media communication theory ii
spring 2012

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class meets: 12:30 - 3 p.m. Mondays in E254 AJB

office hours: 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Mondays; 1 - 3 p.m. Wednesdays

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication office is located in E305 AJB. The Director of the School is Prof. David Perlmutter, who may be contacted at (319) 335-3482.

course overview and goals
This course offers an introduction to the most significant theoretical turning points in media and cultural studies, and to the radical politics that underlies such scholarship. The course is organized in a rough chronology that traces the origins of contemporary critical/cultural studies of the media to Marxian concepts of ideology, but follows the development of these ideas through various schools of thought, illustrating how the field has grown more complex, diverse and energetic over time. Designed for the beginning graduate student, the course will provide a broad working knowledge of the main interventions in the field and of the scholars whose work fueled new trajectories. By the end of the course, students will have a familiarity with the key concepts, movements, and approaches to media and cultural studies. The primary goal of the class is for seminar participants to reach an understanding of the development and range of critical/cultural theories of the media through the process of debate, discussion, critical analysis, and synthesis.

texts
There is one required text for this course:

This will be supplemented by readings placed on electronic reserve via ICON. Supplemental readings will be online at least a week before they are due. Because this class will rely heavily on this system, students must have regular access to a computer with an Internet connection and a printer.

course web site
The class has an ICON site that students can access using their Hawk IDs. Reading responses and paper drafts will be uploaded to this site.

The site is password protected. Each student has access to his/her grades on this site, as well as all the course information that is online (syllabus, course calendar, etc.)

To access the ICON site, go to:
icon.uiowa.edu (please note that there is no “www” at the beginning of this URL)

log on to ICON using your Hawk ID and password
[Note: The login ID for each new account will be your HawkID. If you don’t know your HawkID, you can find out what it is by calling the Customer Information Desk (384-0800), looking it up in WebISIS (http://isis.uiowa.edu/) or calling the ITS Help Desk (384-4357).]
Select the appropriate semester, and click on the plus sign next to “Spring 2011” if you don’t see this class listed right away.
Click on “019:232 “Mass Communication Theory II”

To upload your files once you are in the course web site:
Click on “Discussions” in the navigation bar at the top left.
Go to the appropriate forum (e.g. “Intro, Kellner, Hall”) and click on it
Click on “Add message” (top right)
Copy and paste the text of your paper into the “Message” box
or
Click on “Attach file” at the bottom left and browse for your story
[It is generally easier for me if you copy and paste.]

accommodations
If you have a disability that needs accommodation, please come to my office hours to discuss it as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements in advance. A student seeking academic accommodations first must register with Student Disability Services and then meet with a SDS counselor who determines eligibility for services. A student approved for accommodations should meet privately with the course instructor to arrange particular accommodations. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/
I can only make accommodations for students who have been evaluated by SDD, following that office’s specific recommendations.

ethics
It is expected that all work submitted for a grade in this course reflects the original work of the student submitting it. Students are encouraged to discuss their work with others (inside and outside of class), and to exchange drafts of papers with one another for comments and criticisms. But keep in mind that if you borrow an idea from someone else, you must cite the source, even if it is based on a conversation or correspondence. In addition, turning in the same paper for two classes is considered to be academic dishonesty.
Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in serious academic penalties, including the possibility of failing this class. Examples of academic dishonesty are given in the Student Academic Handbook:
www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook//ix.shtml

This course is given by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. This means that class policies on matters such as requirements, grading, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are governed by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive the approval of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Details of the University policy of cross enrollments may be found at: http://www.uiowa.edu/~provost/deos/crossenroll.doc

Any student who does not fully understand the standards of academic honesty should speak to me in advance of submitting coursework.

understanding sexual harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/ for definitions, assistance, and the full policy.

reacting safely to severe weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.
student rights

Students have the right to make suggestions or complaints and should first visit with the instructor, then with the course supervisor if appropriate, and next with the departmental DEO. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

course requirements

Grades will be broken down according to the following criteria. Please note that grades of “Incomplete” will not be given except under exceptional, documented dire circumstances such as a very serious illness. Lack of time is not a sufficient reason to grant an incomplete—all of us have grading, papers, and excessive amounts of work at the end of every semester, and learning to manage these tasks is part of a graduate education!

attendance and compliance with deadlines (5% of final grade):

All students are expected to attend every class. Attendance will be taken at each meeting of the seminar and will count toward your final grade. Excused absences are granted for the following reasons: serious illness (which should preferably be documented with a doctor's certificate), a death in the family, or, in very rare cases, a school-related event that requires your presence and that you have arranged with the professor well in advance (e.g. an out-of-town academic conference in which you are participating, a religious holiday, or a job interview). Make-up or late work will be permitted only in these documented circumstances; in all other cases, the student must accept the grade penalty.

class participation (10% of final grade):

Class participation is a very important aspect of a graduate seminar. Your final grade in the class is dependent to a large degree on your participation in class discussions. You will be encouraged to voice your ideas and thoughts and to contribute to the discussion of every topic. Respect for others' feelings, beliefs and values are essential to the success of the class, so please be considerate of your classmates’ different backgrounds and experiences as you discuss various points of view. Those who are usually silent in class, or whose participation is unrelated to the readings or conceptual terms discussed in the class, will not earn the 10 percent of the grade that is based on class participation.

responses to the readings/other in-class assignments (20% of final grade)

You will have assigned readings in this class throughout the semester, and you will be asked to provide written and oral responses to the readings. Your responses will be graded on the basis of their depth, thoughtfulness, and originality. Responses should make it clear that you have read and reflected on the whole article.

