

Media, Culture and Communication COMM 271

Spring 2014

Elizabeth Lozano, PhD
T-TH 2:30-3:45, Maguire Hall 330
elozano@luc.edu

Office: Lewis Towers, 905
(312) 915-7768
Office Hours : 4:30-6:00 T-TH

Course Overview

This course studies the relationship between media and contemporary culture and the way these two phenomena influence and are influenced by the way we communicate. This semester we will pay specific attention to issues of gender, race and class in media, and practice critical analysis of media texts, including TV shows, films, comics, and commercials.

Emphasis will be given to shows, films, commercials and other media texts that appear particularly significant in the shaping of culture and communication, and in national, international or global conversation about culture.

Our course takes a critical approach to the study of media, and argues that the ways we see, understand and practice culture are intimately connected to media discourses and representations, but that this relationship is complex, multifaceted and multidirectional.



Learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between media and culture.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship that we as “consumers” and citizens have with communication media.
- Demonstrate skill in analysing race, class and gender in media texts.
- Use accurately key concepts related to the study of media (text, signification, signifier, signifier, intertextuality).
- Apply gained knowledge of critical media analysis to concrete media texts.

Course Texts

Graeme Burton. (2010). *Media and society: Critical perspectives* (2nd Edition). New York; McGraw-Hill.

Readings In Sakai:

Dines, G., and Humez, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Gender, race, and class in media: A critical reader*.

General Philosophy

This course emphasizes personal reflection and critical thinking, expressed in careful observation, description, and analysis of media, and of the cultural patterns and interactions that constitute our lived, social world. The course also highlights the importance of creative thinking and writing, as we learn to think critically and in innovative ways by playing with unexpected options and by questioning received ideas.

Papers and course assignments will not be graded based on the students' ability to repeat the instructors or the textbook. They will be graded based on understanding and appropriation of course material. That is, on your ability to use, evaluate, and integrate concepts learned in class.

Basic Courtesy:

- If you are late to class or absent and miss announcements, it is your responsibility to get the information from a classmate.
- Please turn off all electronic devices prior to entering the classroom. They will distract you and others.
- If you must eat during class, please consume something that you can eat quietly—no crunching wrappers, noisy chewing, etc.
- Do not get up and leave class while it is in session except in the most urgent situation (e.g. childbirth, heart attack, alien abduction).
- If you arrive late, please come in quietly. If you have a compelling reason to leave class early, please sit by the door and notify me before class starts.
- If you have questions about assignments, etc., it is best to speak with me after class or during an office appointment. When class is about to begin, I will likely be focused on what we will be doing for that session.



Dove commercial

Policies

- No discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical and learning disabilities will be tolerated in the classroom.
- Students and instructor are expected to fully respect the views, backgrounds, and experiences of all class members. This respect is not expressed by silence or indifference, but by engaged dialogue.
- Attendance in this class **is not optional**, and will count towards your final participation grade. Missing more than six classes (without a documented, written excuse) will automatically drop the final participation grade to a B maximum. Missing eight or more classes will automatically drop the participation grade to D. Exceptions will be made for documented, valid excuses (personal accidents, death in the family, severe illness, athletic commitments).
- You are expected to actively engage in class discussions and to study all assigned readings, whether they are discussed in lectures or not.
- **No late assignments will be accepted** (without a valid, written excuse). Take the necessary measures to hand in all assignments on time.
- All written assignments submitted for credit **must be typed and proof-read meticulously**. Errors in grammar, spelling and organization will cost you points.
- University standards regarding academic integrity, examinations and grading will be observed in this course. **Plagiarism in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result in an "F"** grade for the assignment or for the course, and might carry further sanctions (see the Loyola Undergraduate Studies Catalogue and the back of this syllabus). Avoid any behavior that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academic dishonesty (e.g., failing to credit a source, or using somebody else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours).
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarifications at any time during lectures. Questions and comments are not interruptions but fundamental components of learning!
-



"One Love"
Hip-hop video

Course Requirements:

1. Take home exam (30%). This will be an essay type exam in which you will apply the basic concepts studied so far to one or more media texts.

2. Critical analysis paper. (50%) This paper will focus on the critical analysis of media texts with the general purpose of identifying how these texts relate to contemporary culture. For example, what do these texts say about mainstream ideology, values, and beliefs? Do they reflect, negotiate, contest or contradict hegemony? We will specifically focus on issues of gender, sex, race, ethnicity and class. This paper can be done individually or in pairs. The paper grade will be distributed as such:

Paper proposal: 10%

Final paper: 40%

3. *Participation* (15%). This will be evaluated based on your overall course performance on the following aspects of participation: Contribution to group discussions and cooperation with classmates; quality of response to assigned readings, and completion of short assignments.

