ENGL 320: History and Theory of Media 2

Prof. Aimée Morrison
Virtual office hours: Thursday 12:00-2:00, or by appointment

Welcome to English 320, History and Theory of Media 2

Course description:

This course explores the social, political, and cultural contexts and consequences of mass media technologies such as newspapers, movies, radio, recorded music, and television. We will take a historical as well as theoretical overview of mass and broadcast media.

Pandemic note:

We’ve never had a fall semester like this before (I am including myself in this “we”). We are building this together. Someday, we will tell our grandchildren about these times. So let’s make something we can all be proud of, today.

This is an in-person class that is being offered entirely online, and asynchronously, in light of the risks of virus transmission that classrooms and campuses create. The course has been redesigned with COVID-times realities in mind, particularly that the wholesale changes to our usual living arrangements, work arrangements, financial opportunities, health concerns, childcare duties, and sense of reality, makes pretty much everything very unpredictable and also stressful.

The course thus has been designed to balance student autonomy and choice about when and how to do the work against everyone’s need for at least a little bit of structure and certainty. I have tried to make it possible for you to manage your needs and constraints without having to ask me for permission. If you require flexibility or assistance beyond what’s provided, please let me know and we’ll try to figure something out.

Course meeting times

The course is organized into weeks, a repeating rhythm of readings, group work, assignments, and quizzes. The intent is to add predictability to how the course works, but in a way that’s flexible enough to bend without breaking, in case of emergencies of all sorts, mine or yours. There are no “meetings” but there are regular “features” and content updates and these happen the same way every week, and you will be able to plan your way through the term according to your own situation and needs.
Contact information

If you email me, put ENGL 320 in the subject line, or email me directly through Learn. If your email is longer than a paragraph, it’s too long (unless you’re just telling me a story. I love stories.) If you need help understanding some part of the content of the course (“I don’t understand what ‘syndication’ means in television, or how broadcasting is different from cable. Can you explain it to me?”) then you will be using email to set up an appointment with me. If you need help understanding when things are due, check the online calendar on Learn, or the assignment sheets. If you need help understanding the course structure, check the syllabus.

New content is added to the class website all the time: that’s the best place to find me. The AMA forum is always open and if you put a question in there, I’ll be answering them weekly. You can attend my open virtual office hours. Many questions can be answered by looking at the web site, the textbook, or the syllabus. Ask group members for help. I love having appointments to talk with students “live” rather than writing pages and pages of email.

True story: I have 70 undergraduate students this term, and five doctoral students, and if all of you email me all the time I’m going to throw my laptop out the window, crawl under my 18 pound heavy blanket with my cat, and eat candy while sobbing until I pass out or throw up. My never-emptied inbox is what makes me think that *this* might be the Bad Place. I’m going to do my best. Please also do yours.

Buy the Textbook

We are reading this entire book. It is the anchor content of the entire course. Get it: print book shipped from W Store, print book or e-book available from Amazon, e-book course reserve online at the UW Library. It’s $45 bucks


Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

- Quizzes (5) 20% (week 2 – week 11)
- Group Assignments (5) 25% (week 3 – week 12)
- Mid Term Take Home Exam 20% (due week 7)
- Final Take Home Exam 25% (due during exam period)
- Individual Participation 10% (week 2 – week 11)
**Absence and Late Policy**

To succeed in the course, you will need to work on it every week, even if I’m not taking “attendance.” Most deadlines in the course are your choice, or within your group. The two take home exams will give you ample time to complete them on your own. There is no reason to hand in late work, because you have so much freedom to choose when and how. If you require further accommodation beyond this, please let me know.

**Access**

I strive to make my classes accessible for all of us. Everyone has a right to the full experience of the university education they have earned by admission and/or tuition payment. Night owls, English learners, introverts, rebels, loud-talkers, assault survivors, grieving students, anime fans but only like the subs and not the dubs, students who use a potato as their Teams avatar, disabled students, people with dial up internet. If there’s something you need to help you succeed, lemme know. If something in this document is freaking you out, let’s talk. If you’re registered with AccessAbility Services (man, that’s a LOT of paperwork to fill out!!!!) you can have them send me whatever. Or talk with me. Me, I’m autistic with a very large side order of ADHD so, yeah. Let me help you out here.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

Every member of this class—instructor as well as students—has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. We are all answerable to University policies governing ethical behaviour (Policy 33) and academic integrity (Policy 71), as well as to those outlining grievance or dispute procedures (Policy 70). Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

You will:

- know the university policies that govern your behaviour
- participate actively in your own learning, while respecting the rights of others to learn as well: this means staying in contact with your assigned group, and doing your part in shared, which includes doing assigned readings.
- give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work
- ask for help when you need it

I will:

- adhere to the university policies that govern my behaviour
• make myself available for consultation online
• return assignments of 1 page or less within one week, and all others within 2 weeks
• provide helpful and respectful feedback on student work
• be ready to offer help when something technical or intellectual goes awry

A final word

Once more, welcome to the course! I hope you find as valuable as it will be challenging. I am looking forward to a productive and exciting semester, and to getting to know all of you.