



Syllabus
Jour 1001, Section 002
Contemporary Mass Media
Spring 2004

Tues. / Thurs. 3:30-4:45 p.m.
Ramaley N1B31

Instructor: Christof Demont-Heinrich, M.A.

Office: Armory 102

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2 p.m.-3:15 p.m. and by appointment

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Class Web Site: <http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~demonthe/1001/>

Required Text:

Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture by Stanley J. Baran, 2002, 3rd edition (new); (2nd edition used)

--Available at CU Bookstore/Colorado Bookstore (and various online sources)

--Two copies of the *2nd edition* will be on reserve at Norlin Library

--Book web site: <http://www.mhhe.com/baran3>

--Book comes with CD-ROM which has useful key terms sections, sample quizzes, etc.

In addition photocopies from other sources will be handed out as needed.

Course Description and Goals

At its most fundamental level this course is designed to teach students to become more critical and thoughtful consumers of media. Its aim is to inspire students to ask questions about **and of** the mass media. Who are the mass media? What do they do? Who do they influence and how? Who are the mass media's powerful players? What kind of power do they have? Over whom and what? How do they fit into the complex web of contemporary (post)modern culture and society? What is the historical, political and economic basis of the contemporary mass media -- and their power? And how, in what ways, and with what possible implications do we/should we [or perhaps should we not] integrate the mass media into our everyday lives?

In sum, this course aims to equip students with the conceptual and intellectual tools to be able to begin to understand, explain, and critically and intelligently comment and reflect upon the contemporary mass media.

In addition to lectures, discussion, and short in-class group activities and presentations, this class will include video presentations as well as guest speakers with direct experience in and knowledge about a variety of media industries from television and high technology to public relations and media ethics.

However, this is NOT a job-skills oriented class. Its primary aim is to introduce students to the field of media studies and to help them become more critical, knowledgeable, intelligent and reflective consumers -- and producers -- of mass media.

Because this class is dedicated to critical mass media analysis, you will be expected to keep abreast of current events by way of television, radio, print and Internet news sources. Current events will be considered possible testing material for possible in-class pop-quizzes only (not for exams).

Grading

Grades will NOT be curved. If you attend class, do the required work and have a reasonable grasp of the information, you should have no trouble earning at least a "C," which indicates satisfactory work.

With the exception of documented absences [official doctor's note, etc.] you will NOT be allowed to make up a pop quiz, exam, etc. if you miss class. If you have a legitimate, documented reason for missing an upcoming class [official CU athletic/extracurricular event, etc.], it is your responsibility to inform the instructor beforehand. It is also your responsibility to contact other class members for notes, assignment sheets, etc. if you miss class. Lecture notes will NOT be distributed in class or online.

Exams:

There will be a midterm (25%) and final exam (25%). The exam formats will include multiple choice, short answer and short essay questions. All material presented in class -- both by the instructor AND by guest lecturers -- is "fair game" for exam questions.

Written Assignments: You will be given two short writing assignments (15% EACH) (three pages, double spaced maximum length). Specific assignment sheets will be made available on the class web site. You will have two weeks to complete each assignment. Written assignments will automatically lose a letter grade for every day that they are late. NO papers will be accepted later than four days after they are due[automatic F].

Homework Assignments/Bulletin Board Posts: You will be given a total of five SHORT homework and/or bulletin board posted assignments over the course of the semester four of which will count toward your homework grade (5%). I will NOT accept late homework assignments/bulletin board posts. Period. The rationale behind these SHORT homework assignments is to encourage you to consistently critically engage the contemporary mass media. The class bulletin board will be used to help facilitate critical thinking and exchange with your classmates.

Participation, Attendance, Bulletin Board Participation: In-class participation and discussion is vital to a healthy and effective learning environment. You may be periodically called upon to ask/answer questions. You will also be called upon to participate in short in-class group activities and subsequent group presentations. Student names must be affixed to any group work (overheads, etc.) and will be used as a partial basis upon which to determine individual participation grades (10%). At any given time during the semester, I may take "spot" attendance. Those who fail to show up regularly will see their participation grade drop, perhaps radically. Also, I will use to the electronic bulletin board to help facilitate conversation, dialogue

and rational, critical intellectual exchange between the instructor and students and, more importantly, among students.

"Pop" Quizzes: There will be three pop quizzes. Only your best two quiz grades will count (in other words, your lowest quiz will be automatically dropped). Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. I will NOT re-administer quizzes for those who arrive to class late! The questions on these quizzes will relate to the readings, lecture AND current events. The pop quizzes will be worth 5% of your semester grade. I reserve the right to increase the number of quizzes -- and the total percentage of your semester grade they are worth -- if it becomes apparent to me that many students are not keeping up with the class readings.

Grading Breakdown:

Participation, attendance, board posts	10%
Pop quizzes (2 of 3 count)	5%
Homework assignments, board posts (4 of 5 count)	5%
Two written assignments	30%
Mid-term exam	25%
Final exam	25%

Grading Scale:

93%+	A
90%-92%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67%-69%	D+
63%-66%	D
60%-62%	D-
59% -	F

Policies

1. No "incompletes" will be given in this class.
2. I will not be regularly monitoring attendance. However coming to class regularly will be crucial to your success. Class lecture and discussion generally will not duplicate your text book. Also, keep in mind that participation constitutes 10% of your total grade and that there will be three [top two graded quizzes will count] pop quizzes (5%) during the semester.
3. Rude or abusive behavior such as talking excessively while the instructor or fellow students are addressing the class and/or personal verbal attacks on another student, groups of students, or the instructor will not be tolerated. Such behavior will have an extremely negative impact on your participation grade!
4. PLEASE turn off all cell phones/pages, etc. before coming to class. Thank you :-).

5. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of another will result in an automatic "F" for that assignment. Additionally, university policy permits harsher actions, if warranted. If you have any questions about what constitutes (or does not constitute) plagiarism, ask the instructor before you turn something in.
6. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) early in the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices)
7. If you have any questions or concerns during the course of the semester about anything, please feel free to contact me. E-mail is far and away the best way to reach me!