

The University of Calgary

Sociology 345 (Weekend University)

Mass Communications

Winter 2008

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Doetzel

Classroom: (ST 130)

Saturday, 8:00 AM

Office: SS 902

Office Hours: Saturday after class (by appointment)

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Course Description:

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) [Lorimer and Gasher; 2004: p.30].

With a focus on these 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:

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

Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (2005) Mass Media and Society. New York: Oxford University Press

Course Requirements for student assessment:

1. Mid-Term multiple choice/ true and false questions scheduled for Feb 23, 2008
30%

2. Term Group Assignment (based on text/reader chapters assigned to your group) due on assigned week (20% for paper; 10% for class presentation); presentation, about 1 hour time slot per group plus a class participation exercise for 15 minutes to a half hour. 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 could 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 disc or CD) for part of your group mark, following your presentations.

Individual paper should be four to five pages double spaced; In your paper, you can: 1/examine how your assigned chapters in the class have introduced ways our modern world has been shaped by mass communications 2/review aspects of modern societies that have shaped mass communication 3/explore some key social processes associated with shaping mass communication 4/assess the range of influence of mass communication on the evolution of society 5/discern if your assigned chapters are focusing on centralized, decentralized and/or widespread community forms of mass communication 6/state what your preferred form of mass communication is and why you prefer it.

*Apply critical thinking within your writing. State your standpoint in the first paragraph and 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 two sources outside of your text books. Use APA referencing.

3. Class participation assignments: total of 10%

Group photos: 2 marks

Analysis talk : 2 marks

Commercial: 2 marks

Group response to video: 2 marks

Group response to video and guest speaker: 2 marks

4. Final Assessment (Registrar Scheduled April 19, 2008) 30%

The midterm and final will be made up of a common objective component [multiple choice and true and false questions)

The major term assignment will constitute a group class presentation and paper, associated with a text chapter and two additional references.

A proportion of each class will entail students involved in group discussions and is designed to encourage students to elaborate on and/or apply the knowledge they are gaining from lectures and readings.

Attendance at lectures is important, as you are responsible for the material covered in your classes. If you miss two or more classes, you may be encouraged to drop the course.

Power Point lecture slides as well as other materials deemed useful to students will be posted on Blackboard.

Each week, the professor will give a summary presentation on the topics to be elaborated on the following week by the groups and will also facilitate class activities, discussions, audio and video presentations, and group work.

Grading System: Grades will be entered as percentages into the grading system on Blackboard. Your final letter grade is computed based on the weighted sum of your percentages based on the following percentage-letter grade equivalencies:

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.

FLEXIBLE LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Jan 19

Student Introductions; Introduction to course; chapter 1 and chapter 12 of text book; video

Participation Assignment due Jan 26: Take a meaningful photo and put it 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. Present this in Jan. 26 class. It should be about five minutes in length.

Jan 26

Photo presentations

Chapter 2 of text: Mass communication & modern society

Chapter 3 of reader: Representation, reality and popular culture: Semiotics and construction of meaning

Intro to chapter 3 and 4 of text

Participation Assignment due Feb 2: 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.

Feb 2

Commercial presentations

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

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

Reader, chapter 4: Culture, Communications and Political Economy

Intro to chapters 4 & 5

Participation Assignment, due Feb. 9: Prepare a one minute talk, centering around a critical and or appreciative analysis of a centralized or de-centralized form of mass communications. Be prepared to present your one minute analysis in class Feb 9. You will be expected to apply some

of the skills Betty Cooper has outlined in her talk and to present your verbal analysis in one minute.

Feb 9

One minute analysis of mass communications

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

Reader chapter # 7: Mediations of Democracy

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

Reader chapter # 8: Production of Media

Feb 23

Midterm

Video

In Class Participation Assignment: group perspective of video, presented in class

March 1

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

Reader chapter # 9: Four Approaches to the Sociology of News

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

Reader: Chapter # 10: The Culture of Journalism

March 8

Guest speaker: Kelly Cryderman, Calgary Herald

Video

Participation assignment: group perspective on video & Speaker

Summary of chapters 8 & 10 of text

March 15

Group # 6: Text: Chapter 8: The Structure and Role of Ownership

Reader: Chapter 11: Comparing Media Systems

Group # 7: Text: Chapter 10: Communication, Technology & Society

Reader: Chapter 15: The Information society: Debate Revisited

REVIEW FOR FINAL LEARNING CELEBRATION

March 29....(Optional class Field Trip) to a "Self Publishing" breakfast, at the Danish Club, 727 11th Ave. S.W. from 8 a.m. till noon; No formal class on campus.

April 5....(Optional class) No formal scheduled class on campus; time can be used for studying for your final

April 19 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.