

## CO 155-02 Media Literacy

Fall 2005 — Tuesday 1–2:15; Thursday, 11:30–12:45 p.m.

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Office hours: Mon., 3:30–4:30 p.m.; Tues., 2:30–3:30 p.m.;  
Thursday 4:30–5:30 p.m.; or by appointment

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### Catalog Description:

This class introduces students to a range of critical thinking skills for use when encountering media materials, including television, radio, print and Internet resources. Using television as a model, students will develop an understanding of the complex functions of the mass media industries, and an understanding of cognitive, emotional, moral and aesthetic choices involved in interpreting media messages.

**Course Objectives:** This class teaches you techniques for thinking critically about media products. Using television as a primary model, we will critically examine the process of message construction, and the relationship between television, TV viewers, and society at large. For students interested in pursuing studies in broadcasting, or for those wishing to work in the industry, the class provides both a working background and a critical perspective on television and its role as a mass medium.

Media institutions are comprised of interacting forces. As a central apparatus for communication in America, television is an arena in which economic, political, social and cultural interests compete for power over the medium. How these various forces interact and influence what we see on television are the underlying questions of the course. We'll explore these issues by examining the relations among the industry, the regulators, the producers, the advertisers and the public—and we'll think critically about the way our current private commercial system uses broadcasting.

### Required Texts:

- W. James Potter, *Media Literacy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001.
- Joseph R. Dominick, et al, *Broadcasting, Cable, The Internet, and Beyond*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2004.

### Recommended:

- David R. Williams, Ph.D., *Sin Boldly! Dr. Dave's Guide to Writing the College Paper*, Perseus Publishing, \$7.95 (available for less at Amazon.com)

### Class Policies:

1. **Attendance:** Classroom time will comprise a balance of lecture, discussion, screenings, and questioning during class. Naturally, your attendance is required, and absences will have a negative effect on your final grade as follows:

- 3 unexcused absences: drop one letter grade
- 5 unexcused absences: drop two letter grades
- more than five unexcused absences: automatic failure
- Habitual tardiness: attending late twice will be the equivalent of 1 absence.

Absences because of a religious holiday or athletic event are only excused when you notify me in advance. Absences because of illness or athletic event require written documentation from a doctor or athletic director. If you are late, it is up to you to remind me after class of your attendance.

2. **Special Needs:** Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this class are encouraged to meet with me during office hours, or with the appropriate disability service provider on campus [571-3460] as soon as possible. Students will not be afforded any special accommodations until they disclose the disability, register with the campus disability service provider and complete the documentation process. Please see the student handbook for more information on the procedures.

3. **Grading:** Your final grade for the semester will be comprised of the following:

- 40% Two Critical Viewings (3 -5 pages) -- 15% and 25% respectively
- 30% Three Exams
- 20% Exercises, Drafts and ungraded assignments
- 10% Class Preparation and Participation

Grading Scale:

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A 90-100 (90-91 A-/ 100 A+)  | D 60-69 (60-61 D-/ 68-69 D+) |
| B 80-89 (80-81 B-/ 88-89 B+) | F 0-59                       |
| C 70-79 (70-71 C-/ 78-79 C+) |                              |

### Assignments:

1. **Written work:** You will be responsible for two papers or "Critical Viewings" this semester. They must be typed, double-spaced, with appropriate (1") margins and font size (10-12 pt.). Critical Viewings are due at the start of class on the day it is due. Late work will be penalized 10% for each working day (M-F) it is late.

2. **Readings:** there are readings assigned for nearly every class period. Do the readings *before* class, so you are prepared to discuss them. If you would like to test your understanding of the Dominick readings, or look for Internet resources on these topics, go to the textbook's web site: <http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/mass/dominick2/> and look under the "Student Resources" section for the "Online Learning Center."

3. Your **preparation and participation** grade will be based on your degree of preparedness and willingness to participate in class discussions. Participation is not based on the *quantity* of your participation, but on the *quality*. Don't be afraid to ask questions: if you don't understand something, others are probably having the same difficulty.

**As a courtesy:** you are expected to turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class that might distract other students or interrupt class. Likewise, IM or non-class-related computer activity will be frowned upon. These behaviors run counter to the creation of a productive and focused learning environment. If you cannot cooperate in this, you may be asked to leave.

