THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY:

A CULTURAL APPROACH TO NAVIGATING MEDIA LANDSCAPES

Vanessa Schill

AMST 7900: Capstone II

Fall, 2016

YOLO: Think Before You Communicate

Look around you and you will likely see some form of media, be it a book, or magazine, or whatever is occupying the airwaves and being transmitted to your radio or television set. Perhaps you're using your laptop to read this paper. You may even have the internet open to Facebook or another social media channel in the background, providing you with a stream of information lest this paper become too arduous to read. While it is tempting to focus solely on new media when examining and teaching media effects, in reality, it's not insightful to point out the pervasiveness of digital and social media in the lives of Americans anymore, especially of today's college-age Americans who have never lived in a world without the internet. However, one's familiarity with the commonplace does not automatically equate to one's being a discerning, savvy, or knowledgeable consumer of media in any form. Nor does it automatically result in a society of engaged Americans capable of distinguishing fact from fiction amid the unstoppable surge of media artifacts filling their Facebook and twitter streams. For example, Justine Sacco, a reporter, made a career-limiting move (she was fired) when she tweeted an offensive message while boarding a plane for a business trip to Africa.[1]

---

[1]Terri Thornton, "Lessons from Justine Sacco's Tweet Heard 'Round the World - MediaShift," MediaShift, January 07, 2014, , accessed November 18, 2016, http://mediashift.org/2014/01/lessons-from-justine-saccos-tweet-heard-round-the-world/.

Figure 1: Justine Sacco's "tweet heard round the world."[2]

In order to make sense of it all, to discern fact from fiction, fantasy from reality, and understand subtext, an educated consumer of media must have at the ready a learned set of critical and interpretive skills, both colloquially dubbed and academically discussed as "media literacy." As Sacco likely discovered, the pop culture expression "YOLO" ("you only live once") also applies to careers. After the "tweet heard 'round the world," she was fired from her job, and has become a great example of what not to do on social media.[3] More importantly, the content of the tweet, which was supposedly meant as a joke, illustrates that there's more to communication than just firing off 140 characters in a tweet–her message caused offense at a social level, and one must know their history, culture, and basic business acumen in order to understand why.

---

[2] Thornton, "Lessons from Justine Sacco's Tweet Heard 'Round the World - MediaShift."
[3] Ibid.

Know Your History: American Studies and Media

At first blush, my undergraduate experiences in social science and media studies led me to believe the answers to teaching media literacy were held primarily in traditional and contemporary media studies scholarship--Henry Jenkins, Marshall McLuhan, Aaron Delwiche, and others. However, upon further examination, I found the theoretical backgrounds necessary to establish the ability to understand, create, and consume media in a meaningful way from scholars who predate many media studies theories and theorists: American Studies. As discussed in the course and in this reflection, scholarship from the mid-nineteenth century, including Leo Marx, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and others from the Frankfurt School are incredibly helpful in teaching methodologies through which one can cultivate a deeper understanding of the "why" in media literacy. That is to say, the historical, cultural, and social underpinnings, all of which have an extensive impact on the way media is created, consumed, and tied into popular culture and American society, are critical to being a responsible consumer and creator of media.

Know Your Role: Education and Media Literacy

Understanding the implications of media illiteracy may account for the sharp rise in the number of media literacy courses offered in the K-12 education system in recent decades, and in the volume of academic research on the subject.[4] Walk through any

---

[4] Schmidt, "Media Literacy Education at the University Level," 65.

public space and you're likely to see that there are as many kids with media devices (mainly cell phones and tablets) as there are adults. The kids, it seems, may be all right. But what about the millenials and Gen-Xers who have had little to no education about how to use, consume, and effectively create media, and the implications therein? Sadly, there is little evidence that similar growth in media literacy courses are treated as critical, core media literacy competencies that should be strengthened and refined at the undergraduate level, where there's a "safety net" to explore media texts and mediums and make mistakes that more readily lend themselves to course-correction.[5] There is certainly an opportunity in the academy to teach students how to make connections to critical and cultural theoretical frameworks from other disciplines as they analyze and produce media in a meaningful way.

