

Lecture: Tu/Th 12:30-1:45 p.m., CAC 300
Professor: Dr. Liz Fakazis, CAC 327, lfakazis@uwsp.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and by appointment

About this course

This course will introduce you to major theories that you can use to analyze and better understand media images, messages, audiences, industries, and technologies. We will explore challenging questions such as: How have media texts and practices contribute to my sense of who I am and how I think about my social world? What is the relationship between media representations and existing social inequalities? How do audiences make meaning from and participate in media culture?

In this 100-level course, you will become familiar with major theories that you will use again in your upper-level media writing, theory, history, criticism AND production courses -- courses that will lead you to a more sophisticated understanding of these theories and that will give you ample opportunities to apply them to your own theoretical and 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

Weekly REQUIRED readings will be distributed through electronic reserve or in class.

These readings will 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). You will also be reading academic 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 be critical to your ability to engage productively and successfully with class lectures, discussions and exams.

Assignments and Grading

You will be evaluated on your performance on **three essay exams**, 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.

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.

Please turn off your cell phones. Use of cell phones, tablets, laptops or other technology is not permitted during class unless it is part of an assignment or a required assistive technology. If you need to use technology in class, please see me.

E-mail. You may e-mail me with questions, comments and concerns, or to set up an individual meeting. I check my e-mail regularly during the work week. Please allow 24 hours for response.

Plagiarism and ethics. All work produced for this class must be your own and must be produced for **THIS** course. If you use others' work, be sure to cite it appropriately (including information you get from print and digital sources). Plagiarism of any kind will result in a warning. A second offence may result in a final grade of "F" for the course. Also, please be sure to treat the classroom and everyone in it with respect – disagreements can be productive, but only if they are constructively and respectfully engaged.

Comm 106 Fall 2018 Working Schedule

This schedule lists topics and exams. REQUIRED readings will be distributed EVERY WEEK via electronic reserve or in class, as will assignments designed to help you deepen your understanding of course material. (I may revise this schedule to meet the needs of the class).

Dates	Topic	Major Questions	Exams
Sept. 4/6	Introduction	What is this course about? What is theory? How can we use it? What do we mean by utopian and dystopian views of the media?	
Sept. 11/13	Media & Society: The Frankfurt School	How do media, society & culture relate to each other? How have our understandings of this relationship changed over time? Who were some of the first scholars to study media? What motivated them to do so? How did they come to understand media?	
Sept. 18/20	Media & Culture	How, when and why did we become interested in the role that media play not only in “society,” but also in “culture”? Why/how does this matter?	
Sept. 25/27	Social Construction & Interaction	What do we mean when we talk about “social construction” and “social interaction”? How are the two related? What roles do media play in all this?	
Oct. 2/4	Introducing Semiotics	In what ways is language connected to power? What is meant by semiotics and how can we use it to analyze media “texts”?	
Oct. 9/11	Ideology & Discourse	What do we mean by ideology? Where, when, by whom and why was this concept developed? What do we mean by discourse? How are discourse, ideology and media connected?	
Oct. 16/18	Advertising & Consumer Culture	How can we use what we’ve learned so far to develop a deeper understanding of advertising and consumer culture?	Exam 1
Oct. 23/25	Media, Citizens & Consumers	What is the “public sphere” and why/how does it matter? How is the public sphere impacted by consumer culture?	
Oct. 30/Nov. 1	Audiences, Meaning & Production	How do audiences make meaning from media texts? In what ways, to what extent, and why do audiences participate in production?	
Nov. 6/8	Media & Social Identities	What do we mean by identity? What role do media play in identity construction, particularly in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, and class?	
Nov. 13/15	Regulating the Media	How and why and by whom are media regulated? How are formal and informal regulations “political”?	
Nov. 20	Political Economy & Globalization	What do we mean by political economy and what does it have to do with media and society? What do we mean by globalization? How is globalization affecting media production, distribution, consumption, regulation, texts, identity?	Exam 2
Nov. 27/29	Power & Limits of Technology	In what ways and to what extent do new technologies influence society and culture, and in what ways and to what extent do society and culture influence new technologies?	
Dec. 4/6	Power of Stories	How and why are stories so powerful?	
Dec. 11/13	Genres, Codes & Conventions	How do genres, codes and conventions work and how/why are they used? When, why, how and to what effect are they challenged, stretched, breached?	
Dec. 19 th 10:15 – 12:15	Bringing it all together		Exam 3