You will be responsible for completing various exercises this semester, which will be graded on the following basis:

- √+ excellent contribution, "A" caliber work
- √ good, but doesn't break any new ground; "B-" work
- √- poor, very little effort; "C-" or "D"
- ∅ no credit

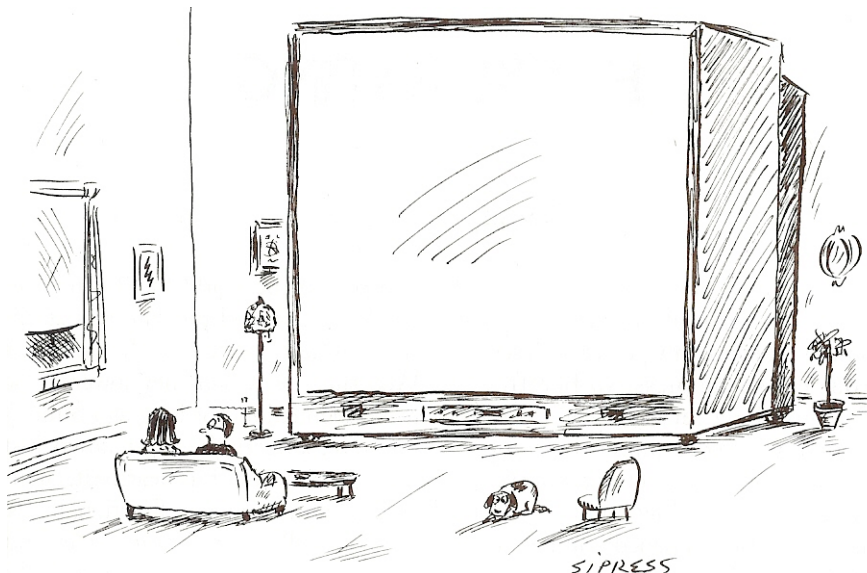
4. **Academic Honesty:** This class follows the standards outlined in the Monmouth University Student Handbook. Penalties for plagiarism in this class include: an "F" for the assignment; an "F" for the entire semester; and/or charges brought against you under the Student Code of Conduct, which could lead to expulsion from the University. I encourage your participation in maintaining an environment of academic honesty and integrity.

## Media Literacy Class Schedule

*This outline is subject to change; additional readings will be announced. Students are responsible for changes announced in class.*

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Due:</b>
T 9/6	Intro to Media Literacy	Read Syllabus
Th 9/8	Why Increase Media Literacy?	ML preface, Ch 1
T 9/13	Defining Media Literacy	ML Ch 2 & 3
Th 9/15	The Skills of Media Literacy <b>Tracking Diaries Due</b>	ML Ch 4
T 9/20	Reality and Media Messages	ML Ch 5
Th 9/22	Character Types and Stereotypes	Gray (handout)
T 9/27	What is Entertainment?	ML Ch 6
Th 9/29	TV Entertainment Genres	Gitlin (handout)
T 10/4	<b>EXAM ONE</b>	
Th 10/6	Mass Media Industries	ML Ch 9 & 10
T 10/11	<b>First Draft of Critical Viewing #1 due</b>	
Th 10/13	Networks & Affiliates	Broadcasting Ch 5
T 10/18	Programming and Syndication <b>Final Draft of Critical Viewing #1 due</b>	Broadcasting 211–226
Th 10/20	Who Owns and Controls the Media?	ML Ch 11
T 10/25	What is News?	Broadcasting pp. 199-207
Th 10/27	What is News cont'd	ML Ch 7
T 11/1	Commercial Advertising	ML Ch 8 Rank's Model (handout)
Th 11/3	Broadcast Regulation	Broadcasting pp. 230-247
Tues., 11/8	— Drop Deadline — Election day... Vote!	
T 11/8	Industry Self-regulation	Broadcasting Ch 11
Th 11/10	<b>EXAM TWO</b>	

T 11/15	What is an Audience? Ratings	ML Ch 12 Broadcasting Ch 12
Th 11/17	What is an Audience? (Cont'd.) <b>First Draft of Critical Viewing #2 due</b>	
T 11/22	Media Effects & How They Work	ML Ch 13 & 14
Thanksgiving		
T 11/29	Effects on Institutions <b>Final Draft of Critical Viewing #2 due</b>	ML Ch 15
Th 12/1	Real-World Knowledge	ML Ch 16
T 12/21	Increasing Media Literacy	ML Ch 17
T 4/26	Helping Others <b>Tracking Diary II due</b>	ML Ch 18
Th 4/28	Review for Final	
Final Exam: Date and time to be announced		



*"I don't know, honey. What do you feel like doing?"*