

Comm 106 Intro to Media Theory, History & Criticism Fall 2019

Lecture: Tu/Th 11-12:15, CAC 202
Professor: Dr. Liz Fakazis, CAC 327, lfakazis@uwsp.edu
Office Hours: Tu/Th 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

About this course

This course will introduce you to ways of thinking about and understanding the ever-changing, complex role of media in culture and society, as well as more personally in your individual life. You will be introduced to theories that will give you tools for analyzing media representations, audiences, technologies, and industries from a variety of perspectives; and for exploring major questions such as: How are media implicated in ideology, meaning-making, appropriation, globalization, identity politics, political economy, civic engagement, and much more. This course will introduce you to concepts, theories and frameworks that you will encounter again in your upper-level media writing, theory, history, criticism and production courses and that you will have the opportunity to apply to your own engagements with media and to your own creative work.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Define theory and explain how we can use it to understand contemporary media and their role in social contexts
- Explain major media theories that help us understand media industries, images, messages, audiences, influences and technologies
- Apply these theories to analyze specific questions regarding contemporary media
- Think and write critically about contemporary media-related questions and problems

Division of Communication Learning Objectives for Communication Majors

- Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences
- Plan, evaluate and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) communication research
- Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems
- Apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices
- Apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts

Required Readings

We will draw heavily from Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (3rd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2018.

Additional REQUIRED readings will be announced in class. These may include excerpts from media theory textbooks, including *Understanding the Media* (Devereux, E., 3rd edition), *Media/Society* (David Croteau & William Hoynes, 5th edition), and *Media & Society* (Michael O'Shaughnessy & Jane Stadler, 6th edition); research articles that demonstrate how the theories we are discussing are being used to deepen, expand or challenge what we know about

the roles of media in society and culture; and news stories that draw on media theories, usually in an implied rather than direct manner. Your readings will expand our class lectures and discussions and will enhance your ability to produce thoughtful, sophisticated analyses for assignments and exams.

Assignments and Grading

You will be evaluated on your performance on **two essay exams** (a mid-term and final), which will be designed to test your understanding of the course material (including readings, lecture, and discussion) AND your ability to apply what you've learned to specific media questions and problems. You will also be asked to complete a series of **weekly pass/fail assignments** that you will collect into a portfolio which I will collect several times over the course of the semester. These pass/fail assignments are designed to deepen your understanding of the material and to give you a chance to develop sophisticated answers to the essays you write for your exams.

Exams 70 percent of final grade

- Mid-Term Exam: Thurs., Oct. 24
- Final Exam: Thurs., Dec. 19, 10:15-12:15

Weekly Pass/Fail Portfolio Assignments 30 percent

Letter grades are assigned as follows:

94-100% = A	90-93% = A-	87-89% = B+	84-86% = B
80-83% = B-	77-79% = C+	74-76% = C	70-73% = C-
67-69% = D+	64-66% = D	60-63% = D-	

Course Policies

Attendance. The success of this course depends on your participation. Please arrive on time for each class, ready to contribute to class discussion and assignments. If you **MUST** miss class, please:

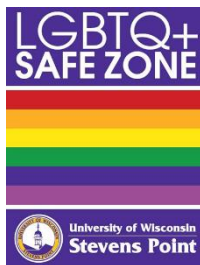
- Notify me in advance. In case of emergency, notify me as soon as possible.
- Arrange to get notes from a fellow student. Do NOT ask me what you missed!
- Arrange to have any work due that day turned in at the beginning of class.
- Understand that there will be NO MAKE-UPS for missed in-class assignments; you will be able to make up a missed exam ONLY if you have a documented excused absence for reasons of medical or other **emergencies**, such as a doctor's note, a funeral notice, or a police report of an accident; emergencies do NOT include family vacations, job obligations, car trouble, faulty alarms, etc.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law designed to help ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to education in part by requiring educational institutions to offer reasonable accommodations. Please visit the UWSP [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) if you need accommodations, and please talk with me during the first week of class, if possible, about what I can do to ensure you have equal access and opportunity in my classroom.

UWSP Disability and Assistive Technology Center
609 Albertson Hall
715.246.3365, datctr@uwsp.edu, www.uwsp.edu/datc

Academic Integrity. You will be producing new, original work for this class. Whenever you incorporate the work of others into your writing, you must cite that work properly using the format required by specific style manuals (we will discuss this in class). This requirement applies to print and digital sources, and published and unpublished material. For more information, consult [Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students](#).

Technology. Please use laptops, tablets, cell phones and other technology in the classroom only to conduct classroom business when needed. Please email me with questions or concerns in between scheduled class meetings. I check my email twice a day, Monday through Friday, and will respond within 24 hours during regular business hours.



Safety and Respect. Please treat others with respect. If you feel uncomfortable, threatened or silenced because of your race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, please let me know. You can find links to resources on UWSP's Diversity and Inclusion page, including Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, International Students and Scholars, Multicultural Resource Center, among others.

Comm 106 Fall 2019 Working Schedule

Please be sure to have completed the assigned readings from *Practices of Looking* by the FIRST class meeting of each unit. You will often need to review parts of the assigned chapters as we proceed with class discussion and portfolio assignments. (This schedule includes major readings and assignments. Additional WEEKLY readings and assignments will be announced in class. I may alter this schedule as needed).

Unit One: Representation Sept. 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19

- *Practices of Looking*, Chapter 1: Image, Power & Politics

Unit Two: Interpretation Sept. 24, 26; Oct. 1, 3

- *Practices of Looking*, Chapter 2: Viewers Make Meaning

Unit Three: Politics of Looking Oct. 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24

- *Practices of Looking*, Ch. 3: Modernity: Spectatorship, The Gaze & Power
- Oct. 22 Comm Week Guests
- **Mid-Term EXAM: Thursday, Oct. 24**

Unit Four: From Mass Culture to Networks Oct. 29, 31; Nov. 5, 7

- *Practices of Looking*, Ch. 6 Media In Everyday Life

Unit Five: Media & Consumer Culture Nov. 12, 14, 19, 21

- *Practices of Looking*, Ch 7 Brand Culture: The Images & Spaces of Consumption

Unit Six: Postmodernism Nov. 26; Dec. 3, 5

- *Practices of Looking*, Ch 8 Postmodernism: Irony, Parody, and Pastiche

Unit Seven: Globalization Dec. 10, 12

- *Practices of Looking*, Ch 10 The Global Flow of Visual Culture

Final Exam, Thurs., Dec. 19, 10:15-12:15