Prepare to Negotiate: Precepts and Methodologies

The curriculum that I have assembled for the media literacy course, entitled "Media Literacy: A Cultural Approach," is propelled by the necessity to address the deficit of undergraduate media literacy education for college students. One source that I found most helpful in examining how current scholars define media literacy, the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, defines it as the ability to "decode, evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media."[6] The Conference further identifies five basic precepts common to media educators: media are constructed and construct

---

[5] Ibid, 66.
[6] Aufderheide, *Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*, 1-2.

reality; media have commercial implications; media have ideological and political implications; the form and content are related in each medium, each of which has a unique aesthetic, codes and conventions; and receivers negotiate meaning in media.[7] It is by these principles that I draw from both American and interdisciplinary studies in order to understand why media literacy is important. By approaching media literacy as a skillset informed largely by American Studies theories and methodologies, in conjunction with communication and media studies theories and methodologies, students will be enabled to formulate a holistic definition of media literacy, and apply the skills learned in the course to their daily media exchanges.

Getting Beyond Basic: It's More Than Just the "Telephone" Game

In the early stages of this project, I examined who uses and creates media, for what purpose, and how this affects society as a whole. To say that media is pervasive in all elements of culture is as elementary as saying the sky is blue, or that water is wet, and is essentially useless. We are all communicators creating and consuming media; a logical first step in the process of building a media literacy curriculum is to formulate an initial understanding of what communication is and how it functions within media consumption and production. Early research, including Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, published in 1949, explains how communication occurs through the dissemination of information, or messages,

---

[7] Ibid.

transmitted from a source to a receiver.[8] However, this is a very basic concept of

communication: a mere transaction between sender and receiver. This is deceptive in its

simplicity, as the act of communication is multifaceted and rooted in a number of cultural

and social theories, history, and mediums. Oddly reminiscent of the "telephone game"

children play, where a message is passed along a line of children and then re-stated at the

end of the chain as a completely different message than the original, culture and meaning

can change how a message is created, received, and refracted.' I found a more holistic

approach in American Studies, a discipline that incorporates history, critical cultural

theory, and popular culture in assembling a more holistic approach to the definition of

communication.

　　　　There are several theories from the mid-century that emerged out of the

then-budding field of American Studies. I found Dean Barnlund's Transactional Model of

Communication notable, as he views communication through a symbolic, functional lens

that suggests communication is a dynamic process, and as such is difficult to quantify.[9]

Barnlund's theoretical definition describes communication as "the evolution of meaning

… not a reaction to something, nor an interaction with something, but a transaction in

which man invents and attributes meanings to realize his purposes … meaning is

something 'invented', 'assigned', 'given', rather than something 'received.'"[10] Going back

---

[8] Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication,* 1-31.
[9] Dean C. Barnlund, "A Transactional Model of Communication," in *Language Behavior: A Book of Readings in Communication*, compiled by Johnnye Akin, Alvin Goldberg, Gail Myers, and Joseph Stewart, The Hague: Mouton, 1970; 45-6.
[10] Ibid, 47.

further, Leo Marx predates Barnlund with his explanation of "myth and symbol," which was the dominant analytical methodology of American Studies scholars from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Marx believed that this idea that the object to which meaning is assigned is an image, describing it as "a verbal recording of a simple sense perception."[11] According to Marx, the image becomes a symbol "to the degree that it is made to carry a burden of implication (value, association, feeling, or, in a word, meaning) beyond that which is required for a mere reference."[12]

I also took into account historian Bruce Kuklick's perspective, as he argues that in assigning meaning we "invest the image with much more than a denotational quality; we enable it to connote moral, intellectual and emotional qualities of wider and wider range." [13] This meaning-making, through which parties involved assign meaning through personal experience, is similar in a pedagogical lens to psychologist Robert Kegan's assertion that "meaning is created between the event and the individual's reaction to it;" this he calls the "zone of mediation."[14] Pedagogist Michael Ignelzi asserts that this has even greater implications when discussing how to construct effective lessons in topics such as media literacy, as individual students decode messages based on their personal experience and not a singular event or idea.[15]

---

[11] Leo Marx, "American Studies. A Defense of an Unscientific Method," *New Literary History* 1, no. 1 (October 1969): 86. doi:10.2307/468374.

