

TOPICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION: COM 405
MASS COMMUNICATION IN GLOBAL SOCIETY
UW-Whitewater/Centro de Estudios Interamericanos CEDEI
Fall 2009

Instructor: Bill Johnson, Lecturer Emeritus, Department of Communication University of Wisconsin-Whitewater e-mail: Johnsonb@uww.edu Telephone: 284 0697 Cell: TBA	Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. or by appointment. Class meetings: TBA 3 Credits
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REQUIRED TEXT:

Grossberg, L., Wartella, E., Whitney, D. C., & Wise, J. M. (2006). *Mediamaking: Mass media in a popular culture* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Plus assigned readings

This course is a modification of the senior level course Mass Media in Society (Speech/Journalism 431) taught at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. The modifications have been specifically aimed to adapt and take advantage of the special circumstance of students living in Ecuador and having the opportunity to compare and contrast media in this Latin American Country with those in the United States.

The course will introduce students to concepts and theories in the use and presentation of news and information in texts and images communicated across multiple platforms in a global context. The media forms will include but are not limited to print, film, broadcast, the Internet and mobile devices. These concepts and theories address:

- Human Communication as a system
- Diversity in mediated communication
- Functions of mediated communication
- Audiences of mediated communication
- Effects of mediated communication
- Political communication
- Relationship between mediated communication and the political, economic, technological, legal, multicultural and historical factors that shape the media

COURSE GOALS: This course is designed to introduce you to theories of mass communication and the processes of production and reception of mediated communication within different cultures, particularly focusing on the United States and Latin America. Focus will be on what media practices and products mean in the lives of people. We will approach our subjects critically to investigate communication as a system that have political, cultural and economic ramifications.

This course will involve both reading and writing. Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically interpret media communication as a system within and across cultures.
- Apply theories in the use of and presentation of information
- Think critically

- Conduct research and evaluate data by methods appropriate to the communications professions
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications

The instructor will provide additional reading materials in course of the semester.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
Self-reflexive media essay	WEEK 1	100
Advertising analysis	WEEK 2	100
Media theory analysis proposal	WEEK 3	100
Midterm	WEEK 4	100
Media theory analysis draft	WEEK 5	100
Media theory analysis	WEEK 6	100
Final exam	WEEK 7	100
Total		700

The final letter grade will be an average of your total score and will be calculated using the following scale:

A	93+
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D+	67 - 69
D	63 - 66
D-	60 - 62
F	59 and below

PARTICIPATION/READING RESPONSE PAPERS

We will be discussing a variety of complex terms and theories this semester. A course like this is particularly appealing to this instructor because discussion of the readings requires active learning by both instructor and students. This is not a straightforward lecture course; treat this course as it were a seminar. Because participation in the class is a part of learning, attendance is required. I will take attendance each class period. Only one absence will be excused. Students should come to class having read the assigned readings.

SELF-REFLEXIVE MEDIA ESSAY

In the third week of class you will submit a 3-page reflection on growing up with the media. Reflect on your own (gender, race, socio-economic class, religious, political affiliation etc.) experiences with different media outlets such as television, radio, film, magazines, the Internet and video games. Provide any specific examples you may have of ever feeling marginalized and/or misrepresented by a particular media message. Also, share any stories you may have when the media helped you feel empowered, etc.

ADVERTISING ANALYSIS

In week four you will complete a 3 to 4-page paper assessing cultural representations (gender, race, class, age, sexuality, and ability/disability) in print advertisements or broadcast commercials in the Ecuadorian media. Choose three ads or three commercials (NOTE: Pick ads that have people in them or at least text that references identities of gender, race, etc.) then compare and contrast the cultural representations explicit or imbedded within each. How do the ads/commercials function? To whom do they seem to be aimed and why do you think they are the same or different from what you see in the U.S? What elements are at work to influence the viewer/reader? Why did you choose these particular images? What do you think the images reflect about broader society? Try to vary the types of media from which you choose print ads and the types/hours of programming from which you choose broadcast commercials. Copies of the print ads should be provided with the paper.

