

# COMM 3800

## MEDIA INDUSTRIES

W 5:30-8:30pm, TC 101

### Course Description & Objectives

This course will introduce you to general trends and debates in the contemporary media industries, including ownership consolidation, changes in work environments, technological convergence, and globalization. We will be focusing primarily on the electronic media, particularly the broadcast industries, but we will also be including the recording industry, Hollywood, and new media in our discussions. By studying the media as an industry we will examine how changes in regulations have allowed for the growth of integrated media conglomerates whose output covers a range of entertainment and informational content. Overall, this course will cover industry structures, business practices, economic fundamentals, technological innovations, and theoretical explanations of how the media industries influence the broader culture and society.

Specific objectives of this course are to be able to:

- understand the general economic, social, institutional, and regulatory environments within which contemporary American media industries operate.
- understand how contemporary American media organizations are being affected by technological changes, regulatory changes, changes in economic practices, and globalization.

- identify and describe examples of how the competitive environment shapes the decisions and practices of contemporary media professionals

Students will work toward achieving these objectives by developing and practicing the following skills:

- reflecting, in writing and in oral discussion, on your own experiences with the media industries as they relate to the course materials
- analyzing examples of key issues as they apply to a specific media industry
- describing the changes in the regulation of media industries and their consequences for industry structure

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## Assignments

The assignments in this class are designed to help you further your understanding of the course material by applying what you learn to a series of projects. This section of the syllabus will give an overview of the assignments, but specific details for each one will be available on the class eCourseware site.

**Reflection Essays:** Over the course of the semester you will complete four (4) short reflection essays (500-700 words each). These essays will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and issues discussed in the class by examining your own experiences and opinions and relating them to the class material.

**Adopt an Industry Project:** This project will require you to select ONE media industry to research over the course of the semester. There are two main parts of this assignment 1) weekly summaries of a trade publication article that relate your industry to one or more issues from that week’s readings and 2) a final paper where you integrate your articles and additional research to discuss the state of your industry, and it’s possible future. More specific details about this assignment will be given separately.

**Final Exam:** There will be one in class comprehensive exam covering the readings and class discussions

### Grade Breakdown:

Reflection Essays (4@10% each):	40%
Industry Project:	30%
Final Exam:	20%
Participation:	10%
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Total	100%

## Understanding Your Grades

### A = Outstanding Achievement

Should be understood as truly excellent work that integrates concepts, and theories and presents them in a well-argued manner. The written work is generally error-free in spelling and grammatical errors. To earn an "A" on an assignment, you will need to be extremely proficient at explaining, applying, evaluating, and synthesizing the concepts, models, etc., covered in this class.

### B = Good Achievement

Should be understood as good work that demonstrates a firm grasp of concepts and class material and presents them in a solid manner. The written work has a minimal number of spelling and grammatical errors and is structured with an appropriate introduction and conclusion.

### C = Satisfactory Achievement

Should be understood as passable work that fulfills the requirements of the assignment in a basic way. It may have some organizational flaws but generally demonstrates an understanding of the key concepts. The written work has a moderate number of spelling and grammatical errors. An assignment that meets, but does not exceed the basic requirements will receive a grade somewhere in the "C" range.

### D = Poor Achievement

Should be understood as not acceptable work that demonstrates competence in less than half of the required concepts, theories, etc. It may have major writing or organizational flaws that hamper the interpretation of the work.

### F = Unsatisfactory

Should be understood as work that does not address the criteria of the assignment and does not indicate an understanding of the course material. It may have severe problems in expression, organization and writing, and accuracy.

## General Class Policies

### Participation

This class will be conducted through a mix of lecture and class discussion. ALL students will be expected to critically assess the course readings and to come to each class prepared to analyze and discuss the assigned readings, and I may cold call on any student to discuss the readings at any time. Therefore, you should read ALL assigned materials and come prepared with any questions or concerns so that they can be address them in class. Engagement in class discussion will make up 60% of your Participation grade.

Participate constructively and respectfully. Attacks and critiques should focus on ideas and evidence, not on personal characteristics. Treat others as you would have them treat you.

Avoid bringing up personal stories unless they relate \*directly\* to the material being discussed. Wild tangents waste everybody's time.

Because class participation and discussion are an important part of this course, it is essential that you show up to class prepared and in a timely manner (i.e., at the start of class would be the best time for this).

At the same time, it is my responsibility to come to class prepared to explain and clarify the readings and to start and end class on time. I'll keep up my end of the bargain if you keep yours.

### Attendance

Attendance at all class sessions is critical to success in this

class. Lectures may include information not covered in the readings, and insights from discussions may be important for the exams. Because this class meets once per week, students will be allowed 1 unexcused absence without penalty. For each subsequent unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted from your attendance grade (worth 40% of Participation). Five points will also be deducted for every 3 tardies.