[12] Ibid, 84.

[13] Kuklick, Bruce. "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." *American Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (October 1972): 435. doi:10.2307/2711683.

[14] Michael Ignelzi, "Meaning-Making in the Learning and Teaching Process," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2000, no. 82 (2000): 6-7.

[15] Ibid, 6-7.

Communication theorists further refine these ideas. Knowing that it is through media that the meaning, or message, is transmitted, communication philosopher Marshall McLuhan explains, "the personal and social consequences of any medium -- that is, of any extension of ourselves -- result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology."[16] In this sense, McLuhan asserts that "the medium is the message;" the message being "the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs … it shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and interaction."[17] The combination of these theories points to the idea that every person engaged in communication is both sender and receiver, medium and messenger, and that communication is a part of both self and society.

We're Going Global-ish: Considering Digital Media Replications of Artifacts

When building this course on media literacy, I also took into consideration the development of communication technologies – first mechanical and now digital – and how electronic mechanisms have, in a sense, liberated the means of media creation, revolutionized the reproduction of media artifacts, and allowed for the easy and global distribution of reproduced media content. Because these devices have assimilated into our culture, we may now we take for granted the technologies that make possible, among other things, an audio recording of a Beethoven symphony, a digital image of the "Mona

---

[16] Marshall McLuhan, and Douglas M. Kellner, "The Medium Is the Message," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi G. Durham, 107-8.
[17] McLuhan, 107-8.

Lisa," or a video recording of a performance of Shakespeare's "Macbeth;" the democratizing effect of these technologies cannot be overstated. German philosopher Walter Benjamin argued that this allowed the original media artifact to "meet the recipient halfway … The cathedral leaves its site to be received in the studio of an art lover; the choral work performed in an auditorium or in the open air is enjoyed in a private room."[18] However, the reproducibility of the media artifact comes at the cost of its authenticity, as Benjamin states: "the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place … that bears the mark of the history to which the [media artifact] has been subject."[19] Even the most perfect reproduction differs in this way from the original. In this way, the medium delivering the media artifact, or carrying the media artifact's message, is altered. This in turn alters how a message is decoded, which can affect its meaning, which can have cultural implication--these are all critical concepts to consider in analyzing media. It is in the spirit of this that I included in the course a reading assignment of the printed version of Eric Overmyer's "On the Verge," a play that features three women and explores, among other things, capitalism and commodification, [20] along with a critical analysis of the play from scholar Keith Appler that features theories from Frankfurt School theorists Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno.[21] From a

---

[18] Walter Benjamin,. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, and Howard Eiland, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, 21-2.

[19] Ibid, 21.

[20] Eric Overmyer, *On the Verge, or The Geography of Yearning*, New York, NY: Broadway Play Publishing, 1986.

[21] Keith Appler, "The Future and the Commodity: Walter Benjamin and Eric Overmyer's On the Verge," *Modern Drama*, 59, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 95-114.

pedagogical perspective, this combination of texts ultimately illustrates to students how a media artifact can be decoded and critiqued using theories discussed in this reflection essay, and which are included in the course content. Modeling how to critique a text, as Overmyer has done in his essay, is a tool meant to help students understand how the methodologies discussed can be used to "unpack," or analyze, a media text. As discussed, applying these methods in trying to understand media is a critical part of media literacy.

