

University of Manitoba  
Department of Sociology

## **SOC 3580 A01 Media, Culture and Society**

Tuesday and Thursday, 10.00 am - 11.15 am

308 Tier

Winter 2013, 3 Credit Hours

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11.30 am - 12.30 pm, Thursdays 12.30 pm -1.30 pm

### **Course Summary**

This course begins by exploring why it is important to study the media from a sociological perspective. It will offer ways to approach the critical analysis of different types of media, for example, newspapers, brands, and television, in terms of how they are produced and organized. It will consider the complex and often contradictory relationship between media and society by examining the messages and images conveyed by advertising, films, and Internet communication. The course will also examine different conceptualizations of media audiences, and the various implications of media for social life. Some of the themes discussed in this course include: the impact of social media on identities and social life; representations of gender, ethnicity and 'race' in the media; television and the public sphere; the mediatization of consumption; and more. It will offer students some of the theoretical tools from developments in media and cultural studies and media sociology in order to begin to appreciate the scope of the field and the breadth of the impact of media on contemporary social life.

### **Course Objectives**

- To interrogate common sense assumptions of media influence against sociological explanations of the way the media works.
- To introduce students to the critical analysis of media through the study of organizations and power, texts and meaning, as well as audiences and social change.
- To introduce students to key concepts in media sociology, such as 'representation', 'ideology', 'discourse', 'genre', 'narrative', and 'postmodernism'.
- To explain types of media as differentiated in terms of their organizing bodies, products and modes of consumption/interaction.
- To develop an appreciation of the significance of media in contemporary culture and social life.

## **Required Textbooks**

Sturken, M., and Cartwright, L. (2009) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **Recommended Textbooks**

O'Shaughnessy, M., and Stadler, J. (2012) *Media & Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Note: Additional required readings will be on reserve in the Dafoe library.**

## **Assessment**

### **Short Written Assignment (Due February 12)**

- Students are required to write a short written assignment of 1000 words. The topic for this piece of written work will be chosen by the student from a list of several possible questions, which will be distributed in class.

### **Mid-term Test (February 28)**

- A test of 60 minutes will be held in-class. The test will comprise a mix of short and long answer questions. Questions will cover material presented in lectures, readings, films, and class exercises. *Students should note that the instructor will not reschedule this test for any reason other than medical.*

### **Term Essay (Due March 19)**

- Students are required to write an essay of 2500 words. The essay topic will be chosen by the student from a list of possible essay questions, which will be distributed in class, OR the student can choose to write on a topic of his or her choice, subject to approval by the instructor. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor to obtain approval of such independently selected essay topics PRIOR to writing the essay.

### **Final Test (April 9)**

- A test of 60 minutes will be held in-class. Students will be presented with a list of possible questions, and asked to choose a fixed number of questions and answer these in mini-essay format. Questions will cover material presented in lectures, readings, films, and class exercises. Study questions will be provided at least one week prior to the test. For this class there will be no exam held during the examination periods. *Students should note that the instructor will not reschedule this test for any reason other than medical.*

### **Participation**

- Participation marks will be based on student submissions to informal, in-class or take-home exercises. Instructions will be handed out in class. There will be at least three of these exercises throughout the term. Assignments will be carried out either individually or collaboratively in small groups, with the group submitting one finished product and all members of the group receiving the same grade for that assignment. Students may be asked to hand in questions following a film, or analyze one of the course readings, or apply their sociological knowledge to a question given by the instructor.

**Note:** Students are required to submit papers in *hard copy* format! Electronic copies will not be accepted. **Do not submit essays by email.** Students are instructed to *always keep a personal copy of any submitted work* in the case that they are required to submit another copy.

### Grade Weights

Short Written Assignment 15%  
 Mid-term Test 20%  
 Term Essay 30%  
 Final Term Test 20%  
 Participation 15%

### Grade Distribution

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>GPA</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+	91-100%	4.5	Exceptional
A	80-90%	4.0	Excellent
B+	75-79%	3.5	Very Good
B	70-74%	3.0	Good
C+	65-69%	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-64%	2.0	Adequate
D	50-59%	1.0	Marginal
F	49% or less	0	Failure

### Late Submissions, Missed Tests, and Missed Participation Exercises

Late papers will be penalized 3% per day late (including weekends). Medical documentation will normally be required to waive this penalty. However, if you know before the due date that a paper will be late you should contact me immediately. Extensions may be granted under extenuating circumstances, entirely at the instructor's discretion, **ONLY** if the student contacts the instructor **PRIOR** to the deadline.

