



COURSE OUTLINE

<u>CMN 102</u> Course Number	<u>Media Issues</u> Course Title	<u>3</u> Credits
<u>3 lecture</u> Hours: lecture/Lab/Other	<u>ENG 101 with a minimum C grade</u> Pre-requisite	

Catalog description (2009-2011 Catalog): Examines current mass media issues such as sensationalism, press censorship, violence, political coverage, rights of privacy for fair trials. Also addresses the implications of recent developments in the mass media and current regulation of broadcast and cable media.

Required texts/other materials:

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Mass Media and Society [10th Edition], edited by Alison Alexander and Jarice Hanson

Revision date: 7/2009

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Information resources: Course supported by contemporary magazines, television programs, websites, news articles, films, music, and communication industry journals.

Other learning resources:

Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:

- Analyze the style of argumentation and method of proof provided by media
- Apply critical thinking skills in analyzing various viewpoints on a media or cultural phenomenon
- Write critical analysis of the interrelationship between media portrayals, real-life occurrences, and personal experience
- Develop oral argumentation skills through researched, timed, and impromptu debates around particular media theories
- Devise and factually support cultural critiques, based on assessments of media portrayals vs. historical and contemporary data
- Utilize mass media product to discuss, analyze, critique, and respond to mass media portrayals of contemporary issues: violence and children; body issues; victims' rights; crime resolutions; the right to know; the right to privacy; media and government adversarial relationships; gate-keeping and agenda-setting in both entertainment and news media
- Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods, and define the role each plays in developing and influencing American values as well as global interpretations of American life.
- Deconstruct mass media portrayals of women, people of color, immigrant definitions of subculture, romanticized American history, and definitions of wealth
- Deconstruct the role media monopolies and big business play in influencing the attentions and spending choices of the American public
- Examine the outcomes of past media portrayals on contemporary imaginings, public anxieties, and government policies; media ethics
- Compare and contrast the roles of new media vs. traditional broadcast media in creating an either fragmented or global cultural community
- Work collaboratively (in group debate project) to provide a full array of perspectives and supporting documentation in the form of a graded debate on either side of a contemporary media issue

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 2. Mathematics. Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.

Goal 3. Science. Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.

Goal 4. Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

MCCC Core Skills

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Goal E. Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Units of study in detail.

Unit I: Media in My Life

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Analyze the frequency and content of media exposure in her life
- Form judgments about the short term impact this media has on her day-to-day concerns, opinions, local political concerns, national interests, global connectedness, sense of security and/or personal anxieties
- Differentiate media exposure by discerning variety vs. volume.
- Recognize the blurring lines between interpersonal media via. Internet interface vs. traditional broadcast media.
- Write and orally summarize discoveries on her/his active analysis of personal experiences with media
- Deconstruct media portrayals through analysis of a contemporary Hollywood film where characters make real-life choices based on media portrayals, as defined in the context of the film.

Unit II: Cultural Values and the Mass Media: From Mild Influence to Active Shaping

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Discern behaviors based on implied social norms and factually supported social reality
- Analyze anecdotal and statistical evidence as they support or undermine media portrayal or social reality
- Provide oral and written summaries of opposing theoretical perspectives of cultural theorists
- Defend and support through selection of a contemporary piece of mass media, the validity of at least one media theorist as deemed by student perspective.
- Evaluate at least two pieces of historical data to illustrate how each can be interpreted and used to support opposing viewpoints on the same media/cultural phenomenon.
- Write an analysis of a contemporary cultural phenomenon that directly contradicts or is at least significantly different from the portrayal in contemporary media.
- Analyze the impact of advertising and sensationalist media in helping to create popular (though false) notions on a contemporary cultural issue.