Bought and Sold: Media, Society, Culture, and Consumers

To the extent that the medium affects the message, the medium affects how the message is received; therefore, the medium can change how content is received.[22] Take, for example, a televised news reel that is later edited down to a 6-second Vine video. A person watching the newsreel may have an entirely different reading of the content than a person watching the abbreviated, edited content on social media based solely upon the medium used to communicate the content. McLuhan regarded media as a commodity of community life, and as such, an extension of all an individual's senses; "that they also configure the awareness and experience of each one of us" as we are inescapably influenced by the ideas of others.[23] As a large part of community life, media must also be considered as a mechanism of control, and therefore highly politicized. If media are a commodity, then social issues surrounding policy and distribution of commodities -- who controls the message, and to whom the messages are directed -- becomes a critical issue

---

[22] McLuhan, 112-14.
[23] McLuhan, 116.

when examining both the role of media in society and who controls media. Frankfurt

School sociologists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno call this the "culture industry"

and a product of capitalism, arguing that "technical rationality today is the rationality of

domination."[24]

> For the present, the technology of the culture industry confines itself to standardization and mass production and sacrifices what once distinguished the logic of the work from that of society. These adverse effects, however, should not be attributed to the internal laws of technology itself but to its function within the economy today. Any need which might escape the central control is repressed by that of individual consciousness. The step from telephone to radio has clearly distinguished the roles. The former liberally permitted the participant to play the role of subject. The latter democratically makes everyone into listeners, in order to expose them in authoritarian fashion to the same programs put out by different stations. No mechanism of reply has been developed, and private transmissions are condemned to unfreedom.[25]

Contemporary communication theorist Robert McChesney is quick to point out

that in a capitalist system, media as commodities can be problematic. He asserts that

media are highly politicized and ill-suited for market-driven regulation, citing the

Telecommunications Act of 1996 which deregulated the radio industry, promptly

resulting not in its intended purpose of greater freedom on the airwaves, but of large

media conglomerates purchasing many smaller stations, resulting in a small number of

companies monopolizing huge numbers of radio stations.[26] Moreover, the

---

[24] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," In *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, 95, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.
[25] Horkheimer & Adorno, 95-6.
[26] Robert McChesney, "The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-first Century," *Choice Reviews Online* 42, no. 01 (2004): 3.

commercialization of media has led to its being driven largely by advertising, which

invariably shapes the messages that are promoted (or ignored) by media.[27]

> First and foremost, the nature of media content is different from that of other commodities … At first glance, using markets to regulate the production and distribution of ideas and culture is troubling. If one follows the logic of the "marketplace of ideas" metaphor closely, it may well be that the rational thing for media firms to do is to produce exactly what the market shows a preference for, what everyone else is producing. Diversity may then be squashed … in the realm of ideas it poses deep problems for traditional liberal democratic notions. [28]

Got Money?: Status, Symbolic Annihilation, and Subordination in Media

Furthering the idea that the intended message may not always be the message that

is received, Stuart Hall's theories of audience reception and encoding/decoding focus on

the idea that "meaningful discourse" must occur in order for an audience to decode an

encoded message; before a message "can have an 'effect,' satisfy a 'need' or be put to a

'use,' it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully

decoded ... which 'have an effect,' influence, entertain, instruct. or persuade, with very

complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences."[29]

Hall's and McLuhan's views on media messages were similar; Hall, however, believed

that how a message was decoded by an audience was reliant upon three hypothetical

positions: first, the dominant-hegemonic position (the viewer decodes the message within

the code it was intended); second, the negotiated position (the viewer decodes the

---

[27] Ibid, 32.
[28] Ibid, 32.
[29] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding" In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, 164-5.

message but does not necessarily agree with it on a personal level); third, the globally oppositional position (the viewer decodes the message on both a literal and connotative level).[30] This suggests that an audience's socioeconomic status impacts how they decode media messages;[31] According to communication theorist Rebecca Ann Lind, these power relationships lead to dominant social groups categorizing and treating subordinated social groups as less-than and reinforce social hierarchy.[32] This "audience participation" theory is a paradigm that "has attracted criticism for the apparent jettisoning of the influence of cultural power, diminishing the authority of the text while elevating the influence of context," which shows an undeniable connection between how we identify ourselves by and through our experiences with media.[33]

 Lind contends that representation in media is itself a form of power, as powerless social groups are easily ignored, allowing media to focus on groups that "matter."[34] This symbolic annihilation of social and cultural groups imply that these groups don't exist--a concept that is reinforced by under-representation, misrepresentation, or absence of representation in media content, which presents a symbolic reflection of society.[35] Of course, mass media in the United States are market driven, functioning as they do within a capitalist economy.

