

COMM 311: Media Literacy

FALL 2014 - Professor Zuk

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Class Meeting

T 2 - 4:40 PM

LIB 308

Office Hours

LIB 3rd Floor

T 10am - 12 noon

Virtual Office Hours

Skype (TeeZuk)

by appointment

WELCOME This course offers both a cultural contextualization of mass-, computer-, and electronically-mediated communication and the tools by which students can access, analyze, evaluate, use and create media forms and content. An emphasis is placed on fostering the critical analysis and interpretation skills that contribute to the development of well-informed, independent-thinking citizens.

OBJECTIVES

My primary objectives for this course are for students to develop:

- critical thinking skills—the ability to form independent judgements about media texts, industries, and audiences;
- awareness of both the constraints and opportunities media presents us as both individuals and as a society;
- methods for analyzing and talking about media production, distribution, and consumption;
- understanding the connections between media, culture, and society—particularly in terms of media education and its potential impact on democratic society;
- sensitivity to the importance of creating effective and responsible messages.

OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- critically analyze a range of media texts, industries, and audiences;
- thoughtfully discuss media literacy as not only a question of individual responsibility, but also as a question of social policy;
- synthesize notions of the theory, practice, and pedagogy of media literacy, both in and out of the classroom;
- create a series of effective and responsible messages across a range of media platforms;
- have a greater comfort and confidence with the online learning environment.

Class Environment It is in the best interests of you as an individual and us as a classroom to create a positive, inclusive, classroom environment. One of my greatest challenges as an instructor is to provide an engaging, entertaining, and intellectual classroom experience. I need your collaboration to create the best educational experience for all involved. By participating in class discussion, being respectful of others opinions, and preparing for class you help not only yourself but your fellow students as well.

Attendance Participation is worth a 15% of your grade in this class. If you are not in class, you cannot

participate. Therefore attendance is strongly encouraged. Excused absences can be acquired if discussed with the instructor prior to the absence.

Blackboard We will be using several aspects of Blackboard in this class. This syllabus, announcements, assignments, and readings will be posted on our course site. Up-to-date grades are also posted on Blackboard. Get familiar with using Blackboard, if you have any questions don't hesitate to ask!

Assignments and Late Paper Policy All assignments will be turned in using Blackboard's "digital dropbox." Late submissions will be accepted via Blackboard, with each day late being worth a letter grade.

Revision Policy If during the semester you feel that you could have done better in any given assignment (not including discussion) you may revise and resubmit that assignment for a better grade. You may only revise an assignment once for up to a one letter grade improvement. Please e-mail me your original and your revision when taking advantage of this opportunity.

Required Texts:

Gladstone, Brooke. *The Influencing Machine*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.

Hochsmann, Michael and Stuart R. Poyntz. *Media Literacies: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.

Additional Articles

Aciman, Alexander and Emmett Rensin. *Twitterture*. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Battis, Jes. "Transgressive TV." *The Cult TV Book*. Ed. Stacey Abbott. New York: Soft Skull Press, 2010, pp 77-83.

Bissell, Tom. "Braided." *Extra Lives*. New York: Pantheon, 2010, pp 99-103.

DeBose, Camille. "The Ambiguously Gay Duo of *Sherlock*: Sexual Aesthetics and the Limits of Cinematic Language." *FLOW*, 14 October 2012.

Edwards, Lynne. "Slaying in Black and White: Kendra as a Tragic Mulatta in *Buffy*." *Fighting the Forces*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002. pp 85-97.

Garcia, Feliks. "Captain America's hybrid masculinity, or the [r]emasculination of the 21st century hero." *FLOW*, 3 September 2011.

Jenkins, Henry. "Buying into American Idol." *Convergence Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2006. pp 59-93.

Jowett, Lorna. "Representation: Exploring Issues of Sex, Gender, and Race in Cult Television." *The Cult TV Book*. Ed. Stacey Abbott. New York: Soft Skull Press, 2010. pp 107-113.

King, Richard C. "Reading Race, Reading Power." *Media Literacy: A Reader*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007. pp 197-205.

