

Introduction to Media - Comm 260

Department of Communication & Theatre Arts
Old Dominion University
Spring 2014

Instructor: Tim Anderson, Ph.D.

Office: BAL 3016

Class meetings: Mills Godwin 101 Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-2:45 pm

Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm and by appointment

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About the Course

This course is designed to introduce students to six basic ways of understanding media : 1) Media as systemic knowledge disseminator; 2) Media as mode of modern experience; 3) Media as capitalist and nationalist enterprises; 4) Media as a regulated and unregulated systems; 5) Media and technological change; and 6) Media and media audiences. Each one of these topics could very well demand a seminar or two. In fact, you may take a class in one or two of these areas of study again before you are done at Old Dominion or anywhere else you go to school. Each area is deeper than this class could ever manage. Think of this course as a buffet and each week you will get a taste.

About the Instructor

My name is Tim Anderson and I am a professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Theatre and Dance and have been teaching in universities since 1992. I live in Norfolk with my wife, my stepchildren, and a bunch of cats. I am from Arizona and received my BA in Philosophy from the University of Arizona. My MA and Ph.D. are in Radio-Television-Film from Northwestern University. I have a number of publications, most of which are centered on the issue of popular music and mass media. If you want to know more about my work, I am in books and journals that the library has. Here's my Amazon author's page, so knock yourself out figuring out what I do (sometimes I'm not certain): http://www.amazon.com/Tim-J.-Anderson/e/B001JS4F3K/ref=ntt_athr_dp_pel_1

Course Texts

There is one text in this course. It is Mass Media Revolution by J. Charles Sterin ISBN-13 978-0-205-59148-0

Grading

Students will be evaluated according through the following:

Exam I 15%

Exam II 25%

Exam III (Cumulative Final) 45%

Online "Lecture/Reading Quizzes" on Blackboard - 15%

All exams will be true/false and multiple choice. The final will be cumulative.

Cheating and Plagiarism

There are no opportunities to plagiarize in this class, but you could cheat. That said, don't do it. If I catch you cheating the consequences will not be good and you could wind up getting kicked out of ODU. If you want to know what constitutes cheating, there's a list here: <http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/WhatisCheating.shtml>

Furthermore, if you cheat and I catch you I will proceed as if you have violated the honors code and committed academic dishonesty, see <http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/DisciplinaryProcedures.shtml>

In short, remember, it takes as much effort to study as it does to cheat. So don't cheat.

Late Exams

Note: given the size of the class, I will not offer exams at another time for anyone for any reason that is not excusable. What is excusable? Glad you asked: You will be excused only for officially sanctioned university reasons (athletic events, university competitions, etc.), funerals involving family members, and medical emergencies (not the sniffles, hangover, etc.). All of these will necessitate documented verification. If you know you may miss an exam for these reasons let me know. Also, what this means is that you **MUST** talk to anyone that can affect your travel (i.e. parents, etc.). Just because a parent booked a flight doesn't mean I will change the time for your exam. I won't. Tell them that.

If for some reason you are unexcused and we agree after the substantial discussion that you may take a late exam and it does not fit the above criteria, the late exam will be penalized *two letter grades per day it is late*. For example, if you were traveling to visit a parent and missed the exam is on a Thursday and you came back and we agreed to offer it on a Friday, the best you could do is 80 percent. After three days you will not be able to take the late exam and will receive a zero.

Some Basics on How to Succeed in This and Any Other Class

Write Down these Lecture Notes - Unlike my more advanced 300 and 400 level courses, the powerpoints for these lectures will not be posted online. I have three reasons for this: 1) In my time as a teacher I have watched the ability of students to take notes in classrooms diminish. The internet is great and all, but it doesn't record everything you want. 2) Powerpoints can be misleading: they don't include everything you need to know. As one wise guy named Obi Wan Kenobi said, "Your eyes can deceive you". 3) You tend to remember things better when you them write down.

Study in Groups - I will say a lot of stuff in this class and it will go by quick. The best way to succeed is to study together with friends and others. Compare notes. Get together and...

Study Often - Cramming is a terrible strategy cause we teachers have a nasty tendency to give you our assignments all at the same time. By the way we do not talk about this. We just do it. I think it's genetic.

Read Your Email - I will communicate with you via email. Check it daily. I know, it's old fashioned but that's how us professors communicate.

Do the Quizzes - Just do them. They will be available when they are available. I will announce them over email and let you know when the window of availability. These will draw from the lectures and the readings. So...

Come to Class - I won't take role in this class, so I guess you could skip, but that would be dumb. This is a three credit course. If you are an in-state student this course costs you \$855 before books. If you are out-of-state this is a \$2,421. This class plans on meeting 27 times, which means that in-staters are paying \$31.67 per meeting and the rest of you \$89.67. Not coming to class is a waste of money, specifically your money. So skip class at your cost, both intellectually and financially.

And Do the Readings - It should go unsaid, but I will say it anyways. Do the readings the week I assign them, take notes, underline your book, and re-read before exams. By the way, you know what the best predictor is on whether or not you will succeed in this or any class? One guess: it has something to do with the readings and whether or not you have done them. Do them.

