



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
COMM 201/201 (2704)—MEDIA THEORY AND CRITICISM
WATER TOWER CAMPUS/SPRING 2017

Instructor: Milan Pribisic, Ph.D. (mpribis@luc.edu)

Class meetings: MWF 1:40pm to 2:30pm, Corboy Law School, Room 301

Office: **WTC** 900 Lewis Tower, workstation B; phone: 312/915-7755

Office Hours: **WTC/Lewis Tower** Mondays 2:35 to 3:35pm OR by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the study of traditional mass media and new media from a historical, critical and interpretive perspective. We live in a mediated environment; how media work on us as individuals and as cultures and what effects they have on us are only some of the questions that media theory tries to answer in order to critically approach our past and present and envision a more ethical and productive future.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course reviews semiotics and other methods of textual analysis of media; it also surveys those theories that approach media as comprehensive, historical practices that go beyond media texts to envelope technology, institutions and political, social and experiential aspects of media production and consumption. After taking this course the students will be able to:

identify major media theories, their main tenets and application contexts;

apply the critical and technical vocabulary (media theory as a body of knowledge) to describe, analyze and critique media (to practice media criticism);

TEXTS: Faughey, Dan. *Key Themes in Media Theory*. (KT) 1st ed. (2007)

ATTENDANCE: In this class I am using the discussion teaching method which includes traditional lecturing but stresses interactive, question and answer, discussion during class time between the teacher and students and among students in small groups and small group projects; therefore, all students are expected to attend the class regularly and to be prepared to actively participate in the discussions and activities after reading the required material. For attending a class a student will receive **1 (one)** point that will be part of his/her course Participation grade. No show in class means no participation points for attendance. To make up for the missed assignments, such as oral presentation, group projects, online assignments, quiz, exam, the written medical doctor's excuse needs to be presented or a proper documentation showing you were representing Loyola in intercollegiate athletics, debate, or model government organizations on these dates.

SAKAI (<https://sakai.luc.edu>) is an online learning tool that allow us to communicate and collaborate with each other during the semester. You will find on it the course syllabus, e-mail addresses of all course participants, announcements, online assignments, online gradebook, etc.

LOCUS (<https://locus.luc.edu>) is Loyola's information portal for a wide variety of tasks. The instructor posts on Locus the midterm academic alerts and the final grades.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious violation of academic integrity. **Cheating** includes, but is not limited to, obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to another student during examination; obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination; using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom; falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines or any other action that, by omission or commission, compromise the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty; it is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts.

Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of other without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited, to submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.; submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material; allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit, or purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper. The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at

<http://www.luc.edu/english/aboutthewritingprogram/theseandmisuseofsourcematerials/#d.en.23878>

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In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard. Plagiarism or any act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the Office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The Office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SoC. If the student is not a member of the SoC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to a similar organization.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan to meet their own needs and assignments due dates.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: The attendance is taken at the beginning of the class! Up to fifteen-minute lateness is acceptable according to the academic rules; beyond that it is on your own discretion to decide whether you should interrupt the class already in progress or not; in any case, if you enter the classroom after the attendance has been taken it is your responsibility to check with the instructor after the class to be sure to get the attendance credit.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS: I am using the cumulative point system which means each assignment carries a certain number of points. To receive letter grade D for the Course you need to earn 61% of the total points or 183 points out of 300.

Participation (attendance, active and critical contribution to the class activities and discussions; short reaction papers and assignment in class or on Sakai, peer teaching and evaluations...)	75 points
Exam (mid-term and final; 50+ 50)	100 points
Individual journal (Annotated Bibliography)	50 points
Case Study Group Project and In-class Presentation	75 points

TOTAL= 300 POINTS:

A (EXCELLENT)=285-300;

A-minus=273-284;

B+=261-72;

B (GOOD)=249-260;

B-minus= 240-248;

C+=231-239;

C (AVERAGE)=219-230;

C-minus=213-218;

D+=201-212;

D (FAIR)=183-200;

F (POOR)=below 183

STATEMENT OF INTENT: By remaining in this course, students are agreeing to accept this syllabus as a contract and to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(This is a plan; syllabus and calendar are open to change--all changes will be posted on Sakai)

WEEK ONE of January 16: NO CLASS ON MONDAY (MLK DAY observed)

Course introduction and overview

What is media? What is theory? What is media theory and criticism?

