

j110

foundations of journalism and mass communication

spring 08

ernie pyle hall 220

tth 11:15-12:30

Instructor: J. Michael Lyons – lyonsj@indiana.edu • office ep 143 • office hours: Tuesday 9-10

Associate Instructor: Catherine Hageman – chageman@indiana.edu • office: ep 212 • office hours (tba)

about the course

Media in all forms wash over us constantly. Media entertains, teaches, disgusts, excites, angers and bores. All of this has consequences and it is the goal of this class to identify, examine and think about what these consequences mean for ourselves, our society and our world. This is a tall order indeed and we might only be able to scratch the surface. That's OK. The key is to develop a critical way of thinking about the media that we can take with us at the end of the semester and use throughout our lives and careers.

course organization

This course takes an approach to examining media that some call "media ecology." We will examine specific forms of media – for example, television, newspapers and the World Wide Web – as they exist together within a fluid media environment. The lines between them are increasingly blurred. Talking about newspapers,

for example, doesn't make sense if you don't talk about the Web as well. So instead of taking on each medium separately we will instead weigh into six debates:

- “The Wisdom of Crowds” vs. “The Cult of the Amateur”
- Profit vs. The public good
- The public's right to know vs. security
- Evolution or Revolution?
- Does media make us smart or dumb?
- Does media bring us together or keep us apart?

We will look at each debate from four perspectives: power, history, technology and ethics. Who has power and who doesn't and how might the media widen or narrow the gap? History is vital in understanding the way media work. Technology is often a key factor in a medium's success. Is it the most important factor? By ethics I mean the choices made at all levels in the communication process, from journalists who make up stories to racy advertisements to violent video games. Case studies will help ground these debates in reality.

readings

Course readings will come from two sources: the required book *Media and Culture* (Richard Campbell, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008) and articles and pod/videocasts posted on Oncourse (signified by the * on the syllabus). The textbook (**“MC” on the syllabus**) will help provide an overview of some of the issues we will discuss. You won't be expected to read the textbook from beginning to end. The readings assigned from the book will jump around a little because the course is not designed to follow it. The readings from the book will be pretty short and straightforward.

But the textbook alone will not suffice, so that's where the articles, podcasts and videocasts come in. Whenever possible the articles and in-class discussions will be oppositional – offering you two sides of the same debate. Arguments about the media, like most of life, are rarely black and white. It's that bit of gray in the middle of the argument that we are most interested in exploring.

grading

Graded assignments include a short paper and three exams. Participation will also be part of your grade (more on that later). Exams will include a few questions drawn from the textbook and the rest from the class discussions and posted readings.

The topic of the short paper will be an analysis of one of the debates mentioned above. The paper should be 1,000-1,200 words and will be submitted electronically (more on that as the first due date approaches). The general paper topic will be assigned for you, but you will be expected to come up with a specific argument. We literally drew names from a hat. The due dates of the papers are staggered to coincide with the class discussions. So, for example, if your paper is about whether media bring us together or keep us apart it will be due near the end of the semester. If it's on the Wisdom of Crowds vs. The Cult of the Amateur it will be due near the beginning of the semester. See the schedule below for the exact due date.

Your paper will critically comment on the debate at hand by examining a case study other than the one(s) we talk about in class. These debates and questions should be broad enough that you can find several examples to look at. By critically comment I mean you will bring in elements of "critical analysis" that we will talk about in the first couple of days of the semester. A handout will be available that will guide you through the paper a little more clearly.

Your grade will be distributed as follows:

First exam:	15 percent
Mid-term exam:	20 percent
Paper:	20 percent
Final exam:	30 percent
Participation:	15 percent

deadlines

Get stuff in on time, come to class and don't miss exams. Simple as that. Each 24-hour period, including weekends, something is late will cost you a letter grade. Extensions can be provided for documented illnesses or family emergencies. You need to notify Catherine Hageman in advance to get an extension on the paper or to make up an exam. These will only be granted for emergency situations. Exams or assignments in other classes don't count. Good deals on plane tickets that take you out of town early for spring break, for example, don't count either. Sorry.

attendance and participation

We don't formally take attendance. Hopefully the class will be interesting enough that you want to show up and tough enough that you need to show up to pass. The participation portion of the grade is based on short responses to the readings posted on Oncourse. There are no make-ups for the in-class question. If you are late for class or leave early and you miss it, it's gone never to return. Several will be asked over the course of the semester. Each question will be worth 10 points and there are three grades 10 points, 5 points, 0 points. Ten points if you are familiar with the reading; five if you just show up and 0 if you didn't show up.

