

Media Culture and Society CM 342.01

Professor: Elliot King

Office: CT MO14

Office Hours:

Cell: 443-858-3731 (texting is the most efficient way to contact me quickly)

Required Texts: **Popular Culture Freaks: Identity, Mass Media and Society**, Everything Bad is Good for You (Johnson, Stephen), Mediated (de Zengotita, Thomas), The Dumbest Generation, (Bauerlein, Mark) Selected Articles

Articles for this course are available on Moodle on the week they are assigned

Introduction: The columnist Walter Lippman noted that the media create the pictures of the world that we carry in our heads. Writing in the 1920s, he suggested that most of what people "know" about the world about them comes not from personal experience but through mass media. He was writing before the widespread availability and use of radio, motion pictures, compact disks, television, cable, and the Internet. Clearly, we live in world that is more saturated with mediated images than Lippmann could imagine.

In this course, we will critically examine the relationship of the media to culture and society—that is, how people think, how they think they should act, and how society is organized and structured—as well as examine how mediated objects can be understood to encompass broader social relationships. To that end, we will look at the possibilities to make meaning from mediated images; the outcomes of making meaning; the limits of making meaning; and, above all, the social or public implications of making meaning from interaction with the media. The course will be conducted as an ongoing conversation about the implications of media images and cultural objects.

This course has four learning aims:

**Learning Aim 1:** To understand **how media systems are integrated and shaped by larger systems of power and cultural understanding** and, how in turn, those systems of power and stratification are dependent of communications.

**Learning Aim 2:** To develop critical tools to explore how **non-dominant groups including women, people of color, social class, and sexual orientation** are represented in the media; the **significance of those representation, the role of those representations in the reproduction of inequality** and how those representations have changed over time.

**Learning Aim 3:** To develop **a meaningful understanding of the evolution of media systems** and how **inequality of access combined with the proliferation of platforms** influence social perceptions and interaction, as well as social structure

**Learning Aim 4:** To write analytical about issues **of race, class and gender** in conjunction with media systems.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Excessive unexcused absences will result in failure.

## **Honor Code**

“The Honor Code states that all students of the Loyola Community have been equally entrusted by their peers to conduct themselves honestly on all academic assignments and tests.

The students of this College understand that having collective and individual responsibility for the ethical welfare of their peers exemplifies a commitment to the community. Students who submit materials that are the products of their own mind demonstrate respect for themselves and the community in which they study.

All outside resources or information should be clearly acknowledged. If there is any doubt or question regarding the use and documentation of outside sources for academic assignments, your instructor should be consulted. The student is referred to the Undergraduate Catalogue and/or Student Handbook for more information and further clarification of the honor code standards, types of violations, due process, and sanctions that may be imposed.”

## **Department of Communication Honor Code**

Department of Communication policy reiterates that the university honor code applies to all CM courses, including this one. I will follow the Department of Communication's policy guidelines for honor code violations if any infraction of the code occurs. The department's policy is available upon request.

## **Learning Disabilities**

If you have a disability that is documented with the Disability Support Services Office and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

This class is rated TV-MA and there is some R-rated material. It may not be suitable for all students. From time to time, sexually suggestive material will be presented and discussed. Students offended by such materials or discussion can excuse themselves without penalty during those class periods.

## **Teaching Philosophy:**

“Who is wise? The person who learns from everyone.” (Talmud. Avot 4:1.) We are all very familiar with living in a heavily mediated environment. While there is a general consensus that what we see and hear on television, radio, the movies, the Internet, in print and so on has a profound impact on the way that we experience the world, nobody is quite sure exactly how. This class is designed to allow you to enter the ongoing conversation about the relationship of media to culture and society. The conversation is multifaceted and each participant potentially may

contribute a meaningful insight or understanding. That means what you and your classmates say may have as much or more significance than the readings and other classroom experiences. My role in this experience is to try to facilitate, guide and participate in the conversation.

### **Expectations of the Student**

The course is designed as a collaborative environment, which means that students are required to be actively involved in classroom experiences. Students are expected to be open to responding to the reading and the discussions. You must come to class prepared to both talk and listen.

### **Expectations of the Teacher**

You can expect me to come to class prepared. I will have selected appropriate material to help generate conversation. I will make my best attempt to clarify issues and ideas that may be confusing to you. I will be available for consultation outside of the normal classroom hours if need be. And I will try to work with you to help you to develop and express your own ideas about the materials at hand...