Format for responses: For each reading, identify (in bullet form) the key idea or ideas of the reading (up to three, if necessary). Then choose the quote or idea that you find the most compelling. Write a short paragraph explaining why that quote or idea stood out for you—what its significance is to your life experience, your understanding of the subject, or your world view in general. In addition, comment on whether the article offered you any new ideas, whether you agreed or disagreed with the author’s position or argument, and whether you have any additional thoughts on the reading. These responses are basically the preparation for a weekly discussion of the readings as well as annotations for your final paper and later research. Please try not to exceed about 150 words per reading.

All responses must be uploaded to appropriate folder on the ICON web site by 9 a.m. on class days; hard copies (print-outs only!) should be brought to class for submission.
in-class presentation (20% of final grade)

Students will be asked, in pairs or small groups, to make presentations during the semester. The topics of these presentations will be arranged according to the syllabus, early in the semester. Students will prepare a 30- to 45-minute talk on the topic and guide the seminar discussion that follows. In order to lead the discussion effectively, student presenters must research the topic outside of the material provided in class. Please meet with the professor to organize your plans and readings well before your presentation. Presentation grades will be based on the quality of the presentation (content as well as clarity, good organization, effective speaking skills, etc.) and the quality of the readings selected by the presenters in terms of the degree to which they enrich the class. Handouts for the class, such as annotated bibliographies or other materials, will bolster the presentation. Ideally, all presenters will participate equally in the presentation, but each “team” can work it out so that each member’s strengths are best utilized.

final paper (45% of final grade)

The final paper will represent the student’s overall understanding of the class material, as well as her/his ability to use this material in original scholarship. The final paper will involve two parts:
(1) a detailed analysis of a refereed journal article that was predicated on a theoretical area covered in this class. The article will be identified by the student and must be approved by the professor. The analysis will explain why the author used the theoretical framework selected, identify the key concepts, explicate the link between the theory and the research question(s), and explore the link between the theory, methodology, analysis and findings.
(2) a proposal for an original research study, involving a detailed theoretical framework and a set of clear, theoretically based research questions, as well as a proposed methodology. The second part of the paper will be roughly 1,250 words in length. These proposals could be the basis for your Spring PhD seminar presentations, or future conference submissions.

NB: All deadlines are set in stone! There will be grade penalties of one letter grade per hour for late work.

course calendar

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are on the course ICON site, either under the “Content” or “Links” tab. “D&K” refers to the Durham & Kellner text. The schedule may change depending on circumstances; it is the student’s responsibility to attend class and check email to keep up with such changes. Extra readings may be added throughout the semester.

week one
1/23: Introductions, syllabus, overview of media and cultural studies

Readings for next class (don’t forget to post your responses to these readings online by 9 a.m. on Tuesday!):
D&K—“Adventures in media and cultural studies: Introducing the KeyWorks”


week two
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

1/30—The concept of ideology; questions of power in media studies

Readings for next class:


D&K Part I: Introduction to Part I, Marx & Engels, Gramsci

week three
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

2/6—Discussion of readings; great debates and cultural studies; British, American and other cultural studies.

The relevance of Marxism to cultural studies

Readings for next class:
D&K Part I: Benjamin, Horkheimer & Adorno

week four
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

2/13—Discussion of readings; the Frankfurt School
Readings for next class:
D&K Part I: Habermas, Althusser

week five
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

2/20—Discussion of readings; Althusserian theory
How to analyze a journal article: thinking about theory, method, structure and elegance

Readings for next class:
D&K Part II: Intro to Part II, Barthes, McLuhan, DeBord, Dorfman
week six
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

2/27—Discussion of readings; semiotics and spectacle
Readings for next class:
D&K Part II: Williams, Hebdige, Hall, Ang


week seven
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

3/5—Discussion of readings; British Cultural Studies
Student group presentation #1: Active audience theory
Readings for next class:

D&K Part III: Intro to Part III, Smythe, Herman and Chomsky, Schiller, Meehan (skip Garnham and Bourdieu)

week eight
Spring Break 3/10 - 3/18 — get some r & r — but think about your final papers, too!

week nine
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

3/19—Discussion of readings
Student presentation #2: Political economy of the media

Readings for next class:
D&K Intro to Part IV + all readings in Part IV

week ten
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

3/26—Discussion of readings
Student presentation #3: Spectatorship, gender and the gaze

Readings for next class:
Readings: Intro to Part V, Baudrillard, Jameson, McRobbie
week eleven
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.
4/2 — Discussion of readings
Postmodern theory

Readings for next class:
Poster, Jenkins, Lievrouw, boyd & Ellison

week twelve
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.
4/9 — Student presentation #4: Theorizing new media environments
Discussion of final paper topics
Readings for next class:
Intro to Part VI + all readings

week thirteen
Reading responses must be posted to ICON by 9 am the day of class; hard copies due in class.

4/16 — Globalized media

week fourteen

4/23 — No class meeting. Work on final paper

Upload complete first draft of paper by 9 am Friday, April 27.

week fifteen

4/30 — Bring first draft of final paper to class; workshop paper in class (attendance mandatory!)

5/3 (Thursday) — Final paper due at 5 p.m. in hard copy in Gigi’s mailbox and online in the course Dropbox

Good luck with your further adventures in media and cultural studies!