Breakdown for evaluating participation:

- a. Short assignments. These include chapter activities from the textbook.
- b. Attendance. Participating in class requires you to be in class. Absence from class means zero participation for that session.
- c. Oral participation. This includes volunteering to answer instructor's questions; proposing questions of your own; making observations; offering critiques, challenging class content, and bringing to class artifacts or materials that can help with class content. This aspect of participation includes as well providing the teacher with creative ideas and course feedback that can be useful in guaranteeing the effectiveness of the class experience.
- d. Written and electronic participation. This type of participation follows similar principles to oral participation, but it is done by means of written comments and suggestions, emails, and/or posts in Sakai (blogs or wiki). If you consider yourself shy, introverted, or quiet, this is an important form of participation that you can utilize.
- e. Cooperation with classmates. Helping as secretary, time-keeper, and spokesperson in small groups; being adequately prepared to discuss readings; helping others with their projects; listening carefully to others' ideas; fully engaging those with whom you disagree (or agree), and doing so with respect and honesty.
- f. Ethical comportment. Be honest, respectful of self and others, and as assertive as you can when defending your perspectives. Always cite your references, and acknowledge those who have influenced you. Be aware of your needs and those of others in the classroom, and act in consequence. Failure to act in an ethical manner (e.g., respecting disagreement) will affect the participation grade.
- g. Academic progress. Learning is a process and this class acknowledges this premise. You may start a little shaky and improve your performance in the course of class, or be steadily good throughout. This element of "progress" will be taken in consideration when assigning the final participation grade and will recognize your effort to improve academically. It follows that **not turning** in an assignment is a really bad idea!!!

4. Paper Presentation (5%). This presentation will be based on the outcomes of your final

paper. It is optional, so that only those who really want to present, do. If you wish not to present, your final paper will be worth 45% instead of 40%. Presentations will take place at the end of the semester.

Grading Scale

A = 100-93 A- = 92-90 B+ = 89-86 B = 85-82 B- = 81-80
 C+ = 79-76 C = 75-72 C- = 71-70 D+ = 69-66 D = 65-60

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule will be modified according to the specific needs and pace of the Class. Handouts will be provided during the semester to specify any necessary updates and extended information on the schedule, as well as assignments and guidelines.

Foundations

W. 1 (1/14-16) Introduction
 Cultural Studies and Media (Kellner; in Sakai)

W. 2 (1/21-23) Cultural studies

W.3 (1/28-30) Media texts (Ch. 1, Burton)

W.4 (2/4-6) Media texts (Ch. 1, Burton)

W.5 (2/11-13) Hegemony (Lull, Sakai)

W. 6 (2/18-20) Audiences and Effects (Ch. 3,
 Burton)

W.7 (2/25-27) Media-audience influence
 (Ch. 4, Burton)

2/27 Take home exam

W. 8 (3/4-6) Spring break



Applications (Gender, race, class)

W.9 (3/11-13) Monarchs, monsters and multiculturalism (Artz)
 The white of their eyes (Hall, Sakai)

3/13 Paper proposal due

W.10 (3/18-20) The male working class buffoon (Butsch, Sakai)

W.11 (3/25-27)	Television “new feminism” (Cuklanz and Moorti, Sakai)
W.12 (4/1-3)	Advertising (Burton, Ch. 7) Image-based culture: Advertising and popular culture (Jhally, Sakai)
W. 13 (4/8-10)	Advertising and the construction of violent male masculinity (Katz, Sakai)
W. 14 (4/15)	Sex, lies and advertising (Steinem)
(4- 17)	Easter Holiday

4/15 Final Critical Analysis Paper due

Short Paper Presentations

W.15 (4/22-24)	Class presentations
W. 16 (5/1)	9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m Final class presentations finish (no final exam)



School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity **Please Read Carefully in its Entirety:**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

- Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student’s work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:
- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;

- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such

submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml .

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.



A General Guide to Papers' Grading

You can know that you are doing:

A/A- work when: Paper shows excellence in both content and form. It is well organized, well argued, and well written. Thesis statement and arguments are consistent, insightful, creative, intelligent, and serious. Paper does contribute in an original manner to our understanding of the chosen topic.

B/B+ work when: Paper goes beyond the basics and approaches the qualities of an Exemplary high grade paper. It is clearly written and deals seriously with issues and ideas. Typically, this is a good paper that falls short in some aspect(s) of the writing task, such as Elaborating conclusions, justifying choices, or fully explaining claims. The B paper is above average without being outstanding.

C/C+ work when: Paper contributes original ideas and honest reflection to the Discussion at hand. It has shortcomings both in form and content, and might have been too sketchy and superficial in discussing the topic. The C paper is satisfactory and attempts to address the chosen topic.

D work when: A paper is poorly done, both in form and content. This is a paper that Only accomplishes the minimum required and that disregards the instructor's advice And directions. It shows serious problems both in writing style and exposition of ideas. Typical problems include: a) being written in a language only loosely related to formal English; b) careless use of words and expressions; c) lacking a clear and effective form of organizing ideas; d) contradicting its own ideas or claims; e) using incomplete and disconnected sentences and/or paragraphs.

F work when: Paper was not submitted in the due date and/or falls below the minimum requirements of college-level work. It disregards directions given, is incoherent, and shows negligence and carelessness.