SYLLABUS
JOUR175: MEDIA LITERACY

Meeting Dates: July 29, 2013 ~ August 15, 2013
Meeting Times: Mon/Tue/Wed/Thu 10:00 am – 1:20 pm
Location: KNI 1208
Final Exam: Thursday, August 15, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

INSTRUCTOR
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
An analysis of the information, values and underlying messages conveyed via the news media, including television, newspapers, the Internet, magazines, radio and film, etc. Examines the accuracy of those messages and explores how news and other media (such as advertising and games) shape views of politics, culture and society.

Required readings are online. Check the class website (link & permission to be granted on first day of class) as new readings are added often.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS / BREAKDOWN OF GRADES*
Blog assignments: Throughout the course, you will be given a total of eight blogs (300 to 500 words each) to write about various topics we discuss. The blog questions will be based on the course readings, lecture, discussions and examples from mass media. You will be given detailed guidelines for each blog as the semester progresses. (20%)
In-class assignments: As this is a course heavily dependent on substantial discussions and hands-on activities regarding media, you will be given in-class assignments at the instructor’s discretion. (10%)
Current Events Quizzes: You will also be given a total of five news quizzes at random, at the instructor’s discretion. One lowest grade will be dropped. (10%)
Without media project: As an exercise to realize how important media is to our lives and to evaluate your dependence on media as young adults, you will be asked to spend a full 24-hour period without any media and write about this experience. (5%)
Video/Podcast PSA: You will be required to produce a one-minute video/podcast PSA about a topic you think is important in society. Further instructions will be given in class. (10%)
Holocaust Museum Paper: You will go to the Holocaust Museum located on the National Mall. After the trip, you will be required to write about your thoughts and questions provided by the instructor. (15%)
Attendance/Participation (10%)
Final Exam (20%)

* Once you have access the class website (ELMS) on the first day of class, a more detailed description/guidelines for each assignment can be viewed on the website. Remember to make best use of the “Discussions”, “Assignments”, “Announcements”, and “Grades” on ELMS.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ABOUT CLASS GRADING:

• Attendance and participation will affect students' final grades. It is especially more important for a course such as this one, where the whole semester is compressed into twelve days. Students are expected to attend every class. Students who miss a class due to illness or emergency will be excused only if they contact the instructor ahead of time to explain the absence. If you know in advance that you will miss a class (due to a religious holiday or other compelling circumstance) it is your responsibility to contact your instructor ahead of time. Extended absences will jeopardize your performance on tests and written assignments; if you miss more than one class, you should arrange to meet with your instructor to discuss how your attendance will affect your grade.
• If the University closes due to weather or other emergency and class must be canceled, students will be advised of assignment adjustments.

• **Reading/blogging assignments are to be done in their entirety.** You will not get full credit for your blog posts if you do not reference all the "reading" assigned – or if the only comments you make are in reference to what's in the first paragraph of the reading. You must be specific in your analysis and evaluation of the "reading": saying something is "interesting" or "boring" is insufficient. You also must add to the online conversation by building on the comments of those who have written their posts before you. Do not just repeat what someone else has said above you.

• **There is no excuse for plagiarism:** Remember, whether you use primary or secondary source material, including internet web sites, classroom lectures or material from other students, that the difference between plagiarism and valid research is a citation or attribution.

• **The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity,** administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html)

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**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor so reasonable accommodations can be made to assist learning and evaluation in the class. In addition, students should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) to document their disability and identify appropriate accommodations. DSS (301-314-7682) provides a variety of services to students with disabilities; staff are available to consult with students at any time ([www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS)). It is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any documented disabilities.

**Students in Need of Assistance**

The University of Maryland offers a variety of services for students in need of either educational or psychological assistance. Learning Assistance Service (LAS) offers services and programs on writing skills, English as a second language, study and time management skills, math learning skills, and issues for students over 25 years of age. They also offer a range of handouts, available on-line. If you need other educational services or support, please contact your instructor for additional resources.

If you are experiencing personal stress that is interfering with your ability to succeed, please consider contacting the Counseling Center or the Mental Health Service at the University Health Center for an appointment. The Counseling Center also offers on-line resources on a series of topics.

**Learning Assistance Service (LAS)**

• 2202 Shoemaker Building
• Email – LAS-CC@umd.edu
• Phone – 301.314.7693
• Website – [www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/)

**University Health Center, Mental Health Service**

• 2nd Floor, University Health Center (across from the Stamp Student Union)
• Phone – 301.314.8106
• Website - [www.health.umd.edu/mentalhealth](http://www.health.umd.edu/mentalhealth)

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**Course Evaluations**

CourseEvalUM will be open for students to complete their evaluations at the end of the semester. Students can go directly to the website ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) to do so. Students will be alerted via their official University e-mail account when the website is active for this semester. Students who complete evaluations for all of their courses in the previous semester (excluding summer), can access the posted
results via Testudo's CourseEvalUM Reporting link for any course on campus that has at least a 70% response rate.