---

[30] Hall, 172.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Rebecca Ann Lind, *Race/gender/class/media 3.0: Considering Diversity across Content, Audiences and Production*, 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson, 2012, 8.
[33] Helen Wood, "The mediated conversational floor: An interactive approach to audience reception analysis" *Media, Culture & Society* no. 1: 75, 99-100.
[34] Lind, 5-6.
[35] Wood, 146.

Heads or Tails?: Discourse and Public Memory

Media representations of society, journalist and cultural critic Edward Morgan argues, are a product of the "fundamental economic, organizational, and ideological forces at work" within that system.[36] However, media do not simply reflect the society in which they are produced back to that society; media play a critical role in shaping the very economic, organizational, and ideological forces that influenced the media content in the first place, thereby helping to "forge and sustain the hegemony of the late capitalist consumer culture."[37] Mass media's goal is to maximize the audience. Therefore, its role is to entertain, not to educate. The result is that mass media "simplifies the past in a way that is inherently ideological, even though it seeks impartial balance between two competing viewpoints, typically presented as two sides of a conflict."[38]

Morgan suggests that mass media play a significant role in creating what he calls "public memory," a selective or sanitized version of the past that can differ significantly from history. Social movements that "challenge the hegemony of dominant elites and their ideology," such as the Civil Rights movement (a topic Morgan uses to demonstrate the difference in perception from the 1960s and now), see their most "radical critiques of the American system" sanitized, silenced or reduced to "barely credible conspiracy

---

[36] Edward P. Morgan, "The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten: Media Culture and Public Memory of the Civil Rights Movement," In *The civil rights movement in America: Essays*, edited by David Levering Lewis and Charles W Eagles, 138, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986.
[37] Morgan, 139.
[38] Ibid.

theories."[39] Morgan argues that mass media portrayals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in particular – and, by extension, the "public memory" version of King – has been "ideologically sanitized, detached from his own politics and their more radical, or system-critical, implications." [40]

Public memory is a form of discourse, which is defined as ways of conceptualizing, discussing, or writing about social phenomena, where power lies in the interpretive frameworks that define phenomena of interest; this is to say that discourse determines what and how these phenomena should be addressed.[41] However, when marginalized groups are unable to attain status as part of the social norm, through discourse or other means, philosopher and critic Lindsay Coleman argues, these groups "attempt to counter-marginalize by reversing the trends of assimilation … achieved through the creation of a new subculture or expanded minority, which in turn grows into a political movement--an ironically essentialist project."[42] Further, media texts are often used and "remade in the creative production and reproduction of self-identity," according to Helen Wood.[43] Using audience studies as a framework, Wood researched how women interacted with broadcast television programming, leading to her discovery of what she referred to as a "mediated conversation" by which viewers "precipitate new ways of constructing and articulating contemporary identities in relation to television and

---

[39] Ibid, 139.
[40] Ibid, 141.
[41] Lind, 8.
[42] Lindsay Coleman, "Shopping at J-Mart with the Williams: Race, Ethnicity, and Belonging in South Park," in *Taking South Park Seriously*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 135.
[43] Wood, 99.

broadcasting."[44] In this way, women are able to relate information garnered from

television broadcasting into their daily lives, which demonstrates "the discursive potential

for the viewer to have a part in constructing the broadcast text for themselves."[45]

Audiences modify media messages in ways that make it meaningful to, representative of,

and personal to them. Participatory culture, as defined by contemporary media scholar

Henry Jenkins, is "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic

engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal

mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices.

Do We Get Points for Participation?: Digital Media and Flash Reason

In a participatory culture, members also believe their contributions matter and feel

some degree of social connection with one another."[46] Directly citing Jenkins'

explanation, contemporary communication theorists Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs

Henderson expand upon this idea of collaboration in participatory culture, arguing that

the internet has furthered the creation of a collective of ideas being created and

exchanged that include everything from recipe exchange to political organizing and

revolution.[47]

---

[44] Ibid, 100.
[45] Wood, 100.
[46] Henry Jenkins, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009, xi.
[47] Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, "What Is Participatory Culture?" In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 4-5.

