

Syllabus

COMM 202: Media and Society

Department of Communication

2023

Claude Drolet, MEd,

Office: G556;

Email: cdrolet@gmu.edu

Office Hours: 1PM – 2PM M-W, 2PM -3PM T--Th and by appointment

Required Texts

1. Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media (7th edition) ISBN: 9781138729483
2. Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age ISBN: 9781628924787

Course Description

Media and Society is a class that investigates what media is, how it has affected society through the ages, and what impacts it has on society today. It also takes a look at the questions: Does society affect media and/or does media affect society? How or how not? This class begins with the most fundamental aspect of media, the written form. It reviews what impact writing has had on the world. By doing so, we are better prepared to understand and discuss how we make sense of our world today. The course then goes to discover the effects of sound and how it has been used and is currently used in our society. From there, we look at the visual aspects of media from both an historical viewpoint as well as using our world lens to discuss how visual aspects of media impact our current lives/world as global citizens. Lastly, we will investigate the always-changing digital world, which combines all three of elements we discussed through the semester. This course focuses not only on our current day society and the impact of media, but on the historical aspects of media and society in order that we are able to intelligently discuss how we, as a society, act and react to what we see and hear in the media today

Course Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to accomplish the following tasks:

1. State the four elements of media from the course;
2. Explain how these four elements have changed society through the ages;
3. Define important theories and fundamental changes that have occurred and explain their impact historically, socially, politically, legally, etc.
4. Define, explain, and analyze various aspects of media that will prepare the student the deeper study of media, journalism, public relations, and politics from a communication standpoint.

This course is divided into four parts of Media and Society: Writing, Sound, Visual, and Electronic. We will take a look at each of these areas; however “media & society” is too vast of a subject to discuss everything that has happened. Thus, there will be some things we will not have time to discuss during the semester. This does not mean they are unimportant, it simply means that of the unimaginable number of possibilities, we have had to make tough choices as to what to include. The class will try to balance historical information and relate it to current-day situations.

The goal is to enlighten the student to things that have happened that have shaped the way our (American) society is today. Think about the major social movements over our (American) history and then think about the impact the media has had in each movement. Conversely, each movement has had an impact on our media and has opened up many “doors” to the way we experience our society and freedoms today. If you are unfamiliar with Archie Bunker, that TV show is one perfect example.

I look forward to guiding you through this semester as we take a look at a variety of aspects of both society and media through the ages, so you get a strong sense of what media is today and how it came about. I also look forward to learning from each of you because a society is not made up of one viewpoint. It is made up of many people experiencing the same thing but having different outcomes.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to define, explain, and demonstrate how media and society work interchangeably;
2. Students will be able to analyze and discuss media's effects on society and society's effects on media through viewing others' assignments in order to develop analytical skills and critical thinking;
3. Students will develop analytical skills and critical thinking skills through the viewing, analysis, and participation in class assignments;
4. Students will become aware of the fundamental principles of media theory and apply them in various in-class and written assignments;
5. Students will receive reinforcement for effective written and spoken communication;
6. Students will learn about and will apply ethical principles regarding media and society;
7. Students will learn to effectively analyze a variety of media using available research and theory;

Attendance

Following University policy, students are expected to be in class on time (defined as the time the class is scheduled to begin). Bring all textbooks, course materials, and this syllabus to each class. Absences and excessive lateness will be noted. Exams cannot be made up except for University-approved absences. More than two absences will result in lower grades due to your inability to participate and cover classroom material. You are responsible for material covered in class whether you are present or not. Please make arrangements with a classmate to get copies of notes and materials covered in class. This material will be included on the midterm and final exams.

Participation

- You have clear knowledge from the first day when things are due. Thus, you are expected to meet those deadlines.
- You are expected to participate in all in-class activities and/or online discussion board exercises. Accountability is important in this class. Do not wait until the last minute to post; it is disruptive to the flow of the class. I expect and encourage active participation. That constitutes timely involvement in the class, thoughtful commentary on the week's topics that reflect one has read the assigned course material before answering, a willingness to contribute to group/class discussion, and above all, respecting your fellow classmates.
- Your final grade and ability to do well in this class will depend on your consistent participation in this course. If you are not physically in class to participate in an in-class assignment, you cannot earn the points missed.