Missing the mid-term or final test is a serious problem and is likely to result in a grade of 0. Only documented reasons will be accepted for missing the test. If you miss the test for health-related or emergency reasons, you should a) provide advance notice, if possible, by phoning or emailing the instructor, then b) directly contact the instructor *as soon as possible* to arrange a makeup test. Note that it is the student's responsibility for initiating a makeup test. Ordinarily, arrangements must be made within one week of the missed test; requests made later than one week will normally be denied. Under no circumstances will a makeup test be offered more than two weeks after the scheduled test.

If you miss an in-class participation exercise for *legitimate reasons only* (medical or other emergency reasons), you must contact the instructor and arrange for a make-up exercise within one week of the missed exercise. Documentation supporting the reason for missing the exercise may be requested by the instructor.

## **Missed Films**

If you miss a film during a lecture you will need to view it at an alternative time. Making this arrangement is a student responsibility. To view a missed film, you will need a form that is available from 123 Fletcher Argue and which will require the instructor's signature. It is your job to bring the form to the instructor for signing during office hours or by appointment.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence. Students should acquaint themselves with the online University of Manitoba Academic Calendar and Catalog: <http://umanitoba.ca/calendar> and refer to the section on General Academic Regulation: **Section 5** – Academic Evaluation: Personation at Examinations (Section 5.2.9) and **Section 8** – Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and Cheating (Section 8.1). *Penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and range from failing the course to expulsion from the University.* Guidelines for properly referencing your papers will be distributed in class.

**Note:** The Faculty of Arts reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

## **Religious Holidays**

The University of Manitoba acknowledges the right of all students to observe recognized holy days of their faith. You will need to inform the instructor in writing of your intended absence(s) at least three weeks in advance, particularly if such absence(s) coincide with the set mid-term test date.

## **Special Learning Needs**

Students with special learning needs (who, for legitimate reasons, require extra time to write a test, or who require aids or other supports) should introduce themselves to the instructor during the first week of the course in order to organize suitable accommodation and assessment arrangements.

## **Disruptions**

Disruptions due to excessive talking or early departures from the classroom are especially distracting to large classes. Please be considerate and respectful to the needs and rights of others in the class. Students should be aware that persistent disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Any student who has a legitimate reason for leaving class early should inform the instructor at the beginning of class.

## **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Last day for voluntary withdrawal from the course without academic penalty is **March 20, 2013**.

## **Student and Instructor Responsibility**

My responsibility as your instructor begins with the University's ROASS Policy and extends to creating a safe, cooperative and stimulating learning environment for students. As your instructor, I have selected texts and organized classroom time to meet the objectives of this course. Lectures are designed to help you understand and extend the concepts and ideas discussed in your texts and in the films. I comply fully with all University of Manitoba policies regarding teaching.

Student responsibilities include:

- Students are responsible for their own learning. You are expected to do readings in advance of class and are required to come prepared. You will often need to independently cover material in the textbooks (since not everything in the textbook will be directly addressed in class). Tests will draw on assigned readings as well as the lectures.
- If you are unclear about material or have academic concerns or questions, it is your responsibility to ask for help. I will be pleased to provide help during my office hours or by appointment. Students are warmly invited to drop by during office hours or to arrange an appointment to discuss any issues, concerns, or questions related to the course. Students are also responsible to track their own progress in the course, and to take action if you discover you are failing tests or papers.
- Students are responsible for complying with the policies on grades and tests, including policies on missed tests. You will find all course policies listed in this syllabus – please review it regularly. If you misplace this syllabus or a term schedule, you can download a copy from the course website.
- Students are asked to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a collegial learning environment; one in which all can develop as individuals and scholars, and in which the free and respectful exchange of ideas occurs. In order to achieve this, students are especially asked to be considerate and respectful of the needs and rights of other students in the class. Whispering and talking is especially inappropriate, since it bothers other students. Students who talk in class will be asked to leave the classroom. Other disruptions include late arrivals, early departures, mobile phone use, and other behaviour deemed inappropriate by the instructor or other students. Students should be aware that persistent disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Any student who has a legitimate reason for leaving class early should inform the instructor at the beginning of class and sit in a seat near the door to minimize disruption.

**Lecture Topics and Readings**  
***Handed out on the first day of term***