TEXTS:


Dennis, Everette & Merrill, John. *Media Debates*. 4th Ed. Wadsworth,

Any additional readings or materials will be distributed.

PURPOSE: As the mass media are ubiquitous, media effects on the audience, society & culture are assumed. The amount of impact depends upon the prevailing political, social and cultural climate as well as individual audience member composition. The relationship between media and society is complex at best. Given the previous assumptions and obvious complexity of the subject matter, the course purposes are as follows: (1) to synthesize and evaluate past and current mass media theory and research; (2) to explore the role of history on the state of mass media today; (3) to debate key media issues; and (4) to create a research paper or presentation according to student need.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

EXAMS: There will be two exams—a midterm and a final. Exams will comprise readings, lectures, discussions, group project material, and debates. Identification, short answer and essay questions will be included. Each exam is worth 25% of your grade (50% in all.)

DEBATES: Students will choose a debate topic to direct and moderate from suggested topics. The student leader will enable the class members to explore differing views and arguments for the issue assigned. Preparation for the debate should include thorough assessment of both sides of the topic. The debate will be worth 20% of your grade.

TOPICS:
1. Freedom Of the Press
2. The Right to Know
3. Media Ethics
4. Media and the Public Trust
5. Family Values and the Media
6. Media Stereotypes
7. Media Consolidation and Concentration of Ownership
8. Partisan (Biased) Press/Journalistic Objectivity
9. Influence on Family Values by the Media
10. Globalization and the Mass Media
11. Video Games Effects on Social Violence
12. Online Services & Bullying
13. Do Media Cause Negative Body Images?
14. Effects of Advertising
15. What is News?
16. Media, Politics and Elections
17. The Internet and Knowledge
18. Technology and Privacy

WRITTEN ANALYSIS OR ORAL PRESENTATION:

WRITTEN ANALYSIS: This paper should be between 15-20 pages in length using MLA or APA styles when appropriate. Please do not fail to cite your sources. Thoroughness of your research, the quality of your ideas, the degree of insight you bring to your topic, correct grammar and composition will be criteria for grading. The paper is due on APRIL 24. Late papers will be penalized. Either a classic research paper thoroughly reviewing and evaluating theory and research of a particular topic (e.g. agenda-setting; the effects of television on children; social learning and the media; social effects of media violence, sensationalism, gender or ethnic stereotyping, etc.) or a case study applying a particular theory or body of literature to a media event, television series, film, or news report are acceptable. The paper is worth 20% of your grade. If you are using this paper as your MLA paper requirement, two copies of the paper are required.

OR

ORAL PRESENTATION: Students will be assigned a topic of research not discussed in class. Presenters will summarize the material, prepare an outline for class members, and illustrate the content with media or internet examples. A 2-3 page outline and a half-hour power point presentation are required. The presentation is worth 20% of your grade.

PRESENTATION TOPICS:
1. Violence
2. Sensationalism
3. Emotion
4. Persuasion
5. Media Stereotypes
6. News and Political Content
7. New Technologies/New Media
8. Marshall McLuhan
9. Globalization

PARTICIPATION: A graduate seminar is only as good as the discussion that emanates from the readings and lectures. Therefore, participation is a key element and worth 10% of your grade.

SCHEDULE:

1/23: Overview and Introduction
1/30: Media Characteristics and History (handouts)
2/6: Overview of Media Theory and Research (Sparks – Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 12)
2/13: Mass Media, Society and Culture (Handouts)
DEBATES Over (Ch. 1 & 6 – Dennis & Merrill)
2/20: Structure and Accountability (Handouts); DEBATES over (Ch. 2, 4, 5, – Dennis & Merrill)
Lectures over Media Law and Ethics; DEBATES over (4, 5, II – Dennis & Merrill)
2/27: Media Culture, Content & Genre (Handouts); Debates over (Ch 12, Dennis & Merrill; and handout, Family Values and the Media)
3/6: PRESENTATION OVER GLOBAL MASS COMMUNICATION; DEBATE OVER Ch. 20 (Dennis and Merrill); Review
3/13: SPRING BREAK
3/20: MIDTERM (ALL MATERIAL TO THIS POINT)
3/27: Violence and the Media (Sparks – Ch. 5); PRESENTATION ON VIOLENCE; DEBATE ON Video Games (Handout); PRESENTATION ON SENSATIONALISM (Sparks – Ch. 6)
4/3: Emotional Effects (Sparks – Ch. 7). PRESENTATION ON EMOTIONAL EFFECTS; DEBATE OVER Media and Negative Body Image (handout)
4/10: PERSUASION (Sparks, Ch. 8); PRESENTATION ON PERSUASION; Advertising (Lectures and handouts); DEBATE over Advertising (Ch. 18 – Dennis & Merrill)
4/17: News and Political Content (Ch. 9 – Sparks); PRESENTATION ON NEWS & POLITICAL CONTENT; Debates on (Ch. 7, 8, and 10 – Dennis & Merrill)
4/24: Media Stereotypes (Ch. 10, Sparks); PRESENTATION ON MEDIA STEREOTYPES; Debate over (Ch. 15 – Dennis & Merrill)
TERM PAPERS DUE
5/1: New Media (Ch. 11 – Sparks; Handouts) PRESENTATION ON NEW MEDIA; DEBATE OVER (Ch. 14 – Dennis & Merrill; Technology & Privacy
Handout; Review for Final.

5/15: FINAL EXAM (6:00 PM TO 8:30 PM)