

Media, Power, & Culture (MDJ 20001)



Instructor Information

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Course Information

Class Times: Asynchronous
Office Hours: Mondays 10-1pm
Office Hours: <https://discord.gg/UKc84DAZ8a>



Course Description

From targeted advertising and viral videos to hashtags and Snapchat filters, the media has become a ubiquitous force in American culture and society, infiltrating virtually every aspect of our existence. Yet we don't often critically examine the values, norms, and ideologies that are disseminated through the media, or how they impact our everyday lives. This course aims to help you become more knowledgeable and critical consumers of mass media by introducing you to key issues, concepts and methods in media studies. We will explore the historical evolution of mass media into their current forms; the technological and economic forces that shape media industries; the legal and ethical issues at play in the media; and the role of mass media in a democratic society.

One of the key objectives of this course is to examine how media is impacted by intersecting systems of power including race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and disability. The word "**power**" in the course title can be interpreted in three ways: First, the course explores the powers that shape mass media: social, political, cultural, and economic. Second, the course explores the power media have to shape the perceptions and values of the audience. Finally, this course empowers Kent State University students to become more proactive media users, rather than passive media consumers. This course will help you develop critical media literacy skills that you can put to use in your own life as a Kent State student and beyond.

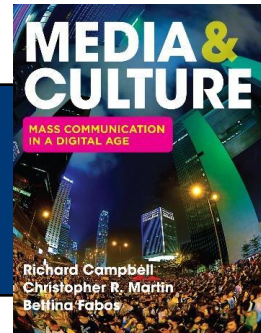
Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- understand the role of mass media in American history, democracy and culture
- identify how technological and economic factors influence mass media industries, consumers and content
- interpret the relationships between media providers and their respective audiences
- use media literacy skills to critically analyze media content
- differentiate among various forms of mass media such as entertainment, journalism, advertising and public relations
- analyze the portrayals of underrepresented groups in both historic and contemporary mass media content
- demonstrate how social norms of race, class, gender, sexuality and disability are shaped by mass media.

Required Texts & Materials

Required: Campbell, R., Martin, C., & Fabos, B. (2019). *Media & Culture: An Intro to Mass Communication*, 12th edition.



Information on Textbook and Materials for the Course

R. Campbell, C. Martin & B. Fabos, *Media & Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication* (Bedford/St. Martin's; 12th edition, January 8, 2019)

- The textbook is available via Flash Books in Canvas. Students will be assessed for content with their tuition on their bursar bill. The cost is \$47.00.
 - If you do not want to use the required course content provided through the Flash Books program, you need to notify Kent State of your decision by selecting the Flash Books link in your course in Canvas and select to “opt out.” You will receive a confirmation email of the action and will be responsible for procuring the textbook on your own.

Total points you can get in this course:

Component	Value	# of Assignments	Total Points
Journals	15	9	135
Quizzes	10	10	100
Film Analysis	30	3	90
Exams	40	4	160
Total			485

Note: Course Grading Scale (in percentages): F = 59.99 or below, D- = 60 to 62.99, D = 63 to 66.99, D+ = 67 to 69.99, C- = 70 to 72.99, C = 73 to 76.99, C+ = 77 to 79.99, B- = 80 to 82.99, B = 83 to 86.99, B+ = 87 to 89.99, A- = 90 to 92.99, A = 93 to 96.99, A+ = 97 to 100.

Course Assignments (subject to change)

Media, Power, & Culture has students identify and analyze the fundamental functions and problems of the United States media system. In addition, through this course, students will learn about possible remedies to foundational problems in media systems. Thus, the primary questions guiding the course are:

What is problematic about our media system and what steps can we take to fix it?

These are the questions that I hope we will answer by the end of the semester, with readings, online materials, and assignments providing insight into the answers. Below, I describe our assignments:

Journals (150 points) - Due Wednesdays at 11:59pm

Each session, you will be responsible for submitting a journal entry responding to the assigned material. Worth 15 points each, journal prompts will be posted on Canvas and each entry should approximate 250-300 words. Over the course of the semester, you may skip two journal assignments (you must complete 9 of the 11 posted due dates).

Film Analysis Assignments (90 points) - Due Wednesdays at 11:59pm

One of the goals of this course is to increase your ability to engage with various forms of media. Three times during the semester, instead of a journal, you will be responsible for watching a feature-length documentary film and analyzing it using ideas and themes from the course in a 500-600 word essay. Specific assignment guidelines will be posted on Canvas and each film analysis assignment is worth 30 points.

Weekly Quizzes (100 points) - Due Sundays at 11:59pm

Almost every week, students will be given an online quiz to take on Canvas. Quizzes will cover conceptual topics and key terms from the weekly readings and online course materials. Quizzes are multiple-choice and true/false questions. These are open-book and open-note quizzes covering that week's content and materials. Note: quizzes are **timed**. You will not have time to go through the material while you take the quiz. You should have viewed and understood the content including readings, videos, and journal prompts before beginning the quiz. You can take the quiz anytime between Monday and Sunday at 11:59pm.

