

School for New Learning

DePaul University

Final Course Syllabus: HC 207 “MediaSmart—Understanding and Creating Media”

O’Hare Campus—Summer 2009

1. General Information

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O’Hare Campus

Mondays, June 15 – August 21, 2009

4 Credit Hours

2. Course Description and Faculty Biographical Sketch

This course will focus on understanding the business of media and how corporations, politicians and government use mainstream media to reach their audiences and advance their agendas. The course will explore who has power in America and how that power is expressed in media ownership and content. The class will also assess the impact of media on society, culture and the individual, as well as how media shapes the values and beliefs of people and the country as a whole. The class will examine the role media plays in a democracy and whether the current media system supports the kind of media required to keep an active and healthy democracy alive.

We will learn how to analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of media channels (television, newspapers, magazines, internet, radio, etc.) and formats (news, entertainment, advertising, etc.). We will also look at how mainstream media represents gender, race, social class and sexual orientation. We will read books and articles; view television programming; examine newspaper and magazine articles; analyze websites. Students will “deconstruct” media in order to better understand how messages are constructed and designed to influence their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own media. The course is designed as an interactive learning experience, where students and the instructor learn from one another. Students will leave the course being more savvy about American media, as well as how to create media for their business or personal use.

Dorothy Balabanos is a Visiting Faculty member at SNL. She is President of DJB Communications Group, Inc., a communications strategy and planning firm. She has spent more than 25 years in communications, advertising and media. Dorothy has a Masters Degree in Advertising from the Medill School of Journalism and a B.A. Degree in English from Northwestern University. A lifelong learner herself, she recently completed her thesis, in order to complete her Master’s Degree in Liberal Studies at DePaul University.

3. Competencies

- FX Understands and can demonstrate how media is used as a tool of business, democracy, politics and culture building. *This course will explore the tug of war between the use of media as a tool for a democratic society and its use as a business, marketing and political tool. Students will evaluate media content in order to determine for themselves which goal media serves most often.*
- H-4: Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the United States. *We’ll examine which groups have the power and the voice in American media, which don’t and the reasons why. We’ll determine how this lack of a real voice for certain groups impacts the progress they can make.*

H2G Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society. *The course explores how mass media influences people's values, beliefs and behaviors. Students will examine how media shapes our cultural identity, as well as our individual sense of self, what we value and what we aspire to.*

A-2-X: Can create an original work of art, explore its relationship to artistic form and reflect on the creative process. *This course examines the creative process and how creativity is used to create media. Students will learn to create their own media in a channel of their choice.*

4. Learning Experience

This course is designed as an interactive and collaborative learning experience, where students and the instructor learn from one another. Active dialog will center around the readings, as well as from viewing television programming, examining newspaper and magazine articles and analyzing web sites. Group and class discussions will occur around both the media's content and advertising; students will learn how to deconstruct messages embedded in both. Students will be required to bring in samples of media and be prepared to walk the class through deconstructions. It is mandatory that students have access to a computer and the Internet. Students will write 2 papers—one is an analytical paper; the second summarizes the results of a small research project. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own media. Instructor lectures will be kept to a minimum.

Two books are required for the course and the reading consists of selected chapters in each book:

- Domhoff, G. William. Who Rules America? Power, Politics and Social Change. New York, New York: McGraw Hill, 2006
- Silverblatt, Art. Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2001

There are several other sources that are required reading and are available on electronic reserves. They can be accessed by typing in the following in your browser:

<http://eres.lib.depaul.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2456>. You may be asked for the course password; it is hc207. The e-reserves site consists of chapters from books and short essays, as follows:

- Bagdikian, Ben: "The Big Five."
- Butsch, Richard: "Ralph, Fred, Archie and Homer: Why Television Keeps Re-creating the White Male Working-Class Buffoon"
- Jhally, Sut: "Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture"
- Katz, Jackson: "Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity: From Eminem to Clinique for Men"
- Kilbourne, Jean: "The More You Subtract, the More You Add: Cutting Girls Down to Size"
- Means, Robin R.: "Black Sitcom Portrayal"
- McChesney, Robert: "The Rise of Hypercommercialism"
- McChesney, Robert: "The Media/Democracy Paradox"
- Perry, Imani: "Who(se) Am I? The Identity and Image of Women in Hip-Hop"
- Pieterse, Jan Nederveen: "White Negroes"
- Putnam, Robert: "Technology and Mass Media"
- Raymond, Diane: "Popular Culture and Queer Representation: A Critical Perspective"
- Richards, Ruth: "Everyday Creativity: Our Hidden Potential"
- Rogers, Deborah D. "Daze of Our Lives: The Soap Opera as Feminine Text"
- Schor, Juliet: "The New Politics of Consumption: Why Americans Want So Much More Than They Need"
- von Oech, Roger: "A Whack on the Other Side of the Head."
- West, Cornell: "Democracy Matters are Frightening in our Time."

