
INTRO TO MEDIA & COMMUNICATION STUDIES in Fall 2018 (CM1023B)

Course Code	CM1023B	Professor(s)	Matthew Fraser
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-4th floor
Class Schedule	WF: 15:20-16:40 in SD-3	Office Hours	Wednesday 12-3 pm
Credits	4	Email	mfraser@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	0689263247

Course Description

Introduction to Media and Communication Studies provides an overview of the structure and function of contemporary media and asks basic questions about its place in contemporary society. It introduces students to the principal concepts and analytical tools for critically engaging the products and practices of the media. In addition to considering the socio-political implications of a wide range of images, narratives, and contexts, the course examines strategies and trends in media production, distribution, public policy, audience formation, and recent phenomenon such as “fake news”.

Course Learning Outcomes

Have a conceptual vocabulary for understanding formal/compositional aspects of media.
Have a critical-theoretical vocabulary for critically analyzing media artifacts, media’s role in social processes, and media businesses.
Understand different aspects of the field of media and communications (e.g.. Film, Audience studies, semiotics, narrative and genre analysis, political economy of media, cultural studies, journalism and political communication, advertising).

General Education

Course Outline

Please note: This is a tentative course schedule, subject to change as the course progresses.

September

Week I - 10th - 14th

Wednesday 12th - Session I

TOPICS - Overview of history of media and key concepts. What is/are the “media”?

READINGS - *Media Student's Book*, Part I “Key Concepts.”

Friday 14th - Session II

TOPICS - How has media production & consumption changed from “old” media to “new media” in the digital age?

READINGS - *Media Student's Book*, Part I “Key Concepts”.

September 16th – last day to drop/add courses online

Week II - 17th – 21st

Wednesday 19th - Session I

TOPICS – Media semiology - signs, symbols and icons.

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, ch. 1, “Approaching media texts”.

Friday 21st - Session II

TOPICS – Signs and symbols in advertising and art – eg. Andy Warhol

READINGS - *Media Student's Book*, “Visual and aural signs”, pp 32-41

Week III - 24th – 28nd

Wednesday 26th - Session I

TOPICS – Narratives and genres – hero and villain archetypes.

READINGS *Media Student's Book*, "Narratives", ch. 2

Friday 28nd - Session II

TOPICS – Genres and formats – (horror, western, rom-com, action, etc.)

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, "Genres & other classifications", ch 3.

October

Week IV – 1st - 5th

Wednesday 3rd - Session I

TOPICS – Representation: stereotypes in advertising, films, television. Case studies: skin whitening.

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, "Representations", ch. 4.

Friday 5th - Session II

TOPICS – Impact of Advertising and PR. Case study: Beauty ideals.

READINGS - *Media Student's Book*, "Debating advertising", ch. 11; "The Rise of the Image Men", *The Economist*.

Week V – 8th - 12th

Wednesday 10th - Session I

TOPICS – Selfie culture and personal representation, real and fake identities, "Finstigram"

READINGS - "On Fake Instagram, A Chance to Be Real", *New York Times*, Nov 2015; "Finding the Self in a Selfie", Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*.

Friday 12th - Session II

TOPICS – Media globalization and cultural "imperialism".

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, "Globalization", ch. 5; "Will Globalization Make You Happy"; "Cultures of Liberty", Vargas Llosa.

Week VI - 15th - 19th

Wednesday 17th - Session I

TOPICS – Media as propaganda. Case study: World War I propaganda, Nazi propaganda.

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, "Ideologies and discourses", ch. 6

Friday 19th - Session II

TOPICS – Cold War propaganda, Hollywood and the CIA.

READINGS – *Media Student's Book*, ch. 6; "Modern art was a CIA weapon"; "How the CIA funded Abstract Expressionism during the Cold War".

Week VII – 22nd – 26th

Wednesday 24th - Session I

TOPICS – Mid-term Review

Friday 26th - Session II

TOPICS – Mid-Term Exam.

October 26th, Mid-semester grades due

Week VIII – 29th – Nov. 2nd

October 31th - November 2nd, (included) Fall break, No classes

November

Week IX – 5th – 9th

Wednesday 7th - Session I

TOPICS – Hollywood globalization – blockbusters and superheroes.

READINGS “Hollywood’s obsession with blockbusters”, Harvard Business Review; “Why Hollywood is caught in the block buster trap”, *Vulture*.

Friday 9th - Session II

TOPICS – Hollywood imperialism and cultural stereotypes. Case study: American Sniper.

READINGS - “American Sniper: Racist Propaganda and American Empire”, *Foreign Policy Journal*.

Week X - 12th -16th

Wednesday 14th - Session I

TOPICS – Hollywood, Disney and China.

READINGS - “How China’s Censors Influence Hollywood”, *NPR*; “How China bought the keys to Disney’s Magic Kingdom”, *New York Times*.

Friday 16th - Session II

TOPICS - Television industry, cultural stereotyping? Case study: Homeland. Student presentation.

READINGS - “Homeland’s Crisis of Conscience”, *The Atlantic*.

Week XI -19th - 23th

Wednesday

21st - Session I

TOPICS – Influences: Reality TV, social media and the iconography of fame. Case studies: The Kardashians; celebrity diplomats. Student presentation.

READINGS – “Celebrities are in trouble for their Instagram posts”, *The Cut*; “Does Celebrity Diplomacy Really Work?”, *The Independent*.

Friday 23rd - Session II

TOPICS – student presentations.

READINGS - articles on course blog.

Week XII -26th - 30th

Wednesday 28th - Session I

TOPICS – The democratization of celebrity. Case studies: “Rich Kids of Instagram”, YouTube stars. Student presentation.

READINGS – “Rich kids love Instagram”; “What Rich Kids of Tehran Tells Us About Iranian Youth Culture”, *Vice*; “Meet the YouTube Millionaires”, *Business Insider*.

Friday 30th - Session II

TOPICS – Student presentations.

READINGS: articles on course blog.

December

Week XIII – 3rd – 7th

Wednesday 5th - Session I

TOPICS - Digital Giants – Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, too powerful? Student presentation.

READINGS – “The Battle for Consumers’ Attention”, *The Economist*.

Friday 7th - Session II

TOPICS - student presentations.

READINGS - articles on course blog.

Week XIV - 10th - 14th

Wednesday 12th - Session I

TOPICS – final exam review

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
The Media Student's Book, 5th ed	G. Branston and R. Stafford	Routledge	978-0415558426	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially

during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

- **Student Blog (25%)** – 4 blog posts of 500-750 words each giving a synopsis and analysis of assigned articles. Students will create their own blogs on Wordpress, Tumblr, Blogger.com, Medium or another platform of their choice.
- **Mid-term exam (25%)** – In-class exam tests students on their knowledge and understanding of readings, lectures, and assignments from the first half of the semester.
- **Presentation and participation (25%)** – Students will work in small groups of 2 or 3 and present a 15-20 minute “case study” to the class. Students will also be graded on attendance and participation in class discussions.
- **Final exam (25%)** – Exam tests students on their knowledge and understanding of readings, lectures, and assignments covering the entire course.

Other

This course has its own website for readings, graphics, and videos: <https://intromediacommm.wordpress.com>