MEDIA THEORY

MST 301: examination of media texts, contexts, influence, and effects from a variety of theoretical perspectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: (1) explain, (2) evaluate, (3) differentiate, and (4) apply contemporary theories of and frameworks for understanding media and their influences

Most material will be covered through lectures and in-class activities. READINGS are on Canvas (under “Files”). Students may also wish to consult Media & Society (O’Shaughnessy) or Media Society (Croteau & Hoynes).

TOPOICAL OUTLINE & CALENDAR

Week of Aug 18-20
Approaches to studying media and The Media
Third Person Effect, Inoculation theory

Week of Aug 25-27
Theories of Influence
“Direct Effects,” minimal effects
Agenda Setting, Priming
Framing, Schema, Heuristic Processing
Socialization/ Observational Learning, Social Learning Theory

Week of Sep 1-3
Cultivation
Content Analysis
Correlation vs. Causation
Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methods of Analysis; Objective vs. Subjective

Week of Sep 8-10
applications, test-prep
* TEST: Sep 10

Sep 15, 17, 22
Narrative/ Textual Analysis
Coding ... * coding exercises in class
*GRADED CONTENT ANALYSIS will be 9/17 or 22

Sep 24: NO CLASS

Week of Sep 29-Oct 1
Audiences and Meaning
Polysemy, Negotiated Readings
Message Characteristics
Humor

Week of Oct 6-8
...Humor cont’d
Cognitive Factors in Message Processing
ELM, emotions, Fear Appeals
Persuasion

C: 235-41
301-OPTIONAL effects
301_intro framing +agenda
C: 16-20
Chapter 4_TV effects (covers weeks 2-4)
Narrative Analysis page 266-76, page 278-86,
page 290-93 (doc is in 3 sections)
*bring w/you “Narrative + Textual OUTLINE”

C: 260-68
Moyer (j’l article)

Chappelle’s Show, ep 1
Oct 13: BREAK
Oct 15: NO CLASS (I’ll be out of the country)

Weeks of Oct 20-22, 27-29
Audiences and Meanings (cont’d)

Representation: of whom, by whom
Gender Schema Theory, feminism/ post-feminism               Ideology (feminist + binary)
Male Gaze, gaze aversion                                    301-finalgirl
Bechdel test                                               Alison Bechdel Reflects
Race/ ethnicity
gender identity, sexualities
Ideology, Hegemony                                         C: 152-67

Week of Nov 3-5
Semiotics
Translating and Decoding Media

* WRITTEN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS will be distributed sometime between 11/5-12 and will be due the next class

Week of Nov 10-12
Motivations for Media Use
Uses and Gratifications, alternatives
Segmentation, Selective Exposure
News and Political Discourse

Week of Nov 17-19
finish content, reveal meaning of life

Th Nov 19 = last day of class, test prep

Nov 24: NO CLASS . . . b/c I know you’re not coming anyways

FINAL EXAM: Tu 12/8, 12-1:30 pm in 402 Graham (our classroom)

EVALUATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADING

1/3 Exam 1(multiple choice)

1/3 Written Analyses: This has 2 components: (1) Content Analysis (in Sep) and (2) Qualitative Analysis (in Nov).
Due to their nature, each of the Analyses is graded as straight: A, B, C, D, F with no plus/minus (the grading rubric will be provided with the assignment); The overall (combined) Written Analyses Grade is: A, A/B, B, B/C, C, C/D, D, F.

This is how it is calculated: You receive a separate grade for the Content Analysis and the Qualitative Analysis. The higher grade is then weighted 2/3. So, if you get an ‘A’ (4.0) on Content Analysis and a ‘B’ (3.0) on the Qualitative, it is calculated as: (4.0 x 2/3) + (3.0 x 1/3) = A/B (3.5).

1/3 Final Exam (multiple choice): 12/8, 12-1:30, 402 Graham

Attendance
I do not enforce the Departmental Policy (of 3 absences = -1/3 of final grade); INSTEAD, to encourage you to attend, I make many materials (including the Written Analyses assignments, exam answers, and significant content) available only in class – it will not be available on Canvas or “retaught” during office hours. Therefore, if you choose not attend class, you knowingly choose to miss material. (If you have a personal issue and notify me in advance, or, if not possible, within 2 business days of a missed class, we can attempt to implement an accommodation. If you have a prolonged illness or personal issue, you should contact the Dean of Students/ Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible and ask them to intercede on your behalf).
POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students must familiarize themselves with UNCG’s Policy on Academic Integrity, available at: http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity. On written work, students must affirm that: “My words and actions will reflect Academic Integrity. I will not cheat or lie or steal in academic matters. I will promote integrity in the UNCG community.” In THIS class it is deemed academically dishonest to allow a colleague to read your written work/tests as well as to copy from a colleague’s work. It is also academically dishonest to forge or fake documents (e.g., University documents, doctor’s notes, police reports, obituaries) in order to obtain a benefit, an excuse from, or extension on written work/tests.

Students violating academic integrity standards receive a 0 for the assignment (with no opportunity to rewrite it OR opt for the original grade, and where that grade is part of a variable percentage, the 0 will count as the greatest proportion possible) and lose any and all extra credit, rewrites, and/or grade-related benefits available in the class.