



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

COMM 201/001 (4789)—MEDIA THEORY AND CRITICISM

LAKE SHORE CAMPUS/SPRING 2020

Instructor: Milan Pribisic, Ph.D. (mpribis@luc.edu)

Class meetings: Wednesdays 4:15 pm to 6:45 pm, Mundelein Center, Room #403

Office: **WTC** 900 Lewis Tower, workstation B; phone: 312/915-7755

Office Hours: By appointment only

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the study of traditional mass media and new media from a historical, critical and interpretive perspective. We live in a mediated environment; how media work on us as individuals and as cultures and what effects their power have on us are only some of the questions that media theory tries to answer in order to practice criticism of our past and present and envision a more ethical and productive future.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course reviews sociological/ethnographic approach, semiotics, discourse and content analysis and other methods of media analysis; it also surveys those theories that approach media as historical, cultural practices that go beyond media technologies and texts to envelope media as businesses with specific political economy, media as agents of change, and experiential aspects of media production and consumption. After taking this course the students will be able to:

identify major media theories and research methods, their main tenets and application contexts;

apply the critical and technical vocabulary (media theory as a body of knowledge) to describe, analyze and critique media (to practice media analysis/media criticism);

TEXTS: Devereux, Eoin. *Understanding the Media. 3rd edition (UM)*; ISBN: 978-1-4462-4880-5

ATTENDANCE: I am using the discussion teaching method which includes traditional lecturing but stresses interactive discussion during class time between the teacher and students and among students in small groups and small group projects; all students are expected to attend the class regularly and be prepared to actively participate in the discussions and activities after reading the required material. The significant part of **Participation** grade (30 points out of total 60 Participation points) is based on student's class attendance and active contribution to the class's activities and discussions. No show in class means no participation points for attendance—since our class meets once a week three unexcused absences per semester or excessive lateness/leaving early the class during the semester will automatically result in a major Attendance portion of the Participation grade damage. To make up for the missed assignments, such as oral presentation, group projects, online assignments, quiz, exam either the written medical doctor's excuse needs to be presented or a proper documentation showing you were representing Loyola in intercollegiate athletics, debate, or model government organizations on these dates (repetitious emails to the instructor regarding absences will not count as excuse).

SAKAI (<https://sakai.luc.edu>) is an online learning tool that allow us to communicate and collaborate with each other during the semester. You will find on it the course syllabus, e-mail addresses of all course participants, announcements, online assignments, online gradebook, etc.

LOCUS (<https://locus.luc.edu>) is Loyola's information portal for a wide variety of tasks. The instructor posts on Locus the midterm academic alerts and the final grades.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious violation of academic integrity. **Cheating** includes, but is not limited to, obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to another student during examination; obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination; using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor; attempting to change answers after the examination has been

submitted; unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom; falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines or any other action that, by omission or commission, compromise the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty; it is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of other without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited, to submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.; submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material; allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit, or purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper. The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at

<http://www.luc.edu/english/aboutthewritingprogram/theuseandmisuseofsourcematerials/#d.en.238783>

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard. Plagiarism or any act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the Office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The Office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SoC. If the student is not a member of the SoC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the

decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to a similar organization.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (SAC): If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact SAC as soon as possible. Formal arrangements must be made through the office before course adjustments can be made. Additional information about the services available at:

<https://luc.edu/sac/sacstudents/>

MANAGING LIFE CRISES AND FINDING SUPPORT: Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (<https://www.luc.edu/csaa/>) for yourself or a peer in need of support. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: <https://www.luc.edu/dos/> or [LUC.edu/csaa; 773-508-8840; deanofstudents@luc.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@luc.edu).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: The attendance is taken at the beginning of the class! Up to fifteen-minute lateness is acceptable according to the academic rules; beyond that it is on your own discretion to decide whether you should interrupt the class already in progress or not; in any case, if you enter the classroom after the attendance has been taken it is **your responsibility** to check with the instructor after the class to be sure to get the attendance credit.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS: I am using the cumulative point system which means each assignment carries a certain number of points—the points grading scale is listed below (to receive an A letter grade in the class you need to earn 285 points; for an A- letter grade you need 276 points ... to get a D letter grade you need to earn 195 points out of 300). Please respect the

24/7 grading policy—wait 24 hours after receiving the grade to talk to me about it but talk to me about the grade within seven days if you have a question. After one week has passed, I will not discuss the grade for that assignment.

Participation (attendance, active and critical contribution to the class activities and discussions; short reaction papers on readings and assignments in class or in Sakai, peer teaching, group presentations evaluation...)	60 points
Exam (two and a final; 30+30+60)	120 points
Individual journal /Annotated Bibliography	60 points
Case Study Group Project and In-class Presentation	60 points

TOTAL= 300 POINTS:

A (EXCELLENT)=285-300;

A-minus=276-284;

B+=267-275;

B (GOOD)=258-266;

B-minus= 249-257;

C+=240-248;

C (AVERAGE)=231-239;

C-minus=222-230;

D+=213-221;

D (FAIR)=195-212;

F (POOR)=below 195

STATEMENT OF INTENT: By remaining in this course, students are agreeing to accept this syllabus as a contract and to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(This is a plan; syllabus and calendar are open to change--all changes will be posted in Sakai and announced in class)

WEEK ONE of January 13: Course introduction and overview

Asking awkward questions

What is media? What is theory? Why media theory and criticism?

READ: UM, Chapter 1

WEEK TWO of January 20: **NO CLASS ON MONDAY/**

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Media Histories, Media Power

READ: UM Chapter 2

WEEK THREE of January 27: Media Globalization

READ: UM Chapter 3

WEEK FOUR of February 3: Media Ownership: Concentration, Conglomeration and

Regulation

READ: UM Chapter 4

WEEK FIVE of February 10: **EXAM # 1**

Media Professionals and Media Production

READ: UM Chapter 5

WEEK SIX of February 17: Media, Ideology and Discourse

READ: UM Chapter 6

WEEK SEVEN of February 24: Media, Ideology and Discourse (continues)

READ: UM Chapter 6

MID-TERM EXAM

WEEK EIGHT of March 2: **NO CLASSES/SPRING BREAK--ENJOY!!!**

WEEK NINE of March 9: **FORMING GROUPS FOR GROUP PROJECTS**

The How and Why of Media Analysis

READ: UM Chapter 10

Media “Re-presentations” in an Unequal World

READ: UM Chapter 7

WEEK TEN of March 16: Media “Re-presentations” in an Unequal World continues

READ: UM Chapter 7

WEEK ELEVEN of March 23: Media Audiences and Reception

READ: UM Chapter 8

WEEK TWELVE of March 30: New Media, Social Media

READ: UM Chapter 9

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

WEEK THIRTEEN of April 6: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS START**

WEEK FOURTEEN of April 13: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

WEEK FIFTEEN of April 20: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

**LAST DAY OF CLASSES IS APRIL 24; THE EXAM WEEK IS APRIL 27 TO MAY 2
(OUR CLASS' FINAL EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 FROM
4:15 PM TO 6:15 PM).**