READ: KT, Chapters 1 and 10

WEEK TWO of January 23: **UNIT ONE: MEDIUM THEORY—TECHNOLOGY**

H. Innis, M. McLuhan—The Medium is the Message

W. Benjamin—Art and Mechanical Reproduction

R. Williams, J. Habermas—Technology and Cultural Form; The Public Sphere

READ: KT Chapter 3

WEEK THREE of January 30: Reading Marshall McLuhan's "The Medium is the Message" (online source)

WEEK FOUR of February 6: **UNIT TWO: MEDIA EFFECTS**

Lasswell's Chain of Communication

Cultivation Theory

Agenda-setting of media theory

READ: KT Chapter 2

CHOICE OF THE TOPIC FOR ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10)

WEEK FIVE of February 13: **UNIT THREE: POLITICAL ECONOMY (AND POSTCOLONIAL) MEDIA THEORY**

T. Adorno—Culture Industry

E. Herman and N. Chomsky—*Manufacturing Consent*

Critical political economy; "The postcolonial" and Race

READ: KT Chapter 7

WEEK SIX of February 20: **UNIT FOUR: STRUCTURALIST MEDIA THEORY**

F. de Saussure and R. Barthes—Signs, Myths, Structure

Theories of Ideology and Hegemony (The Ideology of Ads)

D. Hebdige, M. Foucault—Subculture; Theory of Discourse

READ: KT Chapter 4

WEEK SEVEN of February 27: In-class group work and peer teaching

R. Barthes "An Introduction to the Structuralist Analysis of Narrative" (online)

S. Hall "Encoding, decoding" (online source)

MID-TERM EXAM (FRIDAY, MARCH 3)

WEEK EIGHT of March 6: **SPRING BREAK!!! ENJOY!**

WEEK NINE of March 13: **UNIT FIVE: INTERACTIONIST MEDIA THEORY**

FORMING GROUP FOR GROUP PROJECTS

E. Goffman—Self-presentation

J. Thompson—Mediated Quasi-Interaction

Moral Panic; A, Giddens—Structuration Theory

READ: KT Chapter 5

WEEK TEN of March 20: **UNIT SIX: FEMINIST MEDIA THEORY**

Radical Feminism; A. Dworkin—Anti-Pornography Campaign

T. Modleski—Today's Soap Operas

“Masculinity in Crisis” debate

READ: KT Chapter 6

WEEK ELEVEN of March 27: In-class reading and presentations

L. Mulvey “Visual Pleasure and the Narrative cinema” (online source)

WEEK TWELVE of April 3: **UNIT SEVEN: POSTMODERN MEDIA THEORY**

D. Boorstin, G. Debord—The Image and The Spectacle

The Information Society

READ: KT Chapter 8

J. Beaudrillard “The Implosion of Meaning in the Media” (online source)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (FRIDAY, April 7)

WEEK THIRTEEN of April 10: **UNIT EIGHT: CONSUMERIST MEDIA THEORY**

J. Fiske; M. de Certeau—Consumer Resistance, Everyday Tactics

Theories of Fandom

READ: KT Chapter 9

NO CLASS ON FRIDAY (GOOD FRIDAY)

WEEK FOURTEEN of April 17: **NO CLASS ON MONDAY (EASTER MONDAY)**

GROUP PRESENTATIONS (start Wednesday, April 19)

WEEK FIFTEEN of April 24: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

LAST DAY OF CLASSES IS APRIL 28TH; THE EXAM WEEK MAY 1ST TO MAY 6TH (OUR CLASS’ FINAL EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, MAY 4TH from 1:00PM TO 3:00PM).