Exams (160 points) - Due Sundays at 11:59pm (except for last exam).

At the end of each unit you will be given an open book exam consisting of 20 multiple choice and true/false questions designed to test your comprehension of key terms and concepts. Each exam will be worth 40 points and will cover only the topics within that specific unit. The exam for Unit IV will take place during exam week (there is no comprehensive final exam for the course).

Extra Credit

You have the opportunity to earn up to 20 extra credit points by completing a film analysis assignment on The Digital Economy. Guidelines are posted on Canvas. There will also be other ways to make up lost points towards the end of the semester. Students may also complete more than the 9 required journals to make up for lost points on other assignments.

Course Policies

Late work

All required assignments should be completed by the time specified. If you anticipate a problem with a due date or an assignment, please contact your instructor in advance. Please note that with the exception of emergencies, extensions will only be given if you have made alternative arrangements prior to the due date. While I do not give extensions, I do accept late assignments for partial credit. Please consider submitting late rather than not submitting at all. Some points are better than no points.

Course content & conduct

In this course we will read, think, and write about issues of power and oppression. This work is often difficult and uncomfortable, because some of the most important learning happens when we are pushed out of our comfort zones. You are encouraged to challenge yourself in this course while staying mindful of your own limits and boundaries. Our classroom will promote respectful engagement in which ideas will be exchanged and debated. However, some of the issues we cover in class might be controversial or emotional for some members of the class. It is therefore essential to show respect for your classmates and the classroom community—this is a requirement for the class. Class discussion should be conducted in a mature and professional manner, and comments that are racist, classist, sexist, heterosexist, ableist, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory will not be tolerated.

Student Accessibility and Accommodations

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately.

[Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS): University Library, Suite 100

Email: sas@kent.edu

Phone: 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490

Health and Safety

The [Flashes Safe Eight Principles](#) have been implemented to protect your health as well as the entire Kent State community. To stay informed please check your email and Canvas announcements daily.

[Sign up for FlashAlerts.](#)

Intellectual Property and Privacy

Intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to PowerPoint presentations, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the professor/lecturer/instructor remains the intellectual property of the professor/lecturer/instructor. This means the student may not distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor/lecturer/instructor.

Additionally, students may not distribute or publish recordings and/or links to live classroom presentations, lectures, and/or class discussions.

CCI Diversity Statement

Kent State University defines diversity as “the presence of difference.” The College of Communication and Information affirms that diversity enriches the teaching, study, research and criticism of the principles and practices of communication and information. Further, the faculty, staff and students maintain that communication and information can be understood fully and practiced effectively only when ideas from all people and perspectives are voiced and valued. CCI’s culture intentionally fosters an inclusive environment, and CCI commits itself to being an academic unit in which all individuals feel empowered to participate fully.

CCI Diversity recognizes that our university faculty, staff and student body is made up of a complex and diverse group of people with different backgrounds and religious beliefs. Section 3 - 01.2 (c) of the Policy Register sites that class attendance may excused for religious observances. In an effort to help faculty and staff plan in the event that students request absences in their academic or work responsibilities during the school year, CCI Diversity has built this working interfaith calendar about the major religious holidays of the faiths frequently represented in the Kent State community.

MDJ Diversity Statement

The Kent State University School of Media and Journalism recognizes the importance of a diverse faculty, staff and student body and embraces the concept that diversity will foster the acknowledgement, empowerment and inclusion of any person.

The School teaches the history, culture, values and notable achievement of persons who represent the world’s diverse community. The mission of the school is to offer a strong curriculum, enriched by a legal and ethical foundation, which recruits, retains, promotes and hires from this diverse community.

The School believes that the highest levels of success, knowledge and progress arise when we learn from others who are not of our own national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, gender expression, physical and mental ability and social class. We welcome the many opportunities to examine challenges that may arise from differences.

One of our goals is to promote inclusivity and belonging among students, faculty and staff. MDJ’s Diversity and Globalization committee is committed to serving as a resource to promote ongoing education and awareness about issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Please contact the committee at mdjdiversity@kent.edu if you have a diversity-related issue that you would like to discuss.

Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Assault

Kent State University seeks to provide an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment and does not tolerate sex discrimination of any kind including: sexual misconduct; sexual harassment; relationship/sexual violence and stalking. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this.

Reporting Options:

1. If you report this to a staff and/or faculty member, they are considered a mandated reporter who is required to notify our university's Title IX Coordinator at 330-672-7535 as per our policy 5-16.2 <https://www.kent.edu/policyreg>.
2. If you wish to keep the information confidential, you may contact Kent State University counseling services at 330-672-2487 or 330-672-2208 to speak with a licensed counselor/psychologist.