Also, expect to join the discussion during class – in small groups and in the class as a whole.

on cell phones and civility etc.

Please turn off your cell phones before you come in. Please do not use laptops during class - they bother people. We will talk about many controversial things this semester that many of you will have strong feelings about. Please respect others' opinions as you would like to have them respect yours.

instructor bios

Mike Lyons

Mike came to IU in 2003 after working for 12 years as a journalist. Most recently he worked for the Associated Press and Agence France-Presse in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. He has also worked as a reporter and editor in Alaska, the British West Indies and his hometown of Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Catherine Hageman

Catherine is a second-semester Masters student at Ernie Pyle. She graduated from IU in May 2007 with a BA in journalism and a minor in English/creative writing. Catherine works part-time at WFIU, the local NPR affiliate station.

schedule (Subject to change if something interesting comes up. * - on Oncourse)

Week Dates	Debate	Case(s) / Issue (s)	Readings	Exams / Paper
1 Jan. 8 & 10	Course introduction The critical process		MC – 27-34	
2 Jan. 15 & 17	Media Literacy Ways of thinking about mass communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media and violence • Magic bullet • Knowledge gap • Spiral of silence 	MC – 2-27 MC – Chapter 15	
3 Jan. 22 & 24	“The Wisdom of Crowds” vs. “The Cult of the Amateur”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube • Wikipedia • Blogging • Participatory, Networked, Citizen, Collaborative Journalism • “Public” media 	* Grossman – Time’s Person of the Year * Keen – The Cult of the Amateur * Surowiecki – podcast MC – 40-52	
4 Jan. 29 & 31			* Lehmann – Amateur Hour * Rosen interview - http://youtube.com/watch?v=YBZZ6sDioc MC – 52-72	Jan. 29 – Debate paper 1 due

5	Evolution or Revolution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is print dead? Are books? Is paper? • Technological determinism • Convergence • “New” and “Old” media 	MC – 119-124; 156-164; 274-283, 350-358 *Coit Murphy – Books are Dead, Long Live Books .	
6			*Baker – Goodbye to Newspapers *Morford – All Hail the Death of Radio	Feb. 12 - Debate paper 2 due Feb. 14 – First Exam
7	The Right to Know vs. Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Miller • Josh Wolf • War reporting • Leaks and whistleblowers • Reporter’s privilege 	MC – 484-497 *TimesTalk (podcast) – The Pentagon Papers and what they mean today *Witness Stand (podcast) * New York Times - Bank Data is Sifted by U.S. in Secret to Block Terror	
8			MC – 284-291, 24-25 Evans – War Stories	Feb. 26 – Debate paper 3 due

9 March 4 & 6	Profit vs. The Public Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media consolidation • The “mainstream” and the “alternative” * Media imperialism 	MC – Ch. 13 *Ted Turner – “My beef with Big Media” *Interview with Rupert Murdoch	
10 March 18 & 20			*Pareles – “Pay What You Want for this Article” *Anderson – “The Long Tail”	March 6 – Debate paper 4 due March 20 – Mid-term exam
11 March 25 & 28	Do Media Make Us Dumb or Smart?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The death of print • Indecency • Tabloid journalism • Infotainment • Media and politics • The Daily Show 	MC- 18-19 *Johnson – “Watching TV makes you smarter” *Postman – “Amusing ourselves to death” *Reamusing ourselves to death (podcast)	
12 April 1 & 3			MC – 507-515 *Colapinto – “The Most Trusted Name in News” * “Faker – and Harder” (podcast)	April 1 – Debate paper 5 due

13 April 8 & 10	Do Media Bring Us Together or Keep Us Apart?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Fox News • Bias/objectivity • Parachute Journalism • Digital Divide • Race 	MC - 506 *Kurtz – Tilting at the Right, Leaning to the Left *Cassidy – “Me Media”	
14 April 15 & 17			MC - 471 * Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao – Diversity in the Land of Majority Rule	April 15 – Debate paper 6 due
15 April 22 & 24	Careers Panel Review for exam			
May 1	Final Exam	EP 220 - 12:30 – 2:30		