COM 320: Mass Media: Cultural Criticism and Problems
Dr. Joseph Blaney
Spring 2018
MWF, Noon-1:00 PM
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Course Description
This course will enable student critique of mass media’s influence on cultural and economic life and its influence on public policy and social change.

Required Text (E-Copy Available Via Milner Library)

Americans with Disabilities Act
Any students needing an accommodation covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act are encouraged to talk with me early in the semester about necessary accommodations. Students may also call ISU’s Office of Disability Concerns with any questions they may have: 309-438-5853.

Course Policies

I love teaching and want to make your learning experience as fun and enjoyable as possible. Let’s all maintain good humor and respect for each other in the course of our discussions.

Electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, and phones are not permitted in class. Notes should be taken manually (studies support that it leads to higher retention) either in a notebook or on Power Point slides which you can print from Reggie Net.

Students should arrive to class on time and prepared to learn. Attendance (the strongest factor in considering participation) will be taken at the beginning of class. Students arriving late harm the learning environment. While we all run late for various reasons from time to time, arriving on time and attending will be very important in this course (and important to your professional development as well).

Late work will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day.

You are welcomed to call me on my cell phone, but never between 10:00 PM and 8:00 AM. The best place to reach me in the morning is in my College of Arts and Sciences office (438-5669). I am reachable by cell or in my Fell Hall office in the afternoons.
The best way to reach me is via email. I typically return email within an hour or two, but always within 24 hours. As a general rule, saying “I tried calling you last night about the paper that was due this morning” will not be taken seriously.

Academic dishonesty will result in failure for the course. Turning in papers on time with content as requested, attending class, and participating actively will likely lead to a positive grade outcome.

**Grading Scale**

90% and above=A  
80% to 89%=B  
70% to 79%=C  
60% to 69%=D  
Below 60%=F

**Assignments**

Exam 1, Industries: 20 Points  
Exam 2, Messages: 20 Points  
Exam 3, Audiences: 20 Points (Final Exam Period)  
Friday Reflections: 10 Points (one point each)  
Cultural Critique: 15 Points  
Participation: 15 Points

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Introductions (Chapter 1)  
Week 2: Chapter 2, Marxist Analysis  
Week 3: Chapter 3, Organizational Analysis  
Week 4: Chapter 4, Pragmatic Analysis; Exam 1  
Week 5: Chapter 5, Rhetorical Analysis  
Week 6: Chapter 6, Cultural Analysis  
Week 7: Chapter 7, Psychoanalytic Analysis  
Week 8: Chapter 8, Feminist Analysis  
Week 9: Chapter 9, Sexuality Analysis, Exam 2  
Week 10: Chapter 10, Reception Analysis  
Week 11: Chapter 11, Sociological Analysis  
Week 12: Chapter 12, Erotic Analysis  
Week 13: Chapter 13, Ecological Analysis  
Week 14: Critique Presentations  
Week 15: Critique Presentations

**Final Exam (Exam 3): TBD**
There will be no class meetings on the following dates: Wednesday, January 24.

Extra Credit Research Pool

This class will not offer extra credit for research participation. However, in the interest of federal compliance and effective communication about School of Communication research initiatives, you may choose to read the sections below which apply to courses that do participate in the program.

“The extra credit points will be added to your final grade, and may not necessarily appear in the gradebook immediately upon your completion of the opportunity. There are no guarantees for extra credit, and it is each student's responsibility to be aware of and take advantage of such opportunities. You may receive extra credit for participating in any of the studies in the School of Communication's Research Pool. The Research Pool is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Pool and be aware of available opportunities. The Research Pool can be accessed via: [https://sites.google.com/site/isucomresearch/](https://sites.google.com/site/isucomresearch/)

In general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit study will earn you .5 Research Credits. Each Research Credit is worth an additional 0.5% of your total possible final grade in this course. For example, if you participate in a research study that requires you to spend an hour in a lab (i.e., 1 Research Credit), and your course is based on a 1000-point total, your participation would provide 10 points to your final grade. Each project listed on the Research Pool site will indicate the specific number of Research Credits associated with the project. The course instructor will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from the researcher(s) who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is your responsibility to make sure that the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. Before participating in a study, please be sure to have your name, ULID (i.e., the part of your email before @ilstu.edu), instructor name, and course and section number ready, as you will need to provide these to receive credit. Research Credit can only be applied to one course for each study, unless specified otherwise in the Research Pool. A maximum of 5% of your final course grade can be earned from extra credit opportunities via the Research Pool. After the final exam there will be no further opportunities for extra credit or to otherwise improve your grade.

Please also be aware that federal guidelines indicate that instructors offering extra credit for research participation must offer a reasonable alternative (such as a research paper) for students who want to earn extra credit but do not want to participate in a study.”