South Carolina State University
College of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English and Modern Languages

Jour 200: Understanding Media

A newly approved course for Humanities Cluster Choices for
General Basic Course Curriculum Requirement
(3 Credit Hours)

Jour 200: Understanding Media
Lecture Time and Place: TBA
Instructor: Dr. Shafiqur Rahman
Office Location: Turner A- 260, Tel. 536-8787
Office Hour

Course Description and Rationale:

On an average day, high school seniors, college and university students are exposed to the audiovisual media for more than 5-6 hours. The university students are mostly dependent on television and the Internet for their information, education and entertainment needs. But as we all know, television and Internet do not always provide truthful, fair, credible and balanced information for our young adults’ minds to form accurate perceptions about ideas, things and events around them. The borderline between the fact and fiction, news and infomercials, and notions of “reality” in reality shows have or are being blurred in most media outlets because of media owners’ profit motives. Bias in the media produces non-critical, non-pragmatic, and confusing worldview for our students, creating a profound and long-term impact in their minds. In order to face the challenge of forming an accurate and pragmatic worldview, college students need a comprehensive course to critically examine the role of mass media in society.

This journalism course, Jour 200: Understanding Media, would be an introductory course on how ideas and images are presented through the modern mass media especially newspaper, magazines, radio, television and film. The course will be designed to study how the media operate, why they operate as they do, who owns what media, how the mergers and consolidations of media affect the media contents, and how do they have short and long term impact in the hearts and minds of young listeners and viewers. In this course, students will
learn how to become critical users of the media through the analyses of the form and content of messages. The course will include comprehensive information on the policies, rules, procedures and practices in media industries that may improve the ways to use the mass media by the consumers.

The course will examine the basic processes and functions of mass communication, the development of the mass media, characteristics of the mass media audience, implications of continued changes in mass media technology, economic and political control of the media, and possible work opportunities for the students in mass communications media industry. Some of the major criticisms and challenges faced by the media will also be discussed in this course.

**Required Texts:**


**Additional Recommended Readings:**


*Facing Difference: Race, Gender and Mass Media*, Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, 2006


Read Two Newspapers:
One National (N.Y. Times, USA Today Wall Street Journal, Atlanta Journal and Constitution) and
One Local (The State, or the Times and Democrat)

Two Magazines:
The Editor and Publisher and Broadcasting and Cable
The Black Commentator, the Journal of Black Issues.

Internet Search on the News of Most Mass Media organizations

**Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will learn about the complex structures and matrixes in which the modern mass media operate and find their impacts on the students' own economic, social and cultural milieu.

2. Students will become familiar with the history of the American mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio and television, film, advertising and public relations etc. They will learn to separate fact from fiction, news from advertising, real and real things
in “reality” shows and the truth stretching techniques by the public relations professionals.

3. Students will be able to analyze and understand the role of mass media in major national and international issues such as the Bill of Rights, minority access, budget deficit, Supreme Court Justices, abortion, privacy, copy rights, violence, pornography, wars in Africa and Iraq, and political and economic changes in Russia, China, India and Europe.

4. Visit Web Pages of major media organizations CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, BET, NAB, NYT, USA-Today to check on how they operate and how they impact on the development of students’ worldview.

Course Expectations and Requirements:

1. Students will be expected to attend classes regularly and complete all assigned readings on time.

2. Students will complete 5 class assignments/projects on media’s critical political, economic, educational, religious and cultural roles. They will have a midterm and a final exam covering the assigned readings.

3. Each student will make a class or group presentation, 20-30 minutes on a selected critical topic on media operation process, media laws, ownership regulations.

4. Each student will maintain a portfolio of articles and newspaper clippings and Internet printouts on a chosen area of his/her interest, to be reviewed by instructor.

5. Any violations of academic or disciplinary rules in class or department will be dealt with following the standard university rules.

Outline of Course Content:

2. Media Data Bank, Media Timeline and Media People.
3. Mass Media Effects: Gratification, Selectivity, Socialization, and Apathy/Empathy
4. Mass Media in Globalization
5. Politics and Economics of News and News Business
6. Politics and Economics of Entertainment and Entertainment Business
8. Electronic Media: Radio, Recordings and Television
10. Cyber Media: Information Super Highway, Internet, and Web
11. Politics and Economics of Web, Internet and Cell Phones
12. Mass Media and Governance, and Laws and Ethics
13. Employment Opportunities in Mass Media Industries: Local, State, National
Grade Distribution

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Projects and Class Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Research Project/ Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Prepared by:
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