Parks, Lisa. "Brave New *Buffy*." *Quality Popular Television*. London, BFI Publishing, 2003, pp 118-133.

Proctor, William. "*The Hunger Games* and the Female Driven Franchise." *Antenna*, 9 December 2013.

Serfain, Gina, "Media Mindfulness." *Media Literacy: A Reader*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007.

pp 178-186.

Tyron, Chuck. "Depiction is not Endorsement": Representing Torture in *Zero Dark Thirty*." *Antenna*: 22 January 2013

Vargas-Cooper, Natasha. *Mad Men Unbuttoned*. New York: Collins Design, 2010, pp 2-14.

Warburton, Wayne. "Apples, Oranges, and the Burden of Proof - Putting Media Violence Findings into Context." *European Psychologist*, 10 December 2013.

Watt-Evans. "I'm in Love with my Car." *Neptune Noir*. Ed. Rob Thomas. Dallas, TX: Benbella Books, 2006. pp. 160-168.

The required readings above will be provided online at our Blackboard site.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Response Paper You will have the opportunity to write four short response essays (2-3 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt). Each essay will be a response to one week's readings. A successful response paper will:

- pull at least one key concept from each reading
- and connect those ideas to current events in popular culture and/or media

Papers must be submitted as a Word Document, and submitted electronically via Blackboard's "digital dropbox." Each paper is worth 50 points toward your overall grade. File name should **not** include non-alphanumeric symbols as Blackboard will reject the file!

FINAL RESPONSE PAPER You will have the option of responding to either Gladstone's *Influencing Machine* **OR** Chapter 8 with *The Hurt Locker* for this response paper. The final response paper is due in **Module 13 on December 2nd** in class.

Redesign of Advertising Campaign Project (Group Project) This project will include an analysis of the current ad campaign (of a real product of your choice), a redesigned ad campaign (including visuals, storyboards, and advertising copy) with an explanation of your changes. You will present your project to the class as a marketing pitch and upload your files: notes, presentations, etc. to Blackboard **PRIOR** to the start of class on **October 14th**.

Transformative Art Digital Showcase (Project) We will be curating our own digital showcase in our Blackboard course site. Each of you will create a series of transformative digital artifacts (i.e. animated gif sets, short videos, photo-manipulations, re-edited videos, fan-fiction) that follow the [Fair Use](#) guidelines. At several points in the semester we will discuss these contributions in class. **Deadlines are 10/7; 10/21; 11/4; 12/2.**

Media Literacy Final Paper Instead of a final exam, the last paper you will write will be a **8-12 page** paper on a particular aspect of media literacy that you would like to investigate further. Your exploration may be an in-depth analysis of a text (i.e. film, TV show, comic, news coverage on a particular topic) in relationship to a key concept from class; examining a medium, genre, or concept not discussed in class; or an aspect of media literacy you would like to enhance.

This will be a semester long project that will have several smaller assignments attached to it as the semester progresses. The final draft of your paper is due on the class exam date, **December 9th by 5pm** in the assignment drop-box on Blackboard.

Final Paper Deadlines

Proposal	October 7
Annotated Bibliography	October 28
First Draft	November 18
Class Presentation	December 2 & 9
Final Draft	December 9

Extra Credit - You can submit an entry to the class glossary on Blackboard for extra-credit during the semester. You can submit up to 10 terms and definitions, to earn up to a letter grade in extra-credit. Last day to submit an entry is **December 9**.

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Participation	150 points
Response Papers (4)	200 points
Redesign Ad Campaign Project	125 points
Transformative Art Digital Showcase	100 points

Final Paper

- Proposal 25 points
- Annotated Bibliography 50 points
- First Draft 75 points
- Class Presentation 100 points
- Final Draft 175 points

TOTAL 1000 points

GRADING SCALE:

A = 900-1000 B = 800-899 C = 700-799 D = 600-699 F = 599 and below

A = Excellent: course work is B = Good: course requirements are met at a level measurably above the average. C = Adequate: course work is completed at an adequate level. D = Poor: coursework is completed at a level measurably below adequate or many assignments are not completed. F = Failure: much of the course work is not completed, assignments are completed inadequately, or both.

