

Emory University

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

SOC 343; Spring 2006

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30 - 3:45, 321 Tarbutton

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we examine the history and nature of mass media in four sections. (1) We begin by considering the social implications of new forms of mass media. (2) We then examine how various media industries (*e.g.*, radio, TV, record, motion picture, print) are organized and how such organization is sometimes transformed by regulation, competition, or technology. (3) We focus next on the content of media products and investigate factors that promote stability and change in content. (4) Finally, we consider the audience for mass media products and inspect how they are affected by and actively use media content.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you miss only two classes during the semester, I will add two points to your final grade. If you miss only three classes, I will add one point.

You are required to complete four written assignments: one major paper and three short memos. The paper involves a research project that you will complete over the course of the semester. You may choose your paper topic from a list that I will circulate on February 23 or you may propose a topic of your own (subject to my approval) by March 23. In either case, an outline of your paper is due on April 4 and the completed paper is due on May 1 (although it may be submitted before that date). This 8- to 10-page paper is worth 25% of your final grade. The memos will help you prepare for the examinations. In these 3-page assignments, you will synthesize the readings and the issues that emerge as the course progresses. The due dates for the memos, as well as the dates for when I distribute memo questions, are listed below. The memos will comprise 15% of your final grade (5% each). Note that I will distribute a total of four memo assignments, but you are required to complete only three.

You are also required to take two examinations – a midterm and a non-cumulative final. Both exams consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. Prior to each exam, I will distribute a handout that will help you prepare for the test. Each exam will be worth 30% of your final grade. The midterm examination occurs on March 7; the final examination occurs on

May 9 from 12:30 to 3:00 pm.

Students are expected to adhere to the [Emory College Honor Code](#) when completing both assignments and examinations.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (*e.g.*, syllabus, overheads) will be posted on the [Blackboard site](#) for SOC 343.

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available at Woodruff Library's [electronic reserves](#) (click on "Reserves Direct").

If you have any special needs due to learning disabilities, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory [Office of Disability Services](#) website).

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to revision)

SECTION ONE: CONCEPTUALIZING THE IMPACT OF EMERGENT MASS MEDIA

January 19: Introduction

January 24: Heather A. Haveman. 2004. "Antebellum Literary Culture and the Evolution of American Magazines." *Poetics* 32: 5-28.

January 26: Andrew Leyshon, Peter Webb, Shaun French, Nigel Thrift, and Louise Crew. 2005. "On the Reproduction of the Musical Economy after the Internet." *Media, Culture & Society* 27: 177-209.

SECTION TWO: MASS MEDIA PRODUCERS

The Creation of Media Industries: Intersection of Regulation, Competition, & Technology

January 31:

Catherine E. Kerr. 1990. "Incorporating the Star: The Intersection of Business and Aesthetic Strategies in Early American Film." *Business History Review* 64: 383-410.

MEMO QUESTION #1 DISTRIBUTED

February 2: Huseyin Leblebici. 1995. "Radio Broadcasters." Pages 308-331 in *Organizations in*

Industry: Strategy, Structure, and Selection, edited by Glenn R. Carroll and Michael T. Hannan. New York: Oxford University Press.

February 7:

Allen J. Scott. 2004. "The Other Hollywood: The Organizational and Geographic Bases of Television-Program Production." *Media, Culture & Society* 26: 183-205.

MEMO QUESTION #1 DUE

The Current Organization of Media Industries: Concentration and Beyond

February 9: Ben Bagdikian. 2000. *The Media Monopoly*. Sixth edition. Chapter 1 and pages 3-26.

February 14: Laura J. Miller. 1999. "Shopping for Community: The Transformation of the Bookstore into a Vital Community Institution." *Media, Culture & Society* 21: 385-407.

February 16:

Janet Wasko. 2001. *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Chapters 2 and 3.

MEMO QUESTION #2 DISTRIBUTED

February 21: Timothy J. Dowd, Kathleen Liddle and Maureen Blyler. 2005. "Charting Gender: The Success of Female Acts in the U.S. Mainstream Recording Market, 1940-1990." *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 23: 81-123.

Work and Workers in Media Industries

February 23:

Laura Grindstaff. 2002. *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of TV Talk Shows*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pages ix-xii and Chapter 3.

MEMO QUESTION #2 DUE

RESEARCH TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

February 28:

Steven E. Clayman and Ann Reisner. 1998. "Gatekeeping in Action: Editorial Conferences and Assessments of Newsworthiness." *American Sociological Review* 63: 178-199.

TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED

March 2:

Susanne Janssen. 1997. "Reviewing as Social Practice: Institutional Constraints

on Critics' Attention for Contemporary Fiction." *Poetics* 24: 275-297.

March 7: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

March 9: Marlon T. Riggs. *Color Adjustment* (In-class viewing of documentary).

March 14-16: SPRING BREAK (No Class Meetings)

SECTION THREE: MASS MEDIA PRODUCTS

The Evolving Nature of Media Content

March 21: Shyon Bauman. 2001. "Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 66: 404-426.

March 23: Michael Schudson. 2001. "The Emergence of the Objectivity Norm in American Journalism." Pages 165-185 in *Social Norms*, edited by Michael Hechter and Karl-Dieter Opp. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC DUE

March 28: Denise D. Bielby and C. Lee Harrington. 2004. "Managing Cultural Matters: Genre, Aesthetic Elements, and the International Market for Exported Television." *Poetics* 32: 73-98.

Representations and Frames in Media Content

March 30: Katharina Linder. 2004. "Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002." *Sex Roles* 51: 409-421.

April 4: Bernice Pescosolido, Elizabeth Grauerholz, and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in US Children's Picture Books through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 62: 443-464.

RESEARCH OUTLINE DUE

MEMO QUESTION #3 DISTRIBUTED

April 6: Gabriel Rossman. 2004. "Elites, Masses, and Media Blacklists: The Dixie Chicks Controversy." *Social Forces* 83: 61-79.

SECTION FOUR: MEDIA AUDIENCES

The Affected Audience

April 11:

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. and Shanto Iyengar. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 560-573.

MEMO QUESTION #3 DUE

April 13:

Melissa A. Milkie. 1999. "Social Comparisons, Reflected Appraisals, and Mass Media: The Impact of Pervasive Beauty Images on Black and White Girls' Self-Concepts." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 62: 190-210.

April 18:

Vincent J. Roscigno and William F. Danaher. 2001. "Media and Mobilization: The Case of Radio and Southern Textile Worker Insurgency, 1929 to 1934." *American Sociological Review* 66: 21-48.

MEMO QUESTION #4 DISTRIBUTED

The Active Audience

April 20:

Elizabeth Long. 2003. *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 & 5.

April 25:

JoEllen Shively. 1992. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57: 725-734.

MEMO QUESTION #4 DUE

April 27:

Melissa C. Scardaville. 2005. "Accidental Activists: Fan Activism in the Soap Opera Community." *American Behavioral Scientist* 48: 881-901.

TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED

May 1:

RESEARCH PAPER DUE (5:00 pm)

May 9:

FINAL EXAMINATION (12:30 to 3:00 pm)