

The University of Calgary

Sociology 345 (Weekend University)

Mass Communications

Winter 2009

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Doetzel

Classroom: **(ICT 114)**

Saturday, 8:00-11:50 AM

Office: SS 952

Office Hours: Saturday after class (by appointment)

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Course Description:

Your course reader "Media Scapes" suggests that regarding communication solely as "mass communication" is reductionist and that within mass media the channeling of meanings is done with the audience in mind. This course will commence with a review of the hand book: How to Avoid Misunderstandings, which will assist students in the process of critical thinking, from a micro perspective.

From a Macro perspective, mass communication can be defined in terms of 3 types of activities: centralized production with wide dissemination (e.g. broadcast communication, newspapers); decentralized production with wide dissemination primarily by public access to the internet and individuals interacting with one another on a wide scale, within the world, nation or widespread community by means of public access to communication channels (e.g. cell phone, email) as pointed out in your Lorimer and Gasher text.

With a focus on the main types of mass communication, this course will examine the key social processes associated with them. In particular, it will examine the interaction between society and culture and the mass communication; the content and audiences of mass communication and the way in which the modern globalized and digitized world has been shaped by mass communications and the ways in which these aspects of modern societies shape mass communication. The course will examine these key elements of mass communication from a Canadian perspective. Additionally, the course will give students opportunities to demonstrate individual and group approaches to various means of communication.

Required Texts:

Attallah, P. and Shade, L. R. (2006) *Mediascapes*. Toronto: Thompson/Nelson.

Lorimer, R. and Gasher, M.(2008) *Mass Communication in Canada* (6th Addition). Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario.

Paris, J. Small, R. , Heyman, R (2007) *How to Avoid Misunderstandings & Hurt Feelings in Everyday Life*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications

Course Requirements for student assessment:

1. **Mid-Term** multiple choice/ true and false questions scheduled for **Feb. 28 2009**

30%

2. **Term Group Assignment** (based on text/reader chapters assigned to your group) due on assigned week; **10%** for group presentation); presentation, about 1 hour time slot per group, which includes a class participation exercise for about 15 minutes.

In the group portion, you can present in a creative way agreed upon by your group members. This could range from drama, music, video clips, power point, commercials, talk show, game show, etc. (Use your imagination!!). You must provide some form of notes on your assigned chapters, to be posted on Blackboard for your fellow students. These notes should be in the form of summarizing the chapter in typed notes or power point slides. The notes must be

submitted to the professor (**on a CD**) for part of your group mark, following your presentations.

* Each student within the group will also do a **one minute** summary of their individual papers, profiling a media mentor. This will be done before your group does the group portion. Your individual papers are due **one week after your group has presented in class.**

***Late papers will not be excepted for marking unless the professor has been given a legitimate reason for the lateness.**

3. Individual paper (18% written; 2 % oral)

Paper needs to be four to five pages double spaced; for your paper, you are to select a representative of mass media, whom you admire and have been mentored by : (author, actor, actress, film producer, journalist, musician, sports figure, etc... and .who has greatly influenced how you view the world and has also influenced their audiences in the construction of meaning of their worlds.) Apply the **(assigned group chapters of your reader /text book)** as your primary sources that assist you to frame your paper in a Sociological context, related to this Mass Media course. For example : examine **how** your selected mass media representative has demonstrated ways our modern world has been shaped by their presence in mass communications 2/review aspects of modern societies that have been shaped by their influences within mass communication 3/explore some key social processes associated with them shaping mass communication 4/assess the range of influence they've had in mass communication and on the evolution of society and or the social construction of your identity 5/discern if your media representative is associated with centralized, decentralized and/or widespread community forms of mass communication 6/state what your preferred form of mass communication is, in the context of your selected individual/mentor and why you prefer this for of mass communication.

*Apply critical thinking within your writing. Create an outline before beginning the research which would assist you to cluster ideas around your central subject. State your standpoint on why you selected the individual you have chosen..... within the first paragraph, and state what you plan to cover in the body of the paper. In the body of the paper, write about what you stated that you would cover by supporting the standpoint you have taken. In the final

paragraph, write a conclusion, which is a summary of what you have covered in the paper.

Incorporate literature from at least **three** sources outside of your assigned course books. Use **APA** referencing. Your secondary sources can include: books, articles, interviews, reviews, newspaper clippings, etc. However, make sure you use correct referencing (APA) to avoid plagiarism. You need to respect other's intellectual property.

Suggested outline to get you started:

Choice of person:

Who, What, When, Where, Why?

Possible Focus:

**What will the paper centre on*

Primary & Secondary Sources

Text book, reader & outside literature

3. **Summary of your paper** : On the date , your group does a group presentation, you will do a **one minute oral summary** of your individual paper. This summary will be worth 2% of the mark you receive on your paper. Thus the written portion of your paper will be worth 18%.

