

# Media & Society

PCSCOR350-01 — MW 4:00-5:15 p.m.  
Y04-4120

Professor Jennifer L. Gregg, Ph.D. E-mail: <a href="mailto:jennifer.gregg@umb.edu">jennifer.gregg@umb.edu</a> Office: W-06-85 Office hours: MWF 10:00 – 11 a.m.	Professor Mathias Klang, Ph.D. E-mail: <a href="mailto:mathias.klang@umb.edu">mathias.klang@umb.edu</a> Office: W-6-39 Office hours: Tu&Th 1-2pm
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## Purpose of the Course

We live in an age where the media dominate our social, political, and interpersonal interactions. In this age of “mediocracy,” it is vital for us to become active, critical consumers of media. The purpose of this course is to provide you with knowledge and skills to critically analyze media contents and institutions. Topics examined in the course include, but are not limited to, media economics, media and political regulations, media representations of the real world, media audiences, and globalization and media.

## Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to develop a critical awareness of media institutions and the social environment they are situated in. To that end, you should

- Understand how media systems are integrated and shaped by larger systems of power and cultural understanding, and how these systems of power and stratification are dependent on communication
- Develop critical tools to explore how non-dominant groups including women, people of color, social class, and sexual orientation are represented in the media; understand the significance of those representations, the role of those representations in the reproduction of inequality and how those representations have changed over time
- Develop a meaningful understanding of the evolution of media systems and how inequality of access combined with the proliferation of platforms influence social perceptions and interaction, as well as social structure
- Be able to present your critical thinking in coherent writing and class presentations

## **Required Text**

Croteau, D. & Hoynes, W. (2014). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kidd, D. (2014). *Pop Culture Freaks: Identity, Mass Media, And Society*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

*Journal articles, handouts, and other relevant readings will be assigned throughout the semester. The instructors will also screen documentaries and various educational videos in class.*

## **Accommodations**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offers guidelines and support for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services, Campus Center, Upper Level, Room 0211, 617-287-7430. The student must present these recommendations and discuss them with each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of Drop/Add period.

## **Cell Phones**

Turn your cell phones off when you enter the classroom unless you have prior approval from me. These interruptions are distracting to your fellow classmates and professor. If you disrupt the class by cell phone, text messaging, etc., you will be asked to leave class and your participation grade will suffer.

## **Laptops**

Based on student input, and recent research about note-taking and cognition, laptops will NOT be allowed in class. For more information see:

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>

If you have an accommodation for technology in the classroom (see above) please let me know.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Any student caught cheating in any way will receive **a zero for the semester**. Cheating includes but is not limited to glancing at another student's exam, using unauthorized materials during an exam, handing in written work produced by someone else, plagiarism, helping someone else cheat, etc. Students are required to adhere to the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating, to the University Statement on Plagiarism and the Documentation of Written Work, and to the Code of Student Conduct as delineated in the Catalog of Undergraduate Programs. The Code of Conduct is available online at

[https://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/academics/academic\\_honesty](https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/academics/academic_honesty).

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

All assignments and exams must be completed and turned in *on or before the date assigned*. If you fail to turn in an assignment on time you will lose a letter grade for each day it is late. *Assignments that are more than five days late will not be accepted* and you will receive a grade of ZERO for that assignment.

## **Professionalism**

Attendance is expected at each class period, and we will take attendance. Further, we are sticklers about professionalism and timeliness. Don't be late. Participation is important...please come to class prepared to discuss and ask questions about the current day's topic.

## **Discussion Leader**

You will randomly be assigned as discussion leader for one day during the semester. On this day you will have 10 minutes to present 3 interesting points from that week's chapter. You will not use presentation aids (no PowerPoint!) and you must submit 3 discussion questions to the instructors at the beginning of the class period.

## **Exams**

Two exams will be given from assigned readings and lectures. Given the wealth of information you will be exposed to and the objectives of the course, these exams will NOT test your ability to memorize concepts, but rather test your abilities to apply concepts. These take-home written exams will be due one week from the date handed out in class.

As a general rule, exam make-ups or extensions will only be granted under very limited circumstances. Off campus work and personal travel are not legitimate reasons to miss an exam. Look at the schedule: if you foresee a problem with the exam at the time scheduled, you must make arrangements *prior* to the date the exam is handed out.

## **Documentary Film Review**

This project will be groups of three randomly assigned students. All students are expected to participate in the writing of the review as well as the class presentation. Students will complete a group evaluation of each other's' participation.

Written assignment due via Blackboard November 28 before class. Class presentations will be the week of November 28 & 30. All students must attend all presentations. If you choose not to attend during this mandatory attendance, your individual grade will be reduced by a letter grade.

See Blackboard for details.

## Book Review

You will complete a written book review of the *Kidd* book and participate in a class discussion of the book. The assignment is due November 7 before class; discussion day, November 7, is mandatory attendance. If you choose not to attend, your grade will be reduced by a letter grade.

See Blackboard for details.

Pass/Fail/Withdraw deadline: November 23

All items in this syllabus are subject to change as dictated by needs of the class.

## Grading Scale

Professionalism (includes attendance, in class exercises, pop quizzes as necessary)	150	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5 and class notes)	150
Discussion leader	25	Exam 2 (Chapters 6-10 and class notes)	150
Documentary Film Review (group assignment)	100	Book Review	150
Film presentation (group assignment)	50	Book club participation	25

This class uses a +/- grading scale, as follows:

		C+	77-79%
A	94-100%	C	73-76
A-	90-93%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
		F	0-59%

Bonus points may be awarded for optional activities that arise related to the class (films, speakers, etc.).

## Schedule

Week 1: Sept. 7	Introduction to course and each other
Week 2: Sept. 12, 14	Media and the Social World Media history Read: Chapter 1
Week 3: Sept. 19, 21	Media Technology Read: Chapter 9
Week 4: Sept. 26, 28	Technology continued  The Economics of the Media Industry Read: Chapter 2
Week 5: Oct. 3, 5	The Economics of the Media Industry continued
Week 6: Oct. 12	Political Influence on Media Read: Chapter 3  <b>(No class Oct. 10—Columbus Day)</b>
Week 7: Oct. 17, 19	Political Influence on Media continued
Week 8: Oct. 24, 26	Media Organizations and Professionals Read: Chapter 4 <b>Exam 1 due October 26 before class via Blackboard</b>
Week 9: Oct. 31, Nov. 2	User generated content/social media Media and Ideology Read: Chapter 5
Week 10: Nov. 7, 9	<b>Book club Nov. 7 Mandatory Attendance</b>  Media Influence and the Political World Read: Chapter 7

Week 11: Nov. 14, 16	Media Influence and the Political World Read: Chapter 7
Week 12: Nov. 21, 23	Social Inequality and Media Representations Add gaming stuff Read: Chapter 6  <b>(Nov. 23—Pass/Fail/Withdraw deadline)</b>
Week 13: Nov. 28, 30	<b>Documentary review presentations</b> <b>Mandatory attendance</b>
Week 14: Dec. 5, 7	Active Audiences and the Construction of Meaning Read: Chapter 8
Week 15: Dec. 12, 14	Media in a Changing Global Culture Read: Chapter 10
	<b>Exam 2 due December 20 by 4 p.m. via Blackboard.</b>