### **Assignments:**

**All assignments (except the media inventory diary) will be turned in electronically using the digital drop box in Moodle designated for that assignment. Assignments are due one hour before the class on the due date. If you do not know how to use the digital drop box please consult me or another student. If you are unsure that you successfully submitted a paper, you can send it to me via email. The digital drop box time stamps papers. Late papers will be accepted but marked as such. All assignments must be turned in.**

Assignment One: Media Usage Inventory: The objective of this paper is to make you aware of your own media consumption. You will be asked to monitor your media use for two weeks and then write a four to six page paper describing when and why you use media now (or how you used it in the past) and for what purposes or outcomes. **This assignment has been revised for people to reflect more deeply on the make up of the content as well as the consumption patterns so students become more aware of their mediated environment, how it is constructed and the images they encounter.**

### Grading Criteria:

1. Details of your media usage (60 percent)
2. Self reflection (40 percent)
3. Key questions to address:  
How much (and which) of your media usage is routine? (You engage with the same media at the same time, habitually)

How much (and which) of your media usage is social? (You experience it with other people or interact with other people.)

What is the make-up of the content in terms of the images and origins?

In reflecting on your media usage, what has surprised you?

What do you think is significant about the answers to the above questions?

Assignment Two: Book report. You will write a five page paper responding to the ideas contained in Mediated by Thomas De Zengotita

Grading Criteria:

1. Summary of De Zengotita's argument (50 percent)
2. Depth and detail of your response (50 percent)

Assignment Three: Research paper: You will explore the meaning associated with specific media content, representations or processes of your own choosing. You will then write an 10 to 12 paper in which you will present your ideas. This assignment has been reoriented to focus specifically on doing research into who a marginalized community is represented in specific media content and what the implications are.

Grading Criteria

1. Scope of your research, particularly your use of primary data, though you may use secondary sources as well. (40 percent)
2. Use of theoretical and analytical tools particularly the tools explored in this class (20 percent)
3. Power of your critique (30 percent)
4. Coherence of writing and presentation. (10 percent)

This research assignment calls for the students to do original

Assignment Four : Take Home Final (approximately ten pages)

Grading Criteria

1. Insight of your answers (40 percent)
2. Incorporation of class materials (30 percent)
3. Use of theoretical or analytical framework (20 percent)
4. Coherence of writing or presentation (10 percent)

Reading Assignments:

There will be a series of short reading assignments quizzes designed to demonstrate your knowledge of the key concepts and terms in the readings. They will take several different forms including posting to Wikis and perhaps short quizzes. For each reading you will also be expected to come to class prepared to discuss what you think are the most important points in the reading)

Classroom participation: We will attempt to establish multiple channels of communication in which to conduct the class. Your participation in each will be noted.

The grading formula is as follows:

Class participation (including your reading responses)	10%
Media Inventory Paper	10%
Mediated Book Report	10%
Research Paper	30%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Final	25%

Class Schedule (subject to adjustment)

Week one: Introduction to the course/**Communication and social relationships**  
Getting to Know You  
Reading: Natalie Davis, Kidd Chapter 1

Week Two: Production of Cultural Objects

Reading: The production of culture article  
Disney on Boys  
Ellen Neuborne—Generation Y  
Kidd Appendices

Merchants of Cool Web Site <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>

Assignment: Media Inventory

Week Three: **Communication, Social Structure and Class Distinctions**

Reading: MacDonald  
Williams  
Bad Press  
Metcalf (Jazz Encyclopedia)  
Jazz—from trash to treasure;  
Impressionism and Outrage Art v. Pornography

Week Four: The Creation of Shared Meaning

Reading: Stuart Hall  
Stuart Hall Video  
You Tube Ads, Reaction paper  
Media Inventory Due  
Assign Mediated Book Report

Week Five: Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediated Content: Fashion and Women's Self Image

Reading: Janice Radway, Kidd Chapter 4

Video—Killing Us Softly IV

America's Top Model

Assignment—Magazine ad collection

Week Six Inclusion and Exclusion in the Mediated Content: Race

Reading: Kidd Chapter 2

Mediated Book Report Due—Can we determine what is real?

Video: Color Adjustment (Inclusion vs. Exclusion)

Assign Research Paper

Week Seven; Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediated Content: Class

Reading: Kidd Chapter 3

From The Real Wives vs Duck Dynasty

Week Eight: Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediated Content: Sexuality

Reading: Kidd Chapter 5

From the Ellen Show to Ellen

Week Nine: Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediated Content: Disability

Reading: Kidd Chapter 6

Week Ten: Intersection of systems of marginalization/ The oppositional analysis of culture

Reading and video: bell hooks

Week Eleven: Media and Popular Discourse

Reading: Kidd Chapter 8

The New York Time (in print) vs. CNN vs. Jon Stewart

Week Twelve: Is popular culture good for you?

Reading: Johnson

Video: Family Guy, South Park

Research Paper Due

Week Thirteen Is popular culture bad for you?

Reading: Bauerlein

The Mediocre Multitasker

Video: The Jersey Shore vs. C-Span

Week Fourteen: How we live now  
Reading: Turkle