MEDIA THEORY ANALYSIS

You will complete an 8 -page research paper that critically analyzes a specific media process or text particularly while living in Ecuador. While the instructor must approve the topic, this is your chance to engage your own interests and career goals with the theories and concepts learned in class and experienced while living abroad. We will discuss possible approaches in class. *However, we should have at least one out of class conference prior to writing your proposal.* In week five you will turn in a 4-page proposal that introduces the problem or issue, demonstrates briefly the theory or theories at play and explains how you plan to approach the topic in your final paper. In week six hand in a first draft of the paper in APA style. The final paper is due in week 7. For UW-Whitewater students, the media theory analysis paper may fulfill the writing requirement.

TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION

Toward the end of the term, you will hand in a typed 8-page response to two or three essay questions, which the instructor will provide to you one week before the due date. Where an in-class exam generally relies on recall information, a take-home exam allows students more time in organizing thoughts and demonstrating their grasp of the course material. Since the instructor is giving you the courtesy of completing the exam using your text and other materials, please provide the instructor the courtesy of organized, clear, thoughtful writing. Using APA style, attribute and cite source information as you would for a research paper. The exam will be graded more vigorously than an in-class exam.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with the University policies regarding Special Accommodations, Misconduct, Religious Beliefs Accommodation, Discrimination and Absence for University Sponsored Events (For details please refer to the Undergraduate and Graduate Timetables; the “Rights and Responsibilities” section of the Undergraduate Bulletin; and the “Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures” [UWS Chapter 14]; and the “Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures” [UWS Chapter 17]).

Please keep your cell phones on silent in class.

Offensive material. Due to the critical and cultural nature of this course you may be exposed to material that some persons might consider offensive. While I cannot anticipate what may or may not offend individuals, I will do my best to inform the class of this material before its presentation. In addition, we will be discussing topics that may be sensitive including race, racism, gender representations, sexuality and class hierarchy. Difference of opinion and viewpoint is to be expected. Respect for all members of the class is also expected.

Writing: All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced and stapled. Except when specified, papers should follow APA style. Keep a duplicate copy of any work submitted.

Attendance: Only one absence will be excused. If you are ill, please call or have your host family call CEDEI to advise your absence.

Late Work: Assignments turned in after the due date will be considered late. The penalty for late submissions will be ten percent of the total points available for having missed the deadline and an additional ten percent of the total points available for each subsequent day missed. PLEASE NOTE: No work will be accepted if not received by the instructor one week following the due date. If there are extenuating circumstances, students should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism is the use of others' material, knowingly or unknowingly, that leave the perception it is the author's own. It will not be tolerated in this class. According to the University's Student Handbook, students are held to the highest standards toward the "honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors." Please know that any work turned in that is not a student's own work may be graded as failing. Further, be sure to cite properly all sources of information that did not come from your own mind. Always cite when in doubt.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMINATIONS

(Instructor reserves the right to make changes according to course needs.)

Week 1 -Introduction to the course and putting media in context;

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 1

International communication: Introduction

The global media, regionalization and localization in the media market.

Media and Society: Cultural Studies vs. Political Economy

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 2

Narratives of media history, critical examination of traditional and emerging media debates

Week 2 -Media people and organizations

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 3

Media people, organizations, industries, and institutions.

Self-reflexive media essay assignment

Media and money

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 4

The media agenda vs. media economics

Week 3 - Media analysis

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 5

Textual interpretation, discourse analysis, content and semiotic analysis.

Advertising analysis assignment

Media, ideology and Identity

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 6 & 7

Ideology, hegemony representation, meaning, message propagation

Discussion of your research topics and on how to conduct research

Week 4 - March 3:Media and identity creation and (mis)representation

Readings: Grossberg et al. 8

Cultural representation, stereotype, social and cultural construction, race, gender and class.

Media theory analysis proposal due.

Consuming the media

Readings: Grossberg et al. 9. The sociology of consumption, functions of the media

Mid-term

Week 5 -Analyzing Texts

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 10

Levels of analysis, media effects

Media theory analysis rough draft due

Political communication

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 11

Media and politics, agenda-setting, propaganda and persuasion, spiral of silence, political behavior, framing, priming and the small world theory of information seeking behavior

Week 6- Normative theory

Out-of-class research, Research/Writing Day. Instructor will be available for consultation.

Introduction to the normative theory

Media, the public and the normative theory

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch.12

The public, the “publics,” normative theories of the media, criticism

Media theory analysis paper due.

Week 7-New media trends

Readings: Grossberg et al. Ch. 13

Globalization, global media, and culture

Introduction to media ethics, media ethical dilemma, philosophical media foundations.

Discussions and conversations. **Final Exam due.**