ENGL 320: History and Theory of Media

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Welcome to English 320, History and Theory of Media!

Please feel free to see me with any concerns or questions you have about the class, the readings, or the assignments. I will be in my office during the hours noted, and I’m always very happy to have students drop by during these times, or by appointment at other times. Beyond office hours, you may use email to set up an appointment with me. I will read your emails within one day, and will try to respond within two business days.

Course description:

According to the undergraduate calendar this course “explores the social, political, and cultural contexts and consequences of contemporary technologies of representation such as print and visual media, photography and film, audio recordings, computer-mediated communications, and interactive digital media.” We will take a historical as well as theoretical overview of the mass media of the twentieth (and twenty-first!) century, from the newspaper to new media and from the Frankfurt School to globalization.

Course meeting times

The course meets twice weekly, Monday and Wednesday from 2:30-4:00, in RCH 308.

Required and Recommended texts

The following texts are required for this course. They are available at the University Bookstore in South Campus Hall now. Please buy them, and bring them to class as the assigned readings dictate.


We will also occasionally be reading pieces accessible online: be sure to print copies to bring to class, or take notes from which you can make clear reference to the text. Links to these texts are provided from the website listed in the contact information above.

**Assignments and Mark Distribution**

The following are the graded components of the course:

- Mid Term Exam One: 20% 5 October
- Mid Term Exam Two: 25% 2 November
- Final Exam: 30% (TBA – during exam period)
- Quizzes (5): 15% (check UW-ACE calendar)
- Participation: 10%

The assignments and due dates have been carefully chosen to balance our work across the semester, and to test your accomplishment in the primary goals of the course: a historical and theoretical grasp of media technologies and practices into the twenty-first century.

The three exams of the course will test your recall of important dates and facts, your comprehension of key theories, and your capacity to synthesize your learning in the service of reasoned interpretation. Quizzes, to be taken periodically online, both ensure that you’ve undertaken the required reading, and prepare you for the exams.

Your participation grade will be calculated as follows: it’s a good part attendance, and a dash of talking-in-class. You get one freebie unexcused absence (hey, I used to be a student too); each subsequent unexcused absence results in a loss of one point. You gain positive points by answering questions in class.

**Absence and Late Policy**

You are busy; you are tired. You might be taking 6 courses, or possibly working part time. Maybe you have a new puppy, or a new love interest, taking up a lot of your energy. I understand that this is a pretty intense time of your life. But, as a good friend of mine says: **This is not a crisis – this is your life.** Life’s conflicting demands will not likely get any easier to balance any time soon. One of your fundamental tasks in university, then, is to hone your time-management skills. The syllabus outlines all the major assignments, tasks, readings, and due dates from here until the end of term. It’s up to you to manage your time to get it all done. Absence and missed assignments, or attendance and timely completion—these are choices that you make, and I expect you will take responsibility for them.

Absence from class requires advance permission: I’m always happier to hear about an absence or a conflict earlier rather than later. Absences should have compelling reasons:
“I’m really busy with assignments in all my other courses” is not a legitimate excuse, for example. Medical absences must be documented by a doctor’s note.

Assignments are due at the time and date noted; **do not miss the quiz deadline** as the computer cuts off submissions and once that train leaves the station, it ain’t coming back.

Every member of this class—instructor as well as students—has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

You will:

- regularly check the UW-ACE site for the course for deadlines and extra material
- be familiar with the university policies that govern your behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- arrive prepared: reading done, books in hand
- be an active participant in your own learning: speaking up, but listening too.
- give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

I will:

- regularly update the UW-ACE site with deadlines and extra material
- be familiar with the university policies that govern my behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- be available for consultation in person and over email as per stated policies
- return all assignments within two weeks
- provide helpful and respectful feedback on student work

**A Note from the Faculty of Arts**

**Academic Integrity:**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/ Policies/policy71.htm](http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/ Policies/policy71.htm)
**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW):** [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

**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.
English 320: History and Theory of Media

Foundations: Early Twentieth Century

14 September: Introduction, Syllabus

16 September: Mass Society and Modernity (UM)
    Paul N. Edwards, “How to Read a Book”

21 September: The Press as Mass Medium (MAS)
    Raymond Williams, “Media” and “Mass”

23 September: The Development of the Film Industry (MAS)

28 September: The Growth of Radio Broadcasting (MAS)

30 September: REVIEW DAY

5 October: MID-TERM ONE

Media Grows Up: Theory and Practice

7 October: The Rise of Advertising (MAS)

12 October: Thanksgiving: University Holiday

14 October: The Censorship of Money (UM)
    Inside the Image Factory (UM)

19 October: Propaganda in Peace and War (MAS)
    Cold War and Communication (MAS)

21 October: Telling it as it is? (UM)

26 October: Ways of Making You Think (UM)

28 October: REVIEW DAY

2 November: MID-TERM TWO

Post-War Media and Postmodernity

4 November: Schools of Thought (UM)
9 November: Televisions and Consumer Society (MAS)


16 November: The Audience Strikes Back (UM)

18 November: Media, Information, and Entertainment (MAS)

New Media

23 November: New Media Theory (UM)

25 November: Media, War, and International Relations (MAS)

30 November: New Media (MAS)
Globalization and New Media (MAS)

2 December: REVIEW DAY