Course Requirements & Expectations

- You are responsible for reading all chapters according to the dates on the syllabus. If you have any questions about something you have read, please bring it to my attention.
- COMM Department policy is to not accept late assignments. You know at the beginning of the course when assignments are due. This class will be conducted in the same manner as a working environment, meaning that your boss expects the final product at a set deadline and will not listen to excuses as to why something is not ready when s/he needs it.
- It will be extremely important that you check your GMU e-mail periodically throughout the week. As needed/appropriate, please maintain some sort of consistent contact with your group, as well as me. In this way you will be able to keep up with what's going on in the class.

- There is an old college adage. For every 1 hour in class, you should be prepared to spend 2-3 hours outside of class preparing and studying. This means that I expect you will spend six to nine hours a week on this class. This is ample time to attend to your studies and your work and I expect everything to be completed on time.
- Computer problems are never a reasonable excuse for not turning in an assignment. Be prepared and make sure that your hard drives, monitors, printers, USB keys, ink, etc. are in working order. If your computer is not in working order, there are plenty of places on campus and off where you can use computers. Please plan ahead.
- The best way to reach me is through e-mail. I check e-mail regularly all day, until about **9 pm, even on the weekends**. I may not be able to respond instantly, but I will do my best, sometimes that means you will need to wait until the following day.
- Please post your discussion board assignments on time. Having to wait on someone to post his or her assignments is very frustrating to everyone!
- I will discuss any grading questions on a specific assignment with you during a scheduled office-hour visit for up to two class sessions following the class period I handed it back. Please note, this could mean a decrease, not an increase, in your grade.
- When turning in assignments online, MSWord (available on all campus computers) must be used. Do NOT use WordPerfect, MSWorks, WordPad, or any Apple/Mac product. If I cannot open/read a file, I cannot assign a grade other than zero (0).
- If you miss an exam during the semester, you will not be able to take that exam. In its place, I will assign a 10-12 page paper on a topic that I will give to you based on the information from that module. It will require no fewer than 5 academically-based sources. Neither of your textbooks can count as any of the sources. This paper will be due within one week of the original date of the

Grading Policy and Methods of Evaluation

Assignments are awarded points, not given individual letter grades. Total points will be added at the end of the semester to determine your final grade for the course.

Grading Weights and Point Distribution	
Exam One	100 points
Exam Two	100 points
Exam Three	100 points
Presentation	100 points
Presentation Responses	200 points
Final Exam (cumulative)	200 points
TOTAL	800 points

Point Distribution:

A+ = 486 to 500
 A = 465 to 485
 A- = 450 to 464
 B+ = 435 to 449
 B = 415 to 434
 B- = 400 to 414

C+ = 385 to 399
 C = 350 to 384
 C- = 339 to 349
 D = 300 to 338
 F = 299 or less

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Class Presentations

Each class, 1 or more people will present a 10-minute synopsis of a person from media. You will discuss these people in class so that we can get a better understanding of how media has impacted society and vice-versa. This is not a research project, meaning you can use Wikipedia and encyclopedias, BUT, the information must be truthful, factual, and of a college-level. You are required to use no fewer than three sources. Neither of your textbooks can count as any of the sources. The information must be verbally cited within your presentation.

You should create a PowerPoint or some other visual aspect as they can be helpful. It will help organize you so you are not fumbling around looking unprepared. You may use graphics, sounds, visuals, etc., but nothing longer than 5 seconds at a time, with no more than 4 clips used (total of 20 seconds). I'm not interested in what other people have done/created, only what you have done/created. You must upload your presentation to Blackboard by noon on the Tuesday of the week you are to present.

You will have a maximum of 10 minutes to talk about your person, with the goal to end between 8 ½ and 10 minutes.

You know from the first week when your presentation is due. If you miss your presentation, you will not be able to make up that presentation. In its place, you will be assigned a 10-12 page paper on a topic that is chosen for you based on the information from that module. It will require no fewer than 3 academically-based sources. Neither of your textbooks can count as any of the sources.

