s a Living: Routines and Conventions - all the news that fits, we print, cont’d**

*Key terms:* organizational and professional conventions; socialization; newsworthy; bias and objectivity; gatekeeper; sources; routine events, accidents and scandals; habitual, disruptive and direct access; hard vs. soft-news; agenda-setting; foreign news and the domestication of selection; convergence and the new newsroom

23 – 25

**23 – 25**

**October**

**Media and Identity: Race & Ethnicity**

*Media/Society*, chapter 6

Video: *Color Adjustments: Blacks in Prime-Time* (in-class)


*Key terms:* stereotypes; race; ‘modern’ racism; assimilationism; pluralism; multiculturalism

30

**30**

**October**

**Media-Made Reality: Re-Presenting the World**

*Media/Society*, chapter 5


*Key terms:* ideology; normalization; representation; genres; denotation and connotation; myth; signifiers, signified & signs; icons

01

**01**

**November**

**Media and Identity: Class and Gender**

*Media/Society*, chapter 6 (pp. 212 – 216)


*Key terms:* gender; class; symbolic annihilation; reflection hypothesis; ethnicity

06

**Quiz # 2**

08 – 13

**November**

**Media Effects Mass Culture, Mass Panic, and Mass Persuasion**

*Media/Society*, chapter 7, especially pp. 240– 47


*Key terms:* hypodermic model and magic bullet theory; mass society theory; selective influence perspective; propaganda; intervening variables and the media effects; critical ability
Limited Effects?

Key terms: two-step flow hypothesis; opinion leaders; minimal or limited effects theory; paradigms and paradigm shifts; status-conferral; enforcement of norms; narcotizing dysfunction; monopolization; canalization and supplementation

The Persistence of Violence – as content and social issue

Key terms: cultivation analysis; Violence Index; Mean World Syndrome

Active Audiences – Reception and Pleasure

Key terms: active audience; interpretation; polysemy; encoding-decoding model; social context of media use; interpretive resistance and textual pleasure; ceremonial or ritualistic uses of media

Globalization and New Media: Issues and Ethics
John Tomlinson. “Homogenisation & Globalisation,” History of European Ideas. 1999 (kit)

Key terms: globalization; cultural and media imperialism; global village; cultural homogenization and cultural autonomy; WSIS

Quiz #3

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