This exchange and "contribution, collaboration, and collective knowledge" has expanded since the mid-1980s as the public has gained increased access to the internet.[48] Digital technologies have allowed participatory culture to flourish, and have opened up a medium in which marginalized groups can and do challenge societal norms through media production.[49] However, this technology comes with its own set of challenges beyond the creation, encoding, decoding, and recoding of information.

Gregory Ulmer argues that the invention of digital technologies represents a third age of communication apparatus (the first and second being orality and literacy) and therefore necessitates the development of a new skill set--"electracy"--which "is to digital media what literacy is to alphabetic writing."[50] Ulmer's electracy reflects the instantaneous nature and speed of digital media, and the unique challenges that this medium presents. Digital media (electracy) operate in "now" time, a compression of traditional dimensions of communication -- oral communication operated on cyclical time and literate communication operated on linear time. The danger of this compression -- that it exists entirely in "now" -- is that it leaves "no time for deliberative reason, the persuasion and argument needed to achieve the consent of the governed" in a democratic society.[51] Further, Ulmer's electracy posits that conceptually a "media literacy" is

---

[48] Ibid, 6.
[49] Aaron Delwiche, "The New Left and the Computer Underground" In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 10-19.
[50] Gregory Ulmer, "The Learning Screen," In *Networked: A Networked Book About Networked Art*, http://ulmer.networkedbook.org.
[51] Gregory Ulmer, "Flash Reason," *CyberText Yearbook*, 2013, 2.

insufficient for digital technologies,[52] in part because electracy includes, "besides technological innovations, inventions in the dimensions of institution formation and related skill sets, and identity behaviors individual and collective (ethics and politics)."[53] To course-correct, electracy introduces the concept of "flash reason," or associative thinking, which allows one to process the flood of information delivered by digital media, and to think prudently about the quality of that information.[54] Flash reason is as much about understanding the messages delivered by digital media as it is about filtering out the many low-quality messages that threaten to overwhelm the high-quality messages.

Getting it Together: Media Literacy Pedagogy

Though Ulmer's theory of flash reason does not necessarily reinforce the merits of media literacy, being media literate is of utmost importance in an age and environment of digital and social media. According to a Pew Research Center study, as of September 2013, nearly 90 percent of internet users were between the ages of 18 and 29, and the demographics are dynamic.[55] Multi-platform use (i.e. accessing and using more than one specific form of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter) has risen from 42 percent in

---

[52] Gregory Ulmer, "Electracy: The Internet as Fifth Estate," *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, July 1, 2013, 13.

[53] Ulmer, "Electracy: The Internet as Fifth Estate," 13.

[54] Geoffrey V. Carter, "Satyr At Little Big Horn," *Enculturation*, http://enculturation.net/satyr-at-little-big-horn, 2013.

[55] "Social Networking Fact Sheet," Pew Research Center Internet Science Tech RSS, December 27, 2013, Accessed April 02, 2016, http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/.

2013 to 52 percent in 2014.[56] And while younger generations may arguably know about the utility of these new technologies and applications, they may not understand the merits, consequences, and problems that arise in using this new media.

Jenkins argues for media literacy education, citing that innovations in advertising, web design, and marketing have made it difficult for even the most seasoned internet user to distinguish truth from fiction.[57] Furthermore, ethics can become blurred on the internet; without proper education as to the ramifications of authorship in a public space, posts online can lead to undesirable attention from cyberbullying to employment disqualification (remember Justine Sacco?).[58] Media literacy pedagogy must not only include how to decode and interpret traditional texts, such as print media, broadcast media, and cinema, but now also include digital media and internet channels. Students must learn how to integrate knowledge from multiple sources, think critically about information received in digital spaces, and consider the cultures, perspectives, history, and interconnectedness of other cultures and spaces, while educators must teach collaboration and stay the course in emphasizing and teaching non-electronic core education.[59] Going beyond Jenkins, Ignelzi argues that students must be deliberately taught meaning-making: "the process of how individuals make sense of knowledge,

