

COMMRC 320 Mass Communication Process
Tu & Th 4:00-4:50
G24 Cathedral of Learning
Spring 2013

Dr. Brent Malin
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Office Hours:
Tu 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Th 2:15-3:15 pm
and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:
Nick Maradin
Wil Upchurch

This course is an introduction to mass communication, exploring the cultural, technological, and economic history of the media from newspapers to the Internet, the changing relationships between media industries, audiences, and cultures, and the theoretical underpinnings of mass communication research. By immersing ourselves in both histories of specific communication forms, and traditional and contemporary theories of communication, we will place more academic and scholarly perspectives in conversation with the history of media development and use.

The goal of this conversation and exploration is to gain a perspective on contemporary forms of mass communication that allows us to critically evaluate, engage, and interpret a variety of media and cultural artifacts. In so doing, we will become, on the one hand, like anthropologists of our contemporary culture, working to make the mass communication artifacts that surround us “ethnographically strange” (to borrow a term from Alfred Schutz). Ultimately, we will take seriously the endeavor of confronting contemporary forms of mass communication from a liberal arts perspective, engaging in a critical conversation that examines the place of mass communication and communication technology in our contemporary world as well as our role as critical citizens in an age of electronic communication.

Texts & Materials:

Campbell, R., Martin, C., & Fabos, B. (2013). *Media culture: An introduction to mass communication* (8th Edition). New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Recitation Section:

In addition to our twice weekly lecture classes, each of you must register for and attend a once per week recitation section. These sections are an integral part of our course. You should attend each recitation section prepared to engage your class members in lively conversations of that week’s concepts and issues.

Attendance:

Although this is a large lecture class, you are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions when the opportunity arises. Because you will be expected to discuss concepts from the lecture in your Recitation Section, your attendance and attention in the lectures will bear directly on your ability to participate in those classes as well. You should make every effort to attend each lecture and be sure to get class notes for any lectures that you miss.

Critical Essays:

You will write 2 critical essays, both in the vicinity of 5-7 pages. Your essays should be carefully crafted, well-written, concise and specific, evidencing careful thinking, editing, and revision, and demonstrating your critical thinking about various forms of mass communication. You will receive detailed assignments for both papers later in the semester.

In addition to turning in your essays in class, you will also be required to submit an electronic copy of each of your essays through the website turnitin.com. In order to receive full credit for your essay, it must be submitted online by 10:00 pm on the day that the paper is due. You will receive instructions on how to register on the site during the first few weeks of class.

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm and final exam will be composed of multiple choice questions drawn from the terms, concepts, and definitions from class lectures, readings and discussions. In preparation, you should review class notes and read each assignment carefully. Not every concept from the lecture is covered in our textbook and our lectures and discussions will not cover each important concept from our class text. **Both exams will be taken on electronic Scantron sheets and will require a #2 pencil.**

Deadlines:

Deadlines are clearly marked on all assignments. As a general rule, late assignments are unacceptable, and when accepted will incur a substantial penalty. In addition, you must be present on exam dates in order to complete examinations. If you must miss an exam date, please speak with Professor Malin well in advance. Such requests will be taken on a case by case basis.

It is your responsibility to be sure that your computer files are properly backed up, that you have ample time to print your assignments before they are due, and that you are prepared for any other technology mishap that might occur in the process of completing an assignment. Malfunctioning computer equipment is not an adequate reason for a late assignment.

Grading:

Grading for the course breaks down as follows:

Mid-term Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	25%
Critical Essay #1:	15%
Critical Essay #2:	15%
Recitation Section:	20%

The following scale will be used to calculate grades. At the end of the semester, grades will be rounded to the **nearest half (0.5) percentage point only**. If you hope to achieve a particular grade

in this course, you should make every effort to ensure that you fall within the appropriate percentage range.

A+:	100% and above
A:	at or above 93% and below 100%
A-:	at or above 90% and below 93%
B+:	at or above 87% and below 90%
B:	at or above 83% and below 87%
B-:	at or above 80% and below 83%
C+:	at or above 77% and below 80%
C:	at or above 73% and below 77%
C-:	at or above 70% and below 73%
D+:	at or above 67% and below 70%
D:	at or above 63% and below 67%
D-:	at or above 60% and below 63%
F:	below 60%

Each assignment grade is final and makeup work will not be offered when the semester is over. Communication majors are required to earn a “C” in this course. If you are having difficulty or receive a low grade on any of your early assignments, please see Professor Malin or your recitation section leader as soon as possible.

Problems and Concerns:

Please see Professor Malin about any problems or concerns that might arise throughout the semester. He will always be available during his office hours, and at other times by appointment. If you have a situation or problem which you and Professor Malin cannot resolve, please contact the chair of the Communication Department, Professor Gordon Mitchell.

Professor Malin and the teaching assistants for this course would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. We also encourage you to contact Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and suggest reasonable accommodations for this course.

Cell Phone & In-Class Computer Policy:

Cellular phones may not be used during class—this includes phone conversations as well as such silent communication as texting, web browsing, and so forth. You should verify that you have turned your phone off before each class period. In addition, if you are seen talking on, texting with, or otherwise using your phone during exam periods you will be subject to possible failure on the examination and other disciplinary action. Likewise, although Professor Malin encourages students to take notes on laptop computers if they choose, you should refrain from opening up web pages, playing games, visiting social network sites, or engaging in other activities that might be distracting for your fellow students.

