

## Emory University

# SOCIOLOGY OF MASS MEDIA

## Soc 562; Spring 2007

Thursdays, 2:30-5:30, 206 Tarbutton Hall

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course (1) provides students with a grounding in media sociology and (2) prepares students for doing their own media research. To facilitate the first objective, we survey the media literature that spans a number of disciplines, which includes (but is not limited to) sociology, communications, and history. In pursuing this survey, we touch upon the following themes: (a) We 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, and/or technology. (b) We focus on media content and investigate factors that promote stability, change, and diversity. (c) We address the consumers of mass media products and inspect how they utilize and are affected by media content. To facilitate the second objective (*i.e.*, doing research), we give special attention to methods and designs employed in current research, and we heed how theoretical ideas are translated into empirical projects. Thus, by the end of the semester, each student will have a grasp of the field and an understanding of how to do media sociology.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of a fair amount of reading, class discussion, and written assignments. Given this organization, you are expected to attend each class and to participate.

#### A) Attendance

If you must miss a class, please inform me ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. Note that unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade.

#### B) Class Participation and Discussion

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Class participation comprises 30% of your final grade.

#### C) Weekly Memos

You will prepare a 3-page memo for each week's readings (typed and double-spaced). You should regard these memos as ideas in progress rather than as finished products. Use them to digest each week's readings and to respond with questions,

criticisms, and new ideas. Please bring your memo to class and submit it at the end of the evening. The weekly memos comprise 35% of your final grade.

#### **D) Final Paper**

You will complete a 15-page paper (typed and double-spaced). The paper should deal with some aspect of media sociology, yet it should also relate to your own research interests. Consequently, this paper may take a variety of forms. For example, it can be a review of the literature, a research proposal, or an empirical project. I ask that you discuss your topic with me by *March 8* and submit an outline by *April 5*. The final paper is due on *May 10* and comprises 35% of your final grade. .

### **COURSE RESOURCES**

As the semester progresses, class materials will be posted on the [Blackboard site](#) for SOC 562. Each week, for example, I will post a “Questions to Ponder” document that addresses the current readings.

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings are available at both our Blackboard site (click the "Reserve Readings" button) and at [Woodruff Library's on-line reserves](#). Note that the readings for this class augment – but do not duplicate – those found in the *Sociology of Culture* (SOC 560) and *Sociology of the Arts* (SOC 561) graduate seminars. As a result, you may wish to peruse the [SOC 560](#) and [SOC 561](#) syllabi for additional media readings. Note also that some of our readings overlap with the [reading list](#) for the preliminary examination in Sociology of Culture; consequently, this class offers some preparation for students who will later take the culture prelim.

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.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Subject to Revision)*

#### **SECTION ONE: MEDIA AND PRODUCTION**

**January 18**    *Introductions*

**January 25**    *Construction of Media Markets*

Timothy J. Dowd. 2003. “Structural Power and the Construction of Markets: The Case of Rhythm and Blues.” *Comparative Social Research* 21: 147-201.

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

Candace Jones. 2001. “Coevolution of Entrepreneurial Careers, Institutional Rules and Competitive Dynamics in American Film, 1895-1920.” *Organization Studies* 22: 911-944.

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.

Jonathan Sterne. 1999. “Television under Construction: American Television and the Problem of Distribution, 1926-1962.” *Media, Culture & Society* 21: 503-530.

**February 1**    *Organization and Operation of Media Firms*

Jarl A. Ahlkvist and Robert Faulkner. 2002. "Will This Record Work for Us?": Managing Music Formats in Commercial Radio." *Qualitative Sociology* 25:189-215.

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

Amy Erdman Farrell. 1994. "A Social Experiment in Publishing: *Ms. Magazine*, 1972-1989." *Human Relations* 47: 707-730.

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.

Keith Negus. 1998. "Cultural Production and the Corporation: Musical Genres and the Strategic Management of Creativity in the US Recording Industry." *Media, Culture & Society* 20: 359-379.

### **February 8 Concentration of Media Markets**

William T. Bielby and Denise D. Bielby. 2003. "Controlling Primetime: Organizational Concentration and Network Television Programming Strategies." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 47: 573-596.

Timothy J. Dowd. 2004. "Concentration and Diversity Revisited: Production Logics and the U.S. Mainstream Recording Market, 1940 to 1990." *Social Forces* 82: 1411-1455.

Henrich R. Greve, Jo-Ellen Pozner, and Hayagreeva Rao. 2006. "Vox Populi: Resource Partitioning, Organizational Proliferation, and the Cultural Impact of the Insurgent Microradio Movement." *American Journal of Sociology* 112: 802-837.

John M. Mezias and Stephen J. Mezias. 2000. "Resource Partitioning, the Founding of Specialist Firms, and Innovation: The American Feature Film Industry, 1912-1929." *Organization Science* 11: 306-322.

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

### **February 15 Media Careers (Examples from the Film Industry)**

Wayne Baker and Robert Faulkner. 1991. "Role as Resource in the Hollywood Film Industry." *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 279-309.

Nina Bandelj. 2003. "How Method Actors Create Character Roles." *Sociological Forum* 18: 387-416.

Beth A. Bechky. 2006. "Gaffers, Gofers and Grips: Role-Based Coordination in Temporary Organizations." *Organization Science* 17: 3-21.

James P. Kraft. 1994. "The 'Pit' Musicians: Mechanization in the Movie Theaters, 1926-1934." *Labor History* 35: 66-89.

Anne E. Lincoln and Michael Patrick Allen. 2004. "Double Jeopardy in Hollywood: Age and Gender in the Career of Film Actors, 1926-1999." *Sociological Forum* 19: 611-631.