Incomplete. The grade of “I” will be awarded only when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Students should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an

“Incomplete” grade before the end of the semester.

Appeals If you wish to appeal a grade: within a week of getting your assignment back you must hand in, along with the assignment you want re-graded, a typed paper explaining why you believe your grade was incorrect. I will respond in writing within a week.

Writing Studio The BSC Writing Studio offers free consultations to provide students feedback on their writing (or to brainstorm ideas to write about later). Writers come to the studio regarding many types of work. The Writing Studio is located on the ground floor of Maxwell Library, and can be reached by phone at (508) 531-2053 or at <http://www.bridgew.edu/WritingStudio>.

Students with Disabilities If you need special arrangements for a documented disability, please contact the Academic Achievement Center, located on the ground floor of the Maxwell Library. If you would like to share pertinent medical information, request special arrangements for class seating, or need special assistance in the event of a building evacuation, please contact me in the first week of class. http://www.bridgew.edu/AAC/Disability_Resources.cfm

Subject to Change Statement: Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade scale, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. All readings, screenings, and papers should be done *before* that day’s meeting in preparation for class.

SCHEDULE

Date	Discussion Topic	Readings/Screenings due in class for the week.	Assignments due this week.
Module 1 Week of 9/9	Intro, Logistics, & Some Theory		
Module 2 Week of 9/16	Why Media Literacy?	ML, Chp. 1 & 3	
Module 3 Week of 9/23	Media Literacy Skills...	<i>ML, Chp. 4</i> Serafin, “Media Mindfulness”	
Module 4 Week of 9/30	Advertising & Consumerism	Jenkins, “Buying into <i>American Idol</i> ” Vargas-Cooper, <i>Mad Men Unbuttoned</i>	Response 1 Due
Module 5 Week of 10/7	Gender & Sexuality in the Media	DeBose, “The Ambiguously Gay Duo of <i>Sherlock</i> ” Garcia, “Captain America’s hybrid masculinity” Jowett, “Exploring Issues...”	Paper Proposal Due Transformative

		Proctor, "... Female Driven Franchise"	Art Project 1 Due
Module 6 Week of 10/14	Advertising & Consumerism II	<i>Advertising Presentations in class.</i>	Ad Campaign Projects Due!
Module 7 Week of 10/21	Children & Media ONLINE	ML, Chps. 2 & 5	Transformative Art Project 1 Due
Module 8 Week of 10/28	Race & Classism in Media	Battis, "Transgressive TV" King, "Reading Race, Reading Power" Edwards, "Slaying in Black and White" Watt-Evans, "I'm in Love with My Car"	Annotated Bibliography Due
Module 9 Week of 11/4	Violence in the Media	Parks, "Brave New Buffy" Tyron, "Depiction is not Endorsement" Walburtn, "Apples, Oranges..."	Response 2 Due Transformative Art Project 1 Due
Module 10 Week of 11/11	Video games, Cyborgs, & Machinima	Bissel, "Braided" ML, Chp. 7	
Module 11 Week of 11/18	Alternative, New & Social Media	ML, Chp. 6 McGonigal, <i>Reality is Broken</i>	Final Rough Draft Due
Module 12 Week of 11/25	Thanksgiving Break NO CLASS	<i>The Hurt Locker;</i> Gladstone, <i>Influencing Machine</i>	Response 3 Due
Module 13 Week of 12/2	The "Impartial" News & Democracy	Gladstone, <i>Influencing Machines</i> ML, Chp. 8	Transformative Art Project 1 Due
Last Class Session Week of 12/9	<i>Final Presentations in class,</i>		Response Papers: Last Chance!
Final Presentations	Tuesday, December 16th, 2-4 pm	Final Paper Due in Digital Dropbox by 5pm	

Some of the screenings for this class may contain material with sexually graphic scenes and/or violent subject matter. In these cases, announcements will be made before the screening. If you find the content too disturbing to watch, you may leave or skip this screening. It is your responsibility to inform the professor *immediately after class* (in person, by phone, or through e-mail) that you did not view the material so that you can arrange for an alternate screening.