This paper will be due within one week of the original due date of the presentation and on the day you turn it in, and you will present it to the class so they can learn what you have learned. If you do not turn in the paper and present it on the day it is due you will earn a zero.

In this way, you will be able to demonstrate your understanding of the course's materials while maintaining your academic integrity. There are no exceptions to this policy.

There are no excused absences in this class. You must be in class (on time) in order to earn points

Academic Integrity

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own and developed by you specifically for that assignment during the current semester; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask your instructor for clarification. Under no circumstances is it permissible to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters relating to academic work. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct, and cases of academic misconduct will be treated seriously, will most likely result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and will be reported to the Mason Honor Committee. Another important aspect of academic integrity includes the free exchange of ideas, and there will often have vigorous discussion in this class. It's fully expected that all aspects of this class will be conducted dialogically with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. For more information, visit: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>.

Campus Emergencies, Closures, and Class Cancellations

George Mason University is dedicated to preparing staff and students in the event of an emergency. All students in this class are encouraged to register for Mason Alert, a system that allows university officials to contact the community during an emergency by sending a text message. In addition, take a minute to view the emergency procedures poster in each of your classrooms.

If campus is closed for any reason (power outage, snow, etc.), do not assume that class activities are cancelled. In the event of a snow day or other campus closure that prevents a class from meeting in its

normal classroom, classes will typically be held online. Watch your email for messages from your instructors that provide instructions about how the class will proceed.

If your instructor is not present at the start of class, please check your emails for updates. If there is not an email from your instructor, wait until 20 minutes after the start of class and then you are free to go.

Classroom Conduct and Professionalism

Professionalism includes coming to class with a positive attitude, engaging in dialogic communication (e.g., respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, working together in a spirit of cooperation), and arriving to class on time and prepared for the class session. When students engage in any type of inappropriate behavior, they may be asked and required to leave for the remainder of that class session. If all goes well in the class, students tend to share information of an "interpersonal" nature"- it goes with the territory in a Communication classroom. You wouldn't want something said about you to people all around campus, so keep others' revelations confidential and do not talk about your classmates outside of class, and that goes for all your classes! Each student is expected to be conscious and respectful of classroom diversity. While students may disagree on many topics, every person should respect the perspective of fellow classmates, instructors, and invited guests.

Laptop computers, tablets, mobile phones, and other electronic devices may not be used during class unless the instructor has instructed students to use them for a specific class. Per University policy, cell phones should be set to silent mode and should not disrupt the learning environment in the classroom. Cell phones cannot be answered or used in the classroom except for emergency alerts. Students who fail to turn off such devices and disrupt the class will be asked to leave. See the undergraduate catalog for more information on classroom disruptions.

Texts and SMS Communications. There will be no text messaging during class time.

Students may use laptops and recording devices during class, but solely for note-taking purposes. Do not disrupt other students. No e-mailing during class time. No recorded class lectures or interactions may be posted online or used for any profit-generating activity.

Bring the course textbook, syllabus, class notes, any needed assignments and drafts, papers and writing utensils to each class meeting.

Students who interrupt class discussions by frequently arriving late to class, constantly interrupting others without thoughtfully listening to their comments, or who ask questions (in class and over email) that would more appropriately be answered by a simple glance at the syllabus (e.g., "When is this due?," "What do we have to read for next class?," "Did we do anything important when I missed class?," etc.) not only reflect poorly upon themselves, they also actively devalue the educational experience of others. Keep a copy of the course syllabus and schedule on hand and refer to them often. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and to keep track of assignments and deadlines throughout the semester.

No electronic devices may be used when taking examinations.

Other University Policies and Procedures

This class adheres to all published University policies regarding sexual harassment and equal opportunity. The goal is to provide all of us with a safe, fair, and equitable learning and teaching environment.

If you have a disability, please visit or call the Office of Disability Services. This office will notify me directly so that appropriate accommodation can be made.