Plagiarism:

Using someone else’s work as your own, or without proper citation, constitutes plagiarism, and as such is grounds for failure of this course and disciplinary action on the part of the college. If you have questions about properly citing an article, or what can be considered plagiarism, please feel free

to speak with Professor Malin or your recitation section leader. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is original and contains the appropriate citations and references.

Weekly Syllabus

This schedule is subject to revision.

Readings and other assignments should be completed for the day and class listed.

Week 1

January 8, Tuesday:

COURSE INTRODUCTIONS

January 10, Thursday:

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND COMMUNICATION CULTURES

Week 2

January 15, Tuesday:

DEFINING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Reading:

“Mass Communication: A Critical Approach” (In *Media Culture* by Richard Campbell [M&C] Chapter 1)

January 17, Thursday:

MEDIA AND IDENTITY IN A POST-MODERN AGE

Reading:

“Mass Communication: A Critical Approach” (continued)

Week 3

January 22, Tuesday:

MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND MASS COMMUNICATION EFFECTS

Reading:

“Media Effects and Cultural Approaches to Research” (M&C Chapter 14)

January 24, Thursday:

IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA RESEARCH: INTERPELLATION & HEGEMONY

Reading:

“Media Effects” (continued)

Week 4

January 29, Tuesday:

THE POWERS OF ADVERTISING: ADVERTISING, ZEITGEIST, & IDEOLOGY

Reading:

“Advertising and Commercial Culture” (M&C Chapter 10)

January 31, Thursday:

READING ADS: THE SEMIOTICS OF DESIRE

Week 5

February 5, Tuesday:

PRINT AND DEMOCRACY: THE NEWSPAPER AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Reading:

“Newspapers: The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism” (M&C Chapter 7)

February 7, Thursday:

FROM TEEN TO TIME: MAGAZINES AND AMERICAN CULTURE

Reading:

“Magazines in the Age of Specialization” (*M&C* Chapter 8)

Week 6

February 12, Tuesday:

RIDING THE EARLY WAVES: RADIO AND THE BIRTH OF BROADCASTING

Reading:

“Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting” (*M&C* Chapter 4)

February 14, Thursday:

SOAPS, NEWS, AND SITCOMS: LISTENING IN ON AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

Reading:

“Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting” (continued)

Week 7

February 19, Tuesday:

THE EMERGENCE OF RECORDING CULTURE

Reading:

“Sound Recording and Popular Music” (*M&C* Chapter 3)

Essay #1 Due in Class

February 21, Thursday:

THE ROOTS OF POPULAR MUSIC AND THE RISE OF THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

Reading:

“Sound Recording and Popular Music” (*M&C* Chapter 3)

Week 8

February 26, Tuesday:

FROM LUMIÈRE TO LEE: MASS COMM THEORY GOES TO THE MOVIES

Reading:

“Movies and the Impact of Images” (*M&C* Chapter 6)

February 28, Thursday:

FROM MOVIE PALACE TO MULTIPLEX TO DVD: CHANGING SCREENS AND CHANGING IDENTITIES

Reading:

“Movies and the Impact of Images” (continued)

Week 9

March 5, Tuesday:

Mid-term Examination

March 7, Thursday:

THE BIRTH OF THE SMALL SCREEN: THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION

Reading:

“Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture” (*M&C* Chapter 5)

Week 10

Observe Spring Break Media Rituals

Week 11

March 19, Tuesday:

BEHIND AND BEYOND THE BOX: THE ECONOMICS AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TELEVISION

Reading:

“Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture” (continued)

March 21, Thursday:

FROM AIRWAVES TO WIRES: THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CABLE TELEVISION

Reading:

“Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture” (continued)

Week 12

March 26, Tuesday:

NARROWCASTING AND BEYOND: TELEVISION DURING AND AFTER CABLE

Reading:

“Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture” (continued)

March 28, Thursday:

FROM PAPYRUS TO AMAZON.COM: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF BOOKS

Reading:

“Books and the Power of Print” (*M&C* Chapter 9)

Week 13

April 2, Tuesday:

THE FIJI MERMAID AND OTHER LESSONS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Reading:

“Public Relations and Framing the Message” (*M&C* Chapter 11)

April 4, Thursday:

21ST CENTURY NEWS: RESPONSIBILITY AND FREE SPEECH AT THE DAWN OF THE MILLENNIUM

Reading:

“The Culture of Journalism: Values, Ethics, and Democracy” (*M&C* Chapter 13)

Week 14

April 9, Tuesday:

MEDIA REGULATION AND DEMOCRATIC THEORY

Reading:

“Legal Controls and Freedom of Expression” (*M&C* Chapter 15)

April 11, Thursday:

LIFE IN THE ELECTRONIC GLOBAL VILLAGE

PART I: GLOBALIZATION

Reading:

“Media Economics and the Global Marketplace” (*Me&C* Chapter 12)

Essay #2 Due in Class

Week 15

April 16, Tuesday:

LIFE IN THE ELECTRONIC GLOBAL VILLAGE

PART II: BEING DIGITAL

Reading:

“The Internet and New Technologies: The Media Converge” (*Me&C* Chapter 2)

April 18, Thursday:

COMMUNICATION, CULTURE, AND CITIZENSHIP: A REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Final Examination: April 26, Friday, 8:00 am.