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 HH 280.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam One</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>January 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam Two</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>March 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(TBA – during exam period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (5)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>(check UW-ACE calendar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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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 in the twentieth 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; unless prior arrangements are made late assignments will lose one letter grade (10%) per day late, counting weekends. Assignments more than two days late will not be accepted.

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
- attend all scheduled classes
- arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed, and with the textbook in hand
- participate actively in your own learning, while respecting the rights of others to learn as well: this means active listening as well as active speaking
- give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

I will:

- adhere to the university policies that govern my behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- make myself available for consultation in person and for appointment-making over email
- return assignments of 1 page or less within one week, and all others within 2 weeks
- provide helpful and respectful feedback on student work

The Faculty of Arts, which administers this course and is responsible to ensure adherence to codes of academic conduct, requires that the following paragraphs appear in this syllabus:

“Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties,
students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html).

“If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

“Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.html.”

Students seeking guidance on academic honesty are urged to discuss the issue with their instructor, or to consult the following page of the Arts Faculty Web site, "How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors" (http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html)

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

January 7: Introduction, Syllabus

January 12: Mass Society and Modernity (UM)
            Paul N. Edwards, “How to Read a Book”

January 14: The Press as Mass Medium (MAS)
            Raymond Williams, “Media” and “Mass”

January 19: The Development of the Film Industry (MAS)

January 21: The Growth of Radio Broadcasting (MAS)

January 26: REVIEW DAY

January 28: MID-TERM ONE

Media Grows Up: Theory and Practice

February 2: The Rise of Advertising (MAS)

February 4: The Censorship of Money (UM)
            Inside the Image Factory (UM)

February 9: Propaganda in Peace and War (MAS)
            Cold War and Communication (MAS)

February 11: Telling it as it is? (UM)

February 23: Ways of Making You Think (UM)

February 25: REVIEW DAY

March 2: MID-TERM TWO

Post-War Media and Postmodernity

March 4: Schools of Thought (UM)

March 9: Televisions and Consumer Society (MAS)
March 11: Effects? What Effects? (UM)
March 16: The Audience Strikes Back (UM)
March 18: Media, Information, and Entertainment (MAS)

New Media

March 23: New Media Theory (UM)
March 25: Media, War, and International Relations (MAS)
March 30: New Media (MAS)
Globalization and New Media (MAS)