## **SECTION TWO: MEDIA AND CONTENT**

### **February 22 Link between Production and Content**

William T. Bielby and Denise D. Bielby. 1994. "All Hits are Flukes!: Institutionalized Decision-Making and the Rhetoric of Network Prime-Time Program Development." *American Journal of Sociology* 99: 1287-1313.

Steven E. Clayman, John Heritage, Marc N. Elliot, and Laurie L. McDonald. 2007. "When Does the Watchdog Bark? Conditions of Aggressive Questioning in Presidential News Conferences." *American Sociological Review* 72: 23-41.

Wendy Griswold. 1981. "American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 86: 740-765.

Barbara Rosenblum. 1978. "Style and Social Process." *American Sociological Review* 43: 422-438.

Alva Taylor and Henrich R. Greve. 2006. "Superman or the Fantastic Four? Knowledge Combination and Experience in Innovative Teams." *Academy of Management Journal* 49: 723-740.

### **March 1      *Frames and Representations***

Amy Binder. 1993. "Constructing Racial Rhetorics: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music." *American Sociological Review* 58:753-767.

William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. 1989. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 95: 1-37.

Eva Illouz. 2003. *Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery: An Essay on Popular Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press. Selections.

Daniel J. Myers and Beth Schaeffer Caniglia. 2004. "All the Rioting That's Fit to Print: Selection Effects in National Newspaper Coverage of Civil Disorders, 1968-1969." *American Sociological Review* 69: 519-543.

S. Craig Watkins. 1998. *Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 6 and 7.

### **March 8      *Encroachment of Commercialization***

David Hesmondhalgh. 1998. "The British Dance Music Industry: A Case Study of Independent Cultural Production." *British Journal of Sociology* 49: 234-51.

David Grazian. 2003. *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5 and 6.

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

Patricia H. Thornton and William Ocasio. 1999. "Institutional Logics and the Historical Contingency of Power in Organizations: Executive Succession in the Higher Education Publishing Industry, 1958-1990." *American Journal of Sociology* 105: 801-843.

Janet Wasko. 2001. *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Chapters 2 through 4.

## **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

**March 15      SPRING BREAK (No Class)**

**March 22      *Consecration of Media Content***

Michael Patrick Allen and Anne E Lincoln. 2004. "Critical Discourse and the Cultural Consecration of American Films." *Social Forces* 82: 871-894.

N. Anand and Mary R. Watson. 2004. "Tournament Rituals in the Evolution of Fields: The Case of the Grammy Awards." *Academy of Management Journal* 47: 59-80.

Denise D. Bielby, Molly Moloney and Bob Q. Ngo. 2005. "Aesthetics of Television Criticism: Mapping Critics' Reviews in an Era of Industry Transformation." *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 23: 1-43.

Sarah M. Corse and Monica D. Griffin. 1997. "Cultural Valorization and African American Literary History: Reconstructing the Canon." *Sociological Forum* 12: 173-203.

Robert E. Kapsis. 1992. *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 3 & 4.

### **March 29      SOCIOLOGY OF ARTS MEETINGS (No Class)**

#### **SECTION THREE: MEDIA AND AUDIENCES**

#### **April 5          Construction of Media Audiences**

N. Anand and Richard A. Peterson. 2000. "When Market Information Constitutes Fields: Sensemaking of Markets in the Commercial Music Industry." *Organization Science* 11: 270-284.

Ien Ang. 1991. *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. London: Routledge. Chapters 5-10.

Rodney Benson. 2005. "American Journalism and the Politics of Diversity." *Media Culture and Society* 27:5-20.

Melissa A. Milkie. 2002. "Contested Images of Femininity: An Analysis of Cultural Gatekeepers' Struggles with the 'Real Girl' Critique." *Gender & Society* 16: 839-859.

Joseph Turow. 1997. *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 4-6.

#### **PAPER OUTLINE DUE**

#### **April 12        Patterns of Media Consumption**

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.

Wendy Griswold and Nathan Wright. 2004. "Cowbirds, Locals, and the Dynamic Endurance of Regionalism." *American Journal of Sociology* 109: 1411-1451.

Mauro F. Guillén and Sandra L. Suárez. 2004. "Explaining the Global Digital Divide: Economic, Political and Sociological Drivers of Cross-National Internet Use." *Social Forces* 84: 681-708.

Omar Lizardo. 2006. "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks." *American Sociological Review* 71: 778-807.

Jane Zavisca. 2005. "The Status of Cultural Omnivorism: A Case Study of Reading in Russia." *Social Forces* 84: 1233-1255.

#### **April 19        Media Audiences in Action**

Michael Bull. 2000. *Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg. Chapter 6 & 8.

Tia DeNora. 2000. *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3-4.

C. Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby. 1995. *Soap Fans: Pursuing Pleasure and Making Meaning in Everyday Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapters 2-3.

Ron Lembo. 2000. *Thinking Through Television*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 7-8.

Lakshmi Srinivasi. 2002. "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India." *Media, Culture & Society* 24: 155-173.

### **April 26      Media Audiences and Identity**

Wendy Griswold. 1987. "The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies." *American Journal of Sociology* 92: 1077-1117.

Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis. 1992. *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences, and the Myth of the American Dream*. Boulder, CO: Westview. Chapters 2-4 & 8.

Lori Kendall. 2000. "Oh No! I'm a Nerd! Hegemonic Masculinity on an Online Forum." *Gender and Society* 14: 256-274.

Melissa 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.

Min Zhou and Guoxuan Cai. 2002. "Chinese Language Media in the United States: Immigration and Assimilation in American Life." *Qualitative Sociology* 25: 419-441.

### **May 10      PAPER DUE**