3. **Class participation assignments**: total of **5%**; You **must** attend the classes for these assignments, in order to receive any participation marks .

Group photo presentation : 1%

Individual talk : 1 %

Commercial: 1 %

Group response to video or guest speaker: 1 %

Group study exercise for review for final 1 %

4. **Final Assessment**

(Registrar Scheduled April 18, 2008) 35%

C- = 60-62%

Minimal pass, marginal performance: D+ = 55-59%
D= 50-54%

Unsatisfactory performance: F = 0-49

FLEXIBLE LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Jan 17

Attitude presentation ; Student Introductions; Introduction to course; chapter 1 and chapter 12 of text book; Summary of “How to Avoid Misunderstanding.” Break into groups.

Participation Assignment due Jan 27: Find or take a meaningful photo or photos, related to your reader (How to Avoid Misunderstanding) and put your photos together with all other group member’s photos. Compose a short story, song, prose, poem or news item to express the meaning your group has constructed from the photos taken, in relationship to your reader. Present this in Jan. 27 class. It should be about **five** minutes in length.

Jan 24

Photo presentations

Intro to Chapter 2 and 3 of text: Mass communication & modern society

Other Topic: Representation, reality and popular culture: Semiotics and construction of meaning

Deconstruction of meaning of video

*Participation Assignment due Feb 1: Think of a product or idea you would like to sell, and with your group design a **60 second television** or radio commercial to be presented in class. You must keep it to 60 seconds.

Jan 31

Professor: Intro to chapters 4 & 5

Commercial presentations

Guest speaker: Betty Cooper, award-winning journalist/broadcaster

Group # 1: Text chapter 3: Media: History, Culture & politics

Reader, chapter 12: Advertising in Canada (pg. 196)

Participation Assignment, due Feb. 8: Prepare a **one minute talk**, centering around how you think that your life would be without the modern means of mass communications, such as: television, radio, and the computer. Be prepared to present your one minute talk in class Feb 8. You will be given one mark if you do the talk in one minute and a half a mark if you talk is over time or under time. (You can compose the talk when you are in the class standing in front of your peers, if this is easier for you.)

February 7:

Intro to ch. 7 & 9 of text.

Group # 2: Text Chapter #4: Theoretical Perspectives on Media Content

Reader chapter # 1: Considering Critical Communication Studies in Canada. (pg. 9)

Group # 3: Text Chapter # 5: Theoretical Perspectives on Audiences

Reader chapter # 4: Sipping Starbucks: Re considering Communications Media (p.62)

Feb 14

* Meanings related to Valentines Day

Group # 4: Text Chapter # 7: Communications Law and policy

Reader chapter # 3: The Audience (pg. 49).

Group # 5: Text: Chapter # 9 Journalists as Content Producers

Reader: Chapter # 6: Youth Violence, Moral Panic, and the Canadian Media; (pg. 95)

Feb. 28.

Exercise to chill out

* **Midterm**

Video and discussion

March 7

Summary of chapters 8 & 10 of text

Summary of journalism

Guest speaker: Kelly Cryderman, Calgary Herald

Video

Participation assignment: group perspective on video & Speaker
(1 %)

March 21

Group # 6: Text: Chapter 8: The Structure and Role of Ownership
Reader: Chapter Ch. 5: Good kids/Bad Kids: What a culture
can do (pg. 77)

Group # 7: Text: Chapter 10: Communication, Technology & Society
Reader: Chapter 7: Women and the Media (pg. 114).

March 29

* **TO BE CONFIRMED** Possibly a **Field Trip** to a “Self Publishing”
breakfast, at the Danish Club, 727 11th Ave. S.W. from 8 a.m. till
noon;

April 4

***Review for final**

Participation Exercises: Each group will prepare a 10 minute exercise, such as a quiz...or game related to their chapters presented in class.
(Participation mark 1%).

*** Celebration of last class and opportunities to pick up bonus marks**

April 18 Registrar-scheduled final exam;

***Note: Time spent on topics and order listed on the course outline above may change over the semester to better respond to student needs and interests. Student group work, associated with the individual chapters will be presented in class. Appointments need to be booked to consult with the professor.

University Policies:

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

FOIP: "The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside instructor's office, the department office etc. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class or during the instructors office hours; if a student is unable to pick up their assignment from the instructor, they may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment"

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

Class Policies:

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a "make up" exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Extensions and Late Assignments: Extensions for assignments may be granted only in the case of unforeseen circumstances as deemed legitimate by the instructor but such extensions must be requested prior to the assignment deadline.

* Individual papers are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Group notes are to be handed in after the group presentation.

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.