

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Grant Wiedenfeld

Class: MCOM 1330.03 Analysis of Electronic Culture

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Classroom: #DRB 125 T/Th 9-10:50

Office Hours: #328 T/Th 11-12 or by Appointment

Text: *Alphabet to Internet: Media In Our Lives* by Irving Fang 3th edition

And assigned content posted on Blackboard

Course Description: This course will survey the history & theory of mass media in America with an emphasis on television & new media. Topics addressed include: the impact & development of print & electronic media; the structure of contemporary media industries; the influence of advertisers, regulatory agencies & ratings services; production, distribution & syndication systems; the social influence of mass media content in culture; and the relationship of media content to the development of personal & collective values. Topics related to new media will be introduced throughout the semester – and integrated into the assessment of legacy media and legacy media industries.

The class will consist of lectures, screenings, discussion and Blackboard postings. Take notes. Every day. Date your notes. That helps. Really. Honest. You might be tested on anything that is said or screened or otherwise presented in-class. View screenings critically & note the video that is screened & note any comments made regarding the screening.

Course Objectives: MCOM 1330 will prepare students for effectively assessing a contemporary experience that is increasingly mediated by mass media/new media messages. Students will be introduced to essential concepts in communication theory, to significant events in media history & to emerging developments in mass/new media industries. MCOM 1330 will familiarize students with the essential terms & analytical skills central to media studies. Fundamental skills essential to the development of Media Literacy will be emphasized with regular in-class critiques of television & online content. The class is designed to prepare students for more advanced studies in upper-division courses.

Ask yourself a question: What do you think about mass media in America? I hope that after you leave this class you will have a different -- more complex & more critical -- appreciation of our media environment. That is, I hope you will

never watch TV the same way again. Never!

On completion of this course, students will be able to assess:

- the relationship between media industries, media content & media audiences
- the emergence & historical development of mass media & new media
- theoretical concepts related to the study of mass media
- media literacy skills that promote self-empowerment

Grades: Four (4) tests 50+50+100+100

Tests composed of multiple-choice questions & short answer/essays.

There will be two written assignments that will require you to analyze a TV show in detail and/or analyze a TV advertisement in detail. Up to 10 points MAY be added to your FINAL TOTAL if both these assignments are completed to my satisfaction (5 points apiece).

Grade Scale: A - 270-300 B - 240-269 C - 210-239 D - 180-209 F - 0-179

Make-up Exams available only in special cases. They are likely to be essay. Ouch!

Attendance: I take roll regularly, please get seated & ready to take notes by the time I finish the roll-call. After three (3) absences, subtract 20 points from your final grade total for each additional absence (for whatever reason). No doctor's excuses. Don't waste absences! If you miss a class you are responsible for all work assigned & all material addressed in class. Being late for class is considered absent - exceptions made for bad weather.

Additional Policies & Comments:

No beepers, cell phones, palm-pilots, MP-3 players, satellite dishes or anything that otherwise beeps, vibrates or whistles allowed in class. No eating, sleeping or doing work unrelated to the class. Use laptops ONLY for doing work for this class. Laptops must be closed during screenings. Generally students will refrain from behavior that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process. And please maintain complete honesty & integrity in your academic

experience both in & out of this classroom (see Faculty/Student Handbook). Get my permission to bring visitors to the classroom or to record lectures. You will have an opportunity to evaluate this class. The SAM Center offers excellent study help.

I do not post PowerPoint slides on Blackboard. But I do post an extensive review for all tests on Blackboard.

I do not discuss grades via Email or on the phone. This is to protect your privacy.

No calling me at home -- never, ever...never -- that's why God created Office Hours & Emails! I promise I won't call you at home. Extra Credit: Except for the aforementioned 10 points -- None. But I do notice intelligent, active in-class participation.

Readings & Course Outline:

The schedule for readings and/or lectures may change -- depending on breaking events covered in the mass media. Some chapters will be read in their entirety; some chapters will be read only in part; some chapters will be addressed in lecture; and some chapters will be solely your responsibility. Additional chapters or sections of chapters may be assigned during the semester. Additional materials will be posted on Blackboard.

1st Week Introduction & Ch 1 Writing: Gathering Thought (pp. 1-36)

2nd Week Ch 2 Early Printing: Reaching More of Us (pp. 37-58)

3rd Week Ch 3 Mass Printing: Reaching Still More (pp. 59-86)

4th Week Ch 5 Telegraph: Uniting the United States (pp. 111-124)

First Test during Week Four (exact date TBA)

5th Week Ch 6 Telephone: Reaching without Touching (pp. 125-130)

6th Week Ch 7 Recording: Beyonce Sings Better (pp. 147-155)

7th Week Ch 11 Radio: Helping Us through the Rough Years (pp. 225-239)

Second Test About Week Seven (TBA)

8th Week Ch 8 Photograph: Personal and So Much More (pp. 163-167)

9th Week Ch 9: Silent Film (183-201) & Ch 10: A Movie Century (203-208)

10th Week Ch 12: Television: Pictures in Our Parlors (pp. 251-276)

Third Test about Week Ten (TBA)

11th Week Ch 16 Persuasion: The Push Never Stops (pp. 335-350)

12th Week Ch 13 Computers: Beyond Calculation (pp. 277-282)

13th Week Ch 14 The Internet: The World at Our Fingertips (pp. 292-298)

14th Week Ch 15 Video Games: Leaning Forward (pp. 315-323)

Fourth Test scheduled by SHSU during Finals Week

- **Americans with Disabilities Act:** SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The University suggests the following be added to the syllabus:
“If you have a disability that may affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.”
- **Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy #861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made two weeks in advance of when the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examination are to be completed.