Additionally, you may also report any gender-based discrimination and harassment to:

- Police Emergency: 911
- Kent State Police: 330-672-2212
- Center for Sexual and Relationship Violence (SRVSS): 330-672-9230

For more information about Title IX at KSU, please visit: <http://www.kent.edu/sss> or contact the Office of Compliance, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at 330-672-2038 or aa_eeo@kent.edu.

Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism:

The School of Media and Journalism deals in publishable works and educates its students for various aspects of publishing and other communications professions. Within this framework, every student must be aware of the following rules and definitions while in school or on the job:

Fabrication is, in phrasing first used by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, the cardinal sin. Faking quotations, faking “facts,” reporting things that did not happen are not only reprehensible; they could be actionable in court.

Plagiarizing, as defined by Webster, is “to steal and pass off as one’s own the ideas or words of another”. It is unethical and, in cases involving creative work, usually illegal. One of the worst sins a communications practitioner may commit is to plagiarize the work of another – to steal his/her words, thought, or outline and pass them off as his/her own.

Cheating includes the submission of work in which you have received material and substantive assistance from others, or copied the work of others, when the assignment was intended to be completed by you alone. Unless specifically designated as a group project, all assignments for this course are intended to be the result of your individual efforts.

Duplicating work is defined as submitting the same work to more than one instructor (or publication) without the prior knowledge and agreement of both.

Commission of any of these offenses while in school is grounds for disciplinary action. If the complaint is upheld, a variety of punishments may be imposed, from a reprimand to a lowered or failing grade in the course to dismissal from the university.

Please refer to Kent State University’s Policy Register Section 3-01.8 regarding plagiarism: <http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism>

MDJ Program Statement:

As a program accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, we are committed to developing a curriculum designed to meet twelve professional competencies. (The items in **bold** are specific to Media, Power and Culture.) This course, as part of a larger program, contributes to our development of:

THOUGHTFUL, PROFICIENT COMMUNICATORS...

- ◆ write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- ◆ **demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.**
- ◆ **understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.**
- ◆ apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

...WHO ARE CREATIVE, CRITICAL THINKERS...

- ◆ **think critically, creatively and independently.**

...TRAINED TO UNCOVER AND EVALUATE INFORMATION...

- ◆ conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- ◆ critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- ◆ apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

...WITHIN A LEGAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK...

- ◆ **Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the United States, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;**
- ◆ **demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.**

...IN A DIVERSE AND GLOBAL SOCIETY.

- ◆ **demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation, and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.**
- ◆ **demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of people and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.**

Course Schedule: MDJ 20001 Media, Power and Culture

Term: Spring 2022 | Course Dates: 1/18/22-5/3/22

**Unless otherwise indicated, assessments are due by 11:59 PM ET*

Module	Assessments/Assignments	Points	Due Date*
UNIT I: MEDIA IN TRANSITION			
1	Journal: Media Effects	15	Wednesday 1/20
	Intro Quiz 1	10	Sunday 1/23
2	Journal: Data Privacy	15	Wednesday 1/26
	Quiz 2	10	Sunday 1/30
3	Film Analysis: Racial Injustice & Intersectionality	30	Wednesday 2/2
	Exam I	40	Sunday 2/6
UNIT II: ETHICS, DEMOCRACY, & JOURNALISM			
4	Journal: News Coverage	15	Wednesday 2/9
	Quiz 3	10	Sunday 2/13
5	Journal: Photo Essay	15	Wednesday 2/16
	Quiz 4	10	Sunday 2/20
6	Journal: Freedom of Expression	15	Wednesday 2/23
	Quiz 5	10	Sunday 2/27
7	Film Analysis: Journalism, Democracy, and Ethics	30	Wednesday 3/2
	Exam II	40	Sunday 3/6
UNIT III: ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA & THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION			
8	Journal: Comparing News Media: Then vs Now	15	Wednesday 3/9
	Quiz 6	10	Sunday 3/13
9	Journal: Immigrant Representation	15	Wednesday 3/16
	Quiz 7	10	Sunday 3/20
10	Journal: Scene Analysis	15	Wednesday 3/23
	Quiz 8	10	Sunday 3/27
Spring Break is observed March 27 – April 3			
11	Film Analysis: Representation & Cultural Stereotypes & MMIWG	30	Wednesday 4/6
	Exam III	40	Sunday 4/10
UNIT IV: ADVERTISING, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & MEDIA INDUSTRIES			
12	Journal: Media Ownership	15	Wednesday 4/13
	Quiz 9	10	Sunday 4/17
13	Journal: Gender Targeting	15	Wednesday 4/20
	Quiz 10	10	Sunday 4/24
14	Journal: Public Service Announcement	15	Wednesday 4/27
	Quiz 11	10	Sunday 5/1
15	Extra Credit Film Analysis: The Digital Economy	[10]	Friday 5/6
	Exam IV	40	Friday 5/6
TOTAL		500	