- Weston, Anthony: “Getting Started”
- Wilson, Clint C. and Gutierrez, Felix: “Advertising and People of Color”

In addition, *The Future of Media* whitepaper is also available on e-reserves.

Students missing more than two classes of our ten week course will not have met the requirements for a passing grade. I expect students to come to class ready to discuss the weekly readings and participate in class discussions. I expect students to be in class on time, and to remain until class ends.

5. Outcomes

All students will come away from the course with an understanding of American media and the ability to create their own media. They will also enhance their skills in critical thinking, their research skills, their creativity and their analytical and reflective writing skills. They will also become savvy about American media and the thousands of messages that are communicated to them everyday. There are additional outcomes students can expect, depending on the competence they have registered for:

FX: Students will determine whether current American media is a tool for business, democracy, politics, culture building—or all four.

H-4: Students will understand who has power in American media, whose voices are heard and how the depiction of certain racial, social, cultural and economic groups impact people’s perceptions of these groups.

H2G Students will understand how mainstream media impacts people’s values, beliefs and behaviors, including their own.

A-2-X: Students will have the basic skills required to begin to create media.

6. Evidence the Students will Submit

Writing is an important element of any quality college education. Writing helps students think through ideas and learn how to effectively communicate. The two written pieces build off one another and are designed to strengthen the student’s analytical, reflective and research skills.

One analytical paper, 4-5 pages in length on Silverblatt’s two key elements to interpreting media—process and context. This paper should analyze the 6-7 key major points that Silverblatt makes about process and context, as well as using the methods and questions he outlines in both chapters to interpret a piece of media that students choose. The piece of media can include a television program, newspaper article, magazine article or web site and should be substantive. (Please include a hard copy or web address of the media sample you are analyzing). What are the 3-4 points the author is making in each chapter? What evidence does he use to support his points? Does what he say hold true for you? Why or why not? Use the questions at the end of each chapter as your guide for the deconstruction of media that you selected. (Don’t just answer the questions; instead use them as a guide for the narrative you’ll create). What does the analysis of the piece of media you selected show? This paper is due on July 6.

One research paper, 6-8 pages in length where you conduct your own mini-research project on media or advertising. You will tie the topic you will study to the competence (or competencies) for which you enrolled. Thought-starters will be provided during the second week of class. Project proposals will be submitted to the instructor and should include a 1-2 paragraph description on what you plan to research, as well as what sources you will seek out. A minimum of 4 sources is required and students can use the readings from class in their papers, as appropriate. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to review their approach prior to submitting the project proposal. The proposal is due on July 20 ; the paper is due on August 10.

For both papers, in the case of a dire emergency, a one week extension will be granted; however the student needs permission from me in writing prior to the original due date.

Students will leverage their creative skills to create either the foundation of their own media piece, or if they've enrolled for the A2X competency, develop the concept more fully. Students can choose to create a new television program, website, blog, magazine or newspaper; or refine existing content; or improve an employee communications piece used at work. The instructor will provide students with a worksheet that students can use to capture their ideas. Students taking the class for an A2X competency will develop specific content for their piece, as well as demonstrate their knowledge of the creative process. Students will present their piece during a short in-class presentation on August 3.

Students will receive 3 handouts that are designed to help them understand the readings and that will assess their understanding of the readings. I will provide these handouts in class the week prior to when the readings will be discussed. The completed handouts are due at the beginning of class.

Students can earn extra points by bringing in an example of media and conducting a deconstruction of it in class or by leading a class discussion on a specific chapter or essay.

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

Students may want to consult the following sources:

DePaul's Academic Integrity Policy with Definition of Plagiarism

<http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/code16.html>

Familiarize yourself with DePaul's definition of plagiarism and school policy regarding the misuse of other people's ideas and intellectual property.

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/index.html>

From Princeton University, This page gives clear explanations of what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty, as well as ways to avoid it.

Help with How to do an MLA or APA Works Cited

<http://www.duke.edu/web/HonorCouncil/citationguide.html>

This web page, from Duke University, is easy to follow and shows the differences between MLA, APA, Turabian, Chicago, and AMA styles.

The Citation Machine

<http://citationmachine.net/>

This site prompts students to type in citation information, and then generates a formatted Works Cited listing and parenthetical citation in both MLA and APA styles. I noticed a couple of minor glitches, but it seems to be generally reliable.