Unit III: Advertising and Media Ethics

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Discern the style of argumentation used to support the place of ethics in advertising and the role of the advertiser in supporting media in a market-based economy
- Analyze the growth in information dissemination through advertising vs. non-market media releases.
- Form judgments about the short and long-term influences of advertising on her/his behaviors and purchases.
- Understand the historical interrelationship between the growth of mass media and its dependence on advertising.
- Defend and support through an analysis of advertising history as discussed in class and the limits or freedoms of mass media outlets in informing the public on controversial issues.
- Recognize the art, literature, music, news, public opinion, and social impetus for change exposed through “muckraking” and magazine exposé culture.
- Correlate standardized, popularized body image messages with the growth of “public imagination” and stereotypes.
- Understand the role of early American economists in creating the culture of consumption

Unit IV: Myth vs. Reality: Examining Media Portrayals alongside American History

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the unique era of 1950 in U.S. History and in U.S. mass media. Post-war financial incentives and broadcast television, magazine, and radio culture is emphasized as a context to the statistical data available that compares a “typical” 1950 family to a typical televised portrayal.
- Analyze the role of stereotypes in creating “canned” characters for rapidly increasing broadcast media outlets.
- Discern the role of programming slots, advertising messages, and appealing to a mass and simultaneous audience.
- Define “demographics” on the level of culture and subcultures, and discuss where s/he fits in.
- Compare and contrast the representation of racial, ethnic, social, and religious groups as represented in popular mass media
- Compare and contrast historical data on racial, ethnic, social, and religious groups alongside media portrayals.
- Recognize the role mass media played in creating and extending stereotypes.
- Recognize the role mass media played in discrediting stereotypes and discuss the levels of success and failure.
- Evaluate the role art, music, literature, televised political insurgence, etc. played in creating a publicized response to stereotyping.
- Discern differences between broadcast media’s influence on the “public sphere for debate” before and after cable television, the world wide web, and increasingly fragmented, target-audience media.
- Analyze the statistical impact on viewership of any one broadcast before and after mid-1990.
- Assess the impact of “Reality TV” on contemporary stereotypes.

Unit V: Violence and the Media: Which Came First?

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the increasing concerns of youth violence and exposure to violent media.
- Discern differences in the various methods of argumentation used to support opposing viewpoints on the “exposure to violent media and violent crime” debate
- Analyze primary and secondary sources in determining myths and realities in the historical rate of violent crime and youth offenders.
- Discuss victims’ rights in mass media exposure and representation.
- Analyze the “CSI-effect” in creating a popular belief in high statistical rate of crime solution and punishment.
- Define the differences between “direct violence” and “indirect violence” as they are ascribed to men and women on television.
- Discuss the appeal of violent media, including “solved-crime” programs.
- Support and defend a theoretical viewpoint on violent media impact through use of mass media illustrations: including music, graphic art, film, television, video games, and web resources.
- Recognize the impact of internalized violence in the form of anxieties and defensive behaviors.

Unit VI: Media and Government: The Never-Ending Debate

- Trace the historical relationship between media and government from the American Revolution to Fireside Chats to Public Crisis Information
- Define “adversary” and “cooperative” in terms of media and government relationship
- Debate in structured, researched, team format at least one side of the government-media relationship debate.
- Analyze the changes to government-media relationship in wartime vs. peacetime.
- Compare and contrast the American media system to that in countries with different and similar governmental structures.
- Define “the right to know” and “the right to privacy” as they affect us as individuals, public figures, and individuals for whom these lines are blurred.
- Evaluate the role government plays in controlling media and the role media plays in acting as either a mouthpiece of a “whistle blower” to government. (cont’d)

- Discuss media gate-keeping and agenda setting in local and national political campaigns, as well as information dissemination on international policy and war.
- Analyze the role of “blogging” by established news reporters and soldiers in influences public perception of the government’s and media monopolies in disseminating controversial information.

Evaluation of student learning:

Your class grade is based on your performance on mini-quizzes, written homework assignments, graded in-class debates, and final media examples portfolio.

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| • Written Homework/Media Issue Essays | = 50% |
| • Mini Quizzes | = 10% |
| • Graded Debate(s) | = 15% |
| • Final Media Critique/Samples Portfolio | = 10 % |
| • Class Participation | = 15% |

Academic Integrity Statement:

Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity -- the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work and that faculty and academic support services staff members will take reasonable precautions to prevent the opportunity for academic dishonesty. The entire policy on Academic Integrity is located in the Student handbook and is found on the college website.

Students

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson’s office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.