Tentative Spring 2022 Schedule

Week	Day	Do before class	Do in class
1	02/21 & 02/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Introduction to the Course Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part I: The Printing Revolution, pages 17-26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Overview Assign Presentations
2	02/28 & 03/02	Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1: The Earliest Precursors of Writing, pp. 5-14 Chapter 4: The Origins of Writing, pp 32-39 Chapter 7: Writing Restructures Consciousness, pp 58-63 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing & Writing Presentations?
3	03/07 & 03/09	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter I: The Devine Art, pp. 27-45 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9: Paper & Block Printing, pp. 76-83 Chapter 10: The Invention of Printing, pp. 85-88 Chapter 11: Early Modern Literacies, pp.91-100 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
4	03/14 & 03/16	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter I: The Devine Art, pp. 45-47, 57-66 Chapter 2: The Commercial & Industrial Revolution 1814-1900, pp. 67-78, 88-104 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Revolution Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
5	03/21 & 03/23	Kovarik <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3: Print Media in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries, pp. 105-115, 120-138 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 12: Sensationalism and News 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Revolution Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
6	03/28 & 03/30	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4: Photography: Giving Vision to History, pp. 151-179 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 18: Early Photojournalism EXAM I on Thursday	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photography Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
7	04/04 & 04/06	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 7: The First Electronic Revolution: Telegraph and Telephone, pp. 255-274 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 13: Time, Space, and the Telegraph Chapter 15: The Telephone Takes Command Chapter 17: Wireless World 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telegraph/ Telephone Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
8	04/11 & 04/13	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8: The New World of Radio, pp. 275-282 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 19: Inscribing Sound Chapter 20: The Making of the Phonograph 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonograph Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">
9	04/18 & 04/20	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8: The New World of Radio, pp. 283-292 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 23: The Public Voice of Radio Chapter 24: Early Radio Chapter 25: The Golden Age of Programming 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">

10	04/25 & 04/27	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8: The New World of Radio, pp. 292-307 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 26: Orson Welles' War of the Worlds Broadcast Chapter 27: Radio Voices Chapter 28: Radio in the Television Age <p style="text-align: center;">EXAM 2 on Tuesday</p>	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio Cont'd Presentations
11	05/02 & 05/04	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 5: Cinema: The Image Comes Alive, pp 181-215 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 21: Early Motion Pictures Chapter 22: Movies Talk <p style="text-align: center;">Spring Recess No Classes</p>	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion Pictures Presentations
12	05/09 & 05/11	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9: Television: A New Window on the World, pp. 309-319 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 29: Television Begins 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television Presentations
13	05/16 & 05/18	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9: Television: A New Window on the World, pp. 319-341 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 31: Making Room for TV Chapter 32: From Turmoil to Tranquility Chapter 33: Boob Tubes, Fans, and Addicts 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television cont'd Presentations
14	05/23 & 05/25	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part IV: The Digital Revolution, pp. 343-348 Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 10: Computers, pp. 349-374 Chapter 34: How Media Became New <p style="text-align: center;">EXAM 3 on Tuesday</p>	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Presentations
15	05/30 & 06/01	Kovarik: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 11: Digital Networks, pp. 375-404 Chapter 12: Global Cultures, pp. 405-420; 430. Heyer & Urquhart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 35: Popularizing the Internet Chapter 36: The World Wide Web 	Discussion and activities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital cont'd Presentations
FINAL EXAM: The Final Exam for this course will be delivered during a Block Exam timeframe			

Any adjustments to the schedule will be announced via email and/or on Blackboard; students are responsible for adhering to these changes. All reading should be done prior to the class date where it is mentioned. You are responsible for **all material in your textbooks**. The exams are taken directly from the test banks in the book and are timed. You must read the chapters prior to taking the exams. You are expected to combine the concepts found in all books during your exams. If you do not read the books and do not study from the books, your chances of doing well are lessened significantly. If you have any questions about material that is not covered specifically in discussion, please email me.

By taking this class, you understand that you must read any articles posted, do any discussion boards posted, review the videos, review all elements in the modules, and do any quizzes/assignments due, whether or not they are listed below. You also agree not to cheat or plagiarize in any way. This is your notice that I actively seek those who cheat and/or plagiarize.

Required Readings with Notes

You are responsible for reading, in their entirety, all of the material prior to coming to class. Concepts may or may not be covered in class or on the PowerPoints. If you have questions about something we haven't covered, it is important that you ask. Any changes will be noted via email and/or Blackboard.