The Modern Language Association's (MLA's) Citation Style

<http://www.mla.org/>

Although the MLA does not publish their citation guides on the web, their FAQ page offers some answers to problems students may encounter, such as "How many spaces should I leave after a period or concluding punctuation mark?" and "How do I cite a web source with no page numbers?"

The American Psychological Association's (APA's) Citation Style

<http://www.apastyle.org/>

Like the MLA, the APA does not offer an online citation guide, but does give helpful tips for citing online sources, in both their "FAQ" and "Electronic Reference" pages, as well as information on how to cite interviews.

Citing Cyberspace by James D. Lester

<http://www.apsu.edu/~lesterj/cyber.htm>

This site is dedicated to the citation of online sources. It also offers tips on how to use search engines to find electronic sources, as well as lists of helpful links, however, a sizable portion of the links are old and no longer functional.

7. Criteria for Assessment

For the analytical paper, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. Organization. Clear thesis statement, logical development of argument, well structured paragraphs.
2. Analysis: Ability to analyze the key ideas in the reading assignments and deconstruct media.
3. Clarity: Ability to communicate these ideas clearly and effectively, using relevant examples.
4. Stylistics: Logical sentence structure, grammar and punctuation; careful proofreading; appropriate documentation of sources.

For the research paper, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. Mini-research review: Summary of key research that has already been conducted on the subject. Minimum of four sources per competency; readings from class are acceptable.
2. Research approach and findings: Summary of the approach you used to create the study and your findings.
3. Organization. Clear thesis statement, logical development of argument, well structured paragraphs.
4. Stylistics: Logical sentence structure, grammar and punctuation; careful proofreading; appropriate documentation of sources.

For the media piece, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. Creation of vision: Summary of what the piece is envisioned to focus on over time, who are the audiences it will serve, an overview of the content it will contain, how the piece will generate revenues, etc.
2. Creativity: How the actual piece brought to life all of the ideas put forth in the vision.

Grading and Evaluation

Class Attendance	10 points*
Class Participation	15 points
Analytical Paper	20 points
Research Paper	25 points
Media Piece	15 points
Analysis of Readings	15 points

Total:	100 points

*** Five (5) bonus points will be awarded to students who attend all class sessions.**

Points and Grade Equivalents

A=	105-94 points	C+=	79-77 points
A-=	93-90 points	C =	76-74 points
B+=	89-87 points	C-=	73-70 points
B=	86-84 points	D+=	69-67 points
B-=	83-80 points	D=	66-64 points
		D-=	63-60 points
		F=	59 points or less

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Unfinished work or work requiring revision will be given an Incomplete (IN) grade. In order to qualify for the IN, students must have regularly attended class, and must have completed two thirds of assignments.

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

MediaSmart: Understanding and Creating American Media

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignment for This Week</u>	<u>Screenings/ Viewings</u>
June 15	Introduction	--	TV programming samples; "Media Rich, Democracy Poor" DVD
June 22	Power in America-- Part I; Media Basics	Domhoff: Intro, Chapters 1 & 4 <i>Pieterse</i> Silverblatt: Chapter 1	Instructor & student media content samples
June 29	Power in America— Part II; Media Politics and Control	Domhoff: Chapter 5 <i>West, Bagdikian readings</i> Silverblatt: Chapter 2 <i>McChesney reading "The Media/Democracy Paradox"</i>	Instructor & student media content samples
July 6	Creativity Essentials; Media Context	<i>von oech, Richards, and Weston readings</i> Silverblatt: Chapter 3	Instructor & student media content samples
		Analytical Paper Due	
July 13	Media Framework and Production; Race, Gender & Class	Silverblatt: Chapter 4-5 <i>Means and Rogers readings</i>	Instructor & student media content samples
July 20	Advertising & Hypercommercialism I; Race, Gender & Class	Silverblatt: Chapter 7 McChesney: " <i>The Rise of Hypercommercialism,</i> " <i>Butsch and Schor readings</i>	Instructor & student media content samples
		Project proposal due	
July 27	Advertising & Hypercommercialism II; Race, Gender & Class	Silverblatt: Chapter 9 <i>Wilson & Gutierrez, Katz, Kilbourne and Jhally readings</i>	Katz, Kilbourne videos
August 3	American Political Communications; Race, Gender & Class; Selling the Iraq War	Silverblatt: Chapter 8 <i>Putnam reading</i> Media project due; short in-class presentation of approach	Bill Moyers video
August 10	Wrap up on race, gender and class	<i>Perry, Raymond readings</i> Paper due; short in-class presentations of findings	Instructor & student media content samples
August 17	The Future of Media	Silverblatt: Chapter 10 <i>Future of Media reading</i>	Instructor & student media content samples
August 24	No class	Rewrite of Paper Due	