Come to Office Hours (and/or Make an Appointment) - You might think that because this is about media that this will be easy. But media is just like any other system of knowledge, only harder. Why? Because it involves issues of policy, finance, international affairs, aesthetics, and culture. Any time you have governments, bankers, diplomats, artists and audiences involved you have what we call a complex system. What that means for you is you may get confused, easily even. It happens to me all the time and I have been researching this stuff since the 1980s. However, there's good

news: You don't have to stay confused. Come to my office hours and let's talk about things and find some clarity. Or you can come down and talk about something else, even. Those hours are for you and you should use them. If you can't make em email me and let's make an appointment or two. I am in BAL 3016.

Week 1 and 2 and 3

Section 1 - Systems of Knowledge - There is no "media" only mediums. We need to think of these mediums as systems that connect many different entities and weave together communities. These lectures make us think about history and compare these systems from today and in the future: from micro to mass and into niche and crossing the bridge to the 21st Century (but starting from the 19th) and the beginning of rise of radio.

Week 1 - Jan 14 - Jan 16 - **American Media Basics and the 19th century** - Screening - Mr. Sears Catalogue
Readings Chapter 1 and this Syllabus (that's right, read this syllabus!)

Week 2 - Jan 21 - Jan 23 - **Radio as a mass system of connections, i.e. one way to build a nation** - Screening - The War of the Worlds
Readings Chapter 2

Week 3 - Jan 28 - Jan 30 - **Moving Pictures, The Institution of Cinema and the Birth of Hollywood, and The Medium of the First Half of the 20th Century** - Screenings - The Studio System
Readings Chapter 3

Weeks 4, 5 and 6

Section 2 - New Platforms Bring New Issues - More Histories of Media and Technologies: The Promise of New Modes and New Techs: Cinema, Broadcasting, and Point-to-Point + Peer-to-Peer

Week 4 - Feb 4 - Feb 6 - **Television, The Medium of the Second Half of the 20th Century** - Screening - The Quiz Show Scandals
Readings - Chapter 6

Week 5 - Feb 11 - Feb 13 - **Converging Media - Digital as a micro system connections, i.e. a new way to envision community** - Screening - Internet Rising
Readings - Chapter 7

Week 6 - Feb 18 - 20 - **The Music Industry - Some basic issues about an Industry in Flux**
Readings - Chapter 5 -

Thursday, Feb 20 - First Midterm Exam (Bring Blue, Five Answer Scantron)

Weeks 7, 8 and 9

Section 3 - Politics and Economics - Money And Control Questions -

Who funds what and why + What the heck is Propaganda? and Why is that a dirty word

Week 7 - Feb 25 - 27 - **Propaganda or PR or both?** The Control Room.

Readings - Chapter 8

Week 8 - Mar 4 -6 - What is Political Economics and why should media students care?

Screening - Money and March Madness

Readings - Chapter 9

Week 9 - Spring Break - Mar 11-13 - Stay Safe and Have Fun

Week 10, 11, 12

Section 4 - Who Regulates and Why Regulate - Public Interest - Laws - Who controls the Fourth Estate?

Week 10 - **No classes** - March 18-20 However, view The Net at Risk at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/net/watch.html> and Our Media Future at <http://video.pbs.org/video/1476763742/>

Chapter 2 at roughly 26 minutes

Week 11 - March 25 - 27 - **Question: Why Regulate Media? Answer 1 - Ethical Cultural and Security Issues**

Readings Chapter 11 - Screening - The Wikileaks Documentary

Week 12 - Apr 1 - 3 - **Question: Why Regulate Media? Answer 2 - Potential Bias**

Readings - Chapter 10

Second Exam on Thursday, April 3 - Please bring blue five question scantron

Week 13, 14

Section 6 - Technological Change and Media Fragments - New tech/New Practices - Change, it has happened before and will continue to happen - Change as capitalist + Change as Modern

Week 13 - Apr 8 - 10 - **Personal Digital Tech Overwhelms Us**

Readings - Chapter 7

Screenings - [Digital Nation](#)

Week 14 - Apr 15 - 17 - **Mass has certainly become Micro and What that Might Mean**

Readings - Chapter 15 - Screening - [An anthropological introduction to YouTube](#)

Weeks 15 and 16

Section 7 - Media Audiences and Fan Culture in a digital era.

Week 15 - Apr 22 - 24 - **The Wild and Wonderful World of Media Fandom in the age of Participatory Culture**

Readings - Chapter 13

Screenings - [We Are Wizards](#)

Week 16 - Apr 29 - Tuesday - **Time Catch up if we can!**

Readings - Chapter 14

Final Exam

Final Exam (The final exam will be cumulative! Bring blue scantron)
Thursday - May 1st - 12:30-3:30pm in Mills Godwin 101

Write this down as it will not change. Period. (Please note. This will be the one and only time the final exam is offered. There will be no early final exam and no makeup final exam unless there is a death in the family or a personal illness that places one in the hospital. Travel plans are not an excuse. Don't ask.)