

SEMS 2500-109: Mass Communication and Human Behavior
Spring 2013
(B Days, 1540-1655)

Discipline: Media Studies

Lower Division

Faculty Name: Emily Acosta Lewis

Pre-requisites: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the roles of mass communications in our lives. We will consider theories and empirical research on people's uses of mass communications and the consequences of such usage. We will consider differences between US and the countries that we visit. We will cover a wide array of topics, including citizens' learning from the news, portrayals of ethnicity and gender, political communication, advertising and consumption, violence and pornography, thin-ideal media and disordered eating, fright reactions, and so on. We will read scientific studies on these and other topics and learn to evaluate such studies critically.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Provide students with a general understanding of research on mass communications use and effects
- Give students a set of tools for thinking critically about the role of mass communications in our lives
- Familiarize students with differences in mass communication on a global level
- Give students the opportunity to critically evaluate the role and uses of mass communications across cultures

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

AUTHOR: Glenn Sparks

TITLE: Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview

PUBLISHER: Wadsworth

ISBN #: 1111344450

DATE/EDITION: 2012, 4th edition

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Class/Date Topic

B1: Jan. 12 Introduction, syllabus review, assignments, and expectations
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 1

B2: Jan. 14 What is social science research?
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 2

B3: Jan. 18 A history of media effects
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 3

- B4: Jan. 20 Why & how do people use media?
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 4
- B5: Jan. 24 Media theories: Social cognitive theory; Discuss media in Japan
Readings: Sparks, pgs. 97-99; Bobo Doll articles; Japan media article
- B6: Jan. 26 Media theories: Cultivation; **Mini-exam 1**
Readings: Sparks, pgs. 179-183; Cultivation articles
- B7: Feb. 2 Media theories: Agenda setting, Priming, Framing; Discuss media in China
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 9; China media article
- B8: Feb. 10 Political media; Discuss media in Vietnam
Readings: Baumgartner, J. C., & Morris, J. S. (2010). MyFaceTube Politics: Social networking web sites and political engagement of young adults. *Social Science Computer Review*, 28, 24-44; Vietnam media article
- B9: Feb. 18 Persuasion; Discuss media in Singapore
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 8; Singapore media article
- B10: Feb. 22 Persuasion in action; **field lab paper due**
Readings: Ohio State research news article; Kaiser issue brief on entertainment education and health; American Prospect article
- B11: Feb. 24 New media effects; Discuss media in Burma
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 11; Burma media article
- B12: Mar. 3 Media and children: educational and prosocial; Discuss media in India
Readings: Kaiser media use report; US television article on educational TV; Future of Children article; India media article
- B13: Mar. 12 Media and children: fright and mediation
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 7
- B14: Mar. 14 Portrayals of ethnicity/race in the media; **Mini-exam 2**
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 10
- B15: Mar. 17 Portrayals of gender in the media; Discuss media in Mauritius
Readings: Glascock, J. (2001). Gender roles on prime-time network television: Demographics and behaviors. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(4), 656-669; Mauritius media article
- B16: Mar. 20 Portrayals of sex in the media
Readings: Sparks, Chapter 6
- B17: Mar. 23 Effects of erotica and pornography; Discuss media in South Africa

Readings: Washington Post pornography article; Zillmann, D. & Bryant, J. (1982). Pornography, sexual callousness, and the trivialization of rape. *Journal of Communication*, 32(3), 10-21; South Africa media article

B18: Mar. 31 Media violence

Readings: Sparks, Chapter 5; Ghana media article

B19: Apr. 2 Media effects on disordered eating and obesity; Discuss media in Ghana & Morocco

Readings: Sparks, pgs. 84-88; 241-245; Bardone-Cone, A. M. & Cass, K. M. (2007). What does viewing a pro-anorexia website do? An experimental examination of website exposure and moderating effects. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 40, 537-548; Hive Health obesity article; Morocco media article

B20: Apr. 5 Class presentations (groups 1-2); Final exam review

B21: Apr. 12 **Final Exam**

B22: Apr. 15 Class presentations (groups 3-6)

B23: Apr. 23 Class presentations (groups 7-10)

FIELD WORK

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

The field lab will take place on the last day in Kobe, Japan, which will be Thursday, January 31 and is absolutely mandatory. Students will be briefed about the day's activities, expectations, and details about assignments on board where they will watch the documentary *The Cove*. Students will be asked to begin taking notes on the documentary, their experience, and the media implications of the documentary to help when writing their paper. Students will board a bus to go to the Kobe City Suma Marine Aquarium where an educator will discuss the issue of dolphin practices as inhumane versus a cultural tradition. After the educator talks to us, we'll have a discussion over lunch about what students think about seeing the documentary, the media effects implications of the documentary (awareness, persuasion, etc.).