Notifying me of an intended absence does NOT constitute an authorized absence. Authorized absences, in general, include illness, participation in official university events, unavoidable personal emergencies, and religious holidays. Advance notification and third party documentation is required for ALL authorized absences. You are responsible for ALL material covered in missed classes, whether or not the absence was authorized.

### Technology Use

Before entering the classroom, please turn off all cell phones, beepers, pagers, alarms, and any other bits of technology that could disrupt the class. You may not listen to personal MP3 players or similar devices during class. You are welcome to use your laptop computer to take notes in class, however you accept responsibility for limiting your use of extraneous applications that distract from the class discussions and lectures. In addition, please be aware that others in your immediate area may be distracted by your computer screen, so if you choose to use a laptop, please choose a seat near the back.

## POLICY ON LATE WORK

All assignments are due on the date and time specified by the instructor.

Late papers will be penalized with a 10-point deduction for each day the paper is late, including weekends. Papers more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

As a general rule I do not grant extensions, so it is your responsibility to make sure to keep track of deadlines and turn all assignments in on time. Any exceptions to this will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor.

## POLICY ON WRITTEN WORK

With the exception of work completed in class, all written work must be computer-generated, double-spaced, with proper margins. Please adhere to the word limits established for each assignment, as points will be deducted for papers that are egregiously under or over the limits. All papers must be accurately and completely documented using APA 6th edition style. Papers must be turned in electronically through the eCourseware site.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT

I use Turnitin to evaluate the originality of your assignments submitted for class. As part of this process, you will be required to submit electronic copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. According to the U of M's Office of Legal Counsel (10/17/ 2005) by taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

According to the University of Memphis Student Handbook, your assignments must reflect your own effort. When using outside sources--those written by other individuals--you must acknowledge your sources and add your own analysis. Failure to properly cite sources constitutes plagiarism. **If you plagiarize or cheat, the minimum penalty is an F on the assignment; other penalties could include an F for the course and/or suspension.**

All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs:

<http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/dishonesty/definitions.htm>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 100 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## GRADE DISPUTES & QUESTIONS

Assignments are developed to achieve a variety of academic and assessment goals and I always attempt to describe exactly what is required. However, if you have a question about the assignment—it's content, format, etc., do not hesitate to ask. I usually respond to email within 24 hours during the work week and 48 hours over the weekend. As a general rule I will return graded assignments within two weeks. All grades will be posted on eCourseware, giving you a running total of your grade in the course. If you have additional questions about your progress you may check with me at any time throughout the semester. To do this, schedule a meeting time with me and bring specific questions.

If you would like to discuss any assignment after receiving feedback/grades, please wait 24 hours to "catch your breath" and collect your thoughts; again, be sure you bring specific questions to our discussion. I hope you will approach the grading philosophy as a challenge, not as an obstacle :-)

### Required Materials

*Understanding Media Industries*, T. Havens & A. Lotz (2011). Oxford University Press.

Any additional required readings will be posted on eCourseware. All students must have regular and reliable access to a computer and the Internet and their University of Memphis email accounts. Familiarity with blogs and wikis is helpful but not required.

### Breakdown of Letter Grades (in %)

**A = 94-100 A- = 90-93**

**B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-83**

**C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76 C- = 70-73**

**D+ = 66-69 D = 60-65 F = 0-59**

<b>--Tentative Schedule --Subject to Change--</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings to be discussed/Assignments due</b>
8/31	Introduction to class; Key Concepts in Media Industry Studies	Bring syllabus to class; Ch. 1 through p. 9; select industry to study
9/7	Key Concepts; Media Industry Mandates	Finish Ch. 1, read ch. 2; first trade pub. article & summary due
9/14	Technological Conditions of the Media Industry	Ch. 3; Essay #1 due; article & summary due
9/21	Regulation of the Media Industries	Ch. 4; article & summary due
9/28	Topic TBA (possible guest speaker)	TBA, no article summary due
10/5	Economic Conditions in Media Production	Ch. 5; Essay #2 due; article & summary due
10/12	Topic TBA (possible guest speaker)	TBA, no article summary due
10/19	Creative Practices and Roles Involved in Making Media	Ch. 6; article & summary due
10/26	Distribution & Exhibition Practices	Ch. 7; Essay #3 due; article & summary due
11/2	Auxiliary Practices	Ch. 8; article & summary due
11/9	The Growth of the Symbolic Economy	Ch. 9; Essay #4 due; article & summary due
11/16	Digitization	Ch. 10; article & summary due
11/23	Globalization	Ch. 11; article & summary due
11/30	Industry Projects due - Presentations	All papers due by 5:30pm
12/7	Final Exam	