**GENERAL COURSE GUIDELINES**

**Participation:**
This is a discussion course, so showing up for class, being prepared, and contributing to class discussions is required. Besides, it's much better for everyone to have students engaged in discussion during class.

**Homework:**
Assignments must be on-time. Grammar and punctuation count. So does appropriate tone. For example, do not use “like” colloquially or write as if you were writing in a journal, even though some assignments may be somewhat self-reflective.

**Group Projects & Presentations:**
Occasionally, you will be assigned group projects. Equal participation and effort is key for these assignments. You will be graded on quality of work and presentation, so speak clearly and be organized while you present.

**Grading of group projects:**
- 75% of the grade: the project and presentation
- 25% of the grade: the average of how your team members graded you

**Readings:**
Readings should be completed before we meet that day. Be prepared to have read thoroughly enough to discuss examples and/or situations.

**Grading:**
Think critically. Go beyond the assignment prompts and ask questions like “why or how is this happening?” Above all, this is a media literacy course. So, the point is to get you thinking as an active observer and perhaps participant in media, rather than as a passive consumer. Do not describe what happened. Instead, try to explain WHAT IT MEANS. Don’t "pad" your paper - if the required length is two pages but you have 1.75 of quality critical thinking, leave it. Spell check; read through before you turn in.

**Late assignments.** The Philip Merrill College of Journalism is very strict when it comes to deadlines. You will receive 50% off on assignments turned in late. Exceptions can be discussed in cases of medical excuses and family emergencies (documentation is required).

**Free blog pass.** Each student can ask to use this pass to not complete one blog but still receive full credit for that assignment, no questions asked.

Finally, please be aware that this class touches upon issues that may be sensitive to your classmates, such as race, gender, ethnicity, class status, societal norms/expectations, etc. Often political correctness is not possible or helpful, especially when we discuss stereotypes. BE RESPECTFUL, be adult, be insightful, and don’t be afraid to offer your point of view.

BE AWARE THAT THE ORDER AND EVEN THE TOPICS OF EACH DAY’S LECTURES MIGHT CHANGE, as this is a course that is uniquely responsive to news events and to media issues.
SESSION-BY-SESSION SCHEDULE

*All readings & blogs on ELMS

Day 1 (7/29): What is Media Literacy?
Due by 11:59 pm, 7/29
- Reading for Day 1
- Blog post #1 (Blog question/prompt on the class website)

Day 2 (7/30): The History of News
In-class activity (TBD): journalists in U.S. history
Due at lecture (beginning of class, 7/30)
- Reading for Day 2

Due by 11:59 pm, 7/30
- Blog post #2

Day 3 (7/31): The Business of Media
In-class activity (TBD): storify

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 7/31)
- Reading for Day 3
Due by 11:59 pm, 7/31
- Blog post #3

Day 4 (8/1): Social Media & Images
In-class activity (TBD): storify

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/1)
- Reading for Day 4

Due by 11:59 pm, 8/1
- Blog post #2
Due by 11:59 pm, 8/4
- Without Media Essay

Day 5 (8/5): Documentaries, Video, Propaganda
In-class activity (TBD): writing your own captions

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/5)
- Reading for Day 5

Due by 11:59 pm, 8/5
- Blog post #5

Day 6 (8/6): Entertainment Media
In-class activity (TBD): soundslides

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/6)
- Reading for Day 6

Due by 11:59 pm, 8/6
- Blog post #6
Day 7 (8/7): Advertising
In-class activity (TBD): soundslides

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/7)
- Reading for Day 7

Due by 11:59 pm, 8/7
- Blog post #7

Day 8 (8/8): Holocaust Museum Trip

Day 9 (8/12): Gender & Ethnicity, Diversity
In-class activity (TBD): twitter

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/12)
- Reading for Day 9
- Holocaust Museum Paper

Due by 11:59 pm, 8/12
- Blog post #8

Day 10 (8/13): Democracy & Social Justice
In-class activity: PSA

Due at lecture (beginning of class, 8/13)
- Reading for Day 10

Day 11 (8/14): Class in Review
In-class activity: PSA

Due by 10:00 am, 8/14
- PSA Project Due

Day 12 (8/15): Final Exam
10:00 am ~ 12:00 pm