Academic Objectives:

- learn about the media's role in the dolphin issue in Japan
- discuss the dolphin issue as a cultural tradition versus inhumane killing practice
- learn about how media effects can promote awareness and change

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Components	Number of Points
Field Assignments	35
Field lab paper	<i>10</i>
2 research activities	<i>10</i>
Journal entries	<i>15</i>
Mini exams	20
Class 6	<i>10</i>
Class 12	<i>10</i>
Final Exam	20
Group presentation	15
Participation	10
Total	100

Assignments and participation

Group presentation. You and your group members will be responsible for making one 15-20 minute presentation that connects a real-world media issue, problem, or content area to the media in two countries that we visit (not including the US). You can choose any topic related to media that interests you, such as portrayals of sex, gender, ideal body size, or race; political media; or any other topic approved by me. Each group will be responsible for doing some research in two different countries that we are visiting. You need to bring some examples or evidence of your topic from that particular country (e.g. photos of advertisements, copy of newspapers, etc.) to use as examples. You should use the theories and frameworks discussed in the course to analyze the particular media topic. Group presentations will be given during classes 20, 22, and 23.

Written assignments. The written assignments for this class are designed to work together to help you learn how to develop critical arguments about how and why we use media the way we do and how the countries we are visiting use media. All papers must be typed, spell-checked, and proofread. No hand-written assignment will be accepted. In your papers, you must properly attribute the work(s) that you refer to, following APA style.

Field Assignments. You will write one 4-page paper and two 2-page papers regarding activity in ports. The first report will be a 4-page response paper where you discuss what you learned from the field lab and use theories from class to evaluate the media situation in Japan. The field lab paper is due by class 10. The two 2-page reports must include an in-port research activity where you analyze a particular type of media (advertisement, a newspaper front pages etc.) and discuss what you observed and try to observe a pattern across the media in the port and compare it to media in the US. You can use these two research activities as part of your group presentation. The two research activities are due within two class periods of the last day in the port of selection and both must be turned in by class 19 (which means you cannot use Ghana or Morocco for these activities).

Journal entries. Another component of this course will be keeping a digital journal about your experiences related to media on the ship. You should think critically about your lack of media use while on the ship. You can talk about things that surprised you about being

disconnected; how much time you spent in port with media; feelings you have etc. You will need to write 10 journal entries throughout the semester on a somewhat weekly basis. The following are the due dates for the entries: B3; B6; B7; B8; B11; B12; B14; B17; B19; B22.

Participation. Your participation grade will be assigned based on both the amount and quality of your participation in class. You may lose points on your participation grade for unexcused absences, regular tardiness, and disrespect of other students. Also, if you never speak in class, you cannot expect to receive full points for participation.

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Jennings Bryan and Mary Beth Oliver
TITLE: Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research
PUBLISHER: Routledge
ISBN #: 0805864504
DATE/EDITION: 3rd, 2008

AUTHOR: Sandra Calvert and Barbara J. Wilson
TITLE: The Handbook of Children, Media and Development
PUBLISHER: Wiley-Blackwell
ISBN #: 1444336940
DATE/EDITION: 1st, 2011

AUTHOR: Robin L. Nabi
TITLE: The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects
PUBLISHER: Wiley-Blackwell
ISBN #: 1412959969
DATE/EDITION: 2009

AUTHOR: Stanley J. Baran
TITLE: Mass Communication Theory
PUBLISHER: Wadsworth
ISBN #: 0495898872
DATE/EDITION: 6th, 2011

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: J. Glascock
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Gender roles on prime-time network television: Demographics and behaviors.
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*
VOLUME: 54
DATE: 2001
PAGES: 656-669

AUTHOR: D. Zillman and J. Bryant
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Pornography, sexual callousness, and the trivialization of rape
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Journal of Communication*

VOLUME: 32
DATE: 1982
PAGES: 10-21

AUTHOR: Bardone-Cone, A. M. & Cass, K. M
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: What does viewing a pro-anorexia website do? An experimental examination of website exposure and moderating effects.
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *International Journal of Eating Disorders*
VOLUME: 40
DATE: 2007
PAGES: 537-547

AUTHOR: Baumgartner, J. C., & Morris, J. S.
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: MyFaceTube Politics: Social networking web sites and political engagement of young adults
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Social Science Computer Review*
VOLUME: 28
DATE: 2010
PAGES: 24-44

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Japan article: The Cove movie sparks global action for Japan's dolphins, Elizabeth Batt

China article: Censorship levels soar, Nury Vittachi

Vietnam article: Vietnam limits Chinese TV, radio programmes, The Indian Express

Singapore article: Television in Singapore, Wikipedia

Burma article: Burma government ends censorship of local media, Yadana Htun

India article: Rise of new media spurs major change in Bollywood's India, Michael Addelman

Mauritius article: Mauritius no heaven for news media, Shehnilla Mohamed

South Africa article: South African media regulation poses threat to its constitutional values; South African media group to fight proposed regulation of journalists, James Butty

Ghana article: Ghana must have a broadcasting law; Media of Ghana, Wikipedia

Morocco article: Media foster cross-cultural connections for Moroccans, Thomas Rohlinger;
Morocco's video sniper sparks new trend, Layal Abdo

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of

what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”