---

[56] Maeve Duggan, Nicole B. Ellison, Cliff Lampe, Amanda Lenhart, and Mary Madden, "Social Media Update 2014" Pew Research Center Internet Science Tech RSS, January 09, 2015, accessed April 02, 2016, http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/.
[57] Jenkins, 25.
[58] Jenkins, 26.
[59] Jenkins, 28-32.

experience, relationships, and the self," and these things "must be considered in designing college curricular environments supportive of learning and development."[60]

In sum, the internet and digital media have infiltrated all aspects of culture and communication. For this, educators and researchers must entertain new ways in which to teach media creators and consumers the importance of media literacy. This education in media literacy must emphasize how to read and consume new media, including that found in digital and social media landscapes. Further, students of media literacy must be taught the importance of both creation and consequence in using digital media. These goals can be achieved through presenting students with terms and concepts that promote and explain the question of *why* media operates as it does across multiple texts and media, *what* this means to individuals, groups, and society en masse, and *how* history, culture, and society influence the way media is created, consumed, and tied into popular culture and American society. Small, in-class breakout sessions can be used for students to discuss course topics, allowing individuals in the group to assert their personal, experiential views affect how they view media. Individual reflective essays assigned throughout the semester that focus on specific questions about media literacy encourage students to apply the theories they've read, as well as topics discussed in class, and expand upon them, demonstrating their mastery of the subject matter. A journal kept by individual students will include student-chosen media artifacts, along with corresponding journal entries. This journal will allow students to apply their knowledge of media

[60] Ignelzi, 5.

literacy, encouraging them to think critically about the way media is produced and consumed, for what purpose, and how the theories discussed in class and in assigned readings apply to these texts. Quizzes and exams will assess how well students grasp the materials presented, and will also help the instructor to identify places where additional instruction is needed for students to understand what could be argued to be higher-level concepts for an undergraduate course. In the end, students will have a thorough, interdisciplinary understanding of media; at this point students can be said to have the tools necessary to truly become media literate.

References

Barnlund, Dean C. "A Transactional Model of Communication." In *Language Behavior: A Book of Readings in Communication*, compiled by Johnnye Akin, Alvin Goldberg, Gail Myers, and Joseph Stewart 43-61. The Hague: Mouton, 1970.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*. Edited by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin. Translated by Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, and Howard Eiland. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.

Carter, Geoffrey V. "Satyr At Little Big Horn." *Enculturation*, 2013.

Coleman, Lindsay. "Shopping at J-Mart with the Williams: Race, Ethnicity, and Belonging in South Park." In *Taking South Park Seriously*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 131-44. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

Delwiche, Aaron, "The New Left and the Computer Underground" In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 10-19. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Delwiche, Aaron, and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson. "What Is Participatory Culture?" In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 3-9. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Duggan, Maeve, Nicole B. Ellison, Cliff Lampe, Amanda Lenhart, and Mary Madden. "Social Media Update 2014." Pew Research Center Internet Science Tech RSS. January 09, 2015. Accessed April 02, 2016. http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/.

Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding" In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, 164-74. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." In *Dialectic of enlightenment: Philosophical fragments*, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, ed. Edmund Jephcott, trans., 94–136. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Ignelzi, Michael. "Meaning-Making in the Learning and Teaching Process." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2000, no. 82 (2000): 5-14. Accessed January 21, 2016. doi:10.1002/tl.8201.

Jenkins, Henry. *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

Kuklick, Bruce. "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." *American Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (October 1972): 435. doi:10.2307/2711683.

Lind, Rebecca Ann. *Race/gender/class/media 3.0: Considering Diversity across Content, Audiences and Production*. 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson, 2012.

Marx, Leo. "American Studies. A Defense of an Unscientific Method." *New Literary History* 1, no. 1 (October 1969): 75–90. doi:10.2307/468374.

McChesney, Robert. "The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-first Century." *Choice Reviews Online* 42, no. 01 (2004): 1-43. Accessed November 20, 2015. doi:10.5860/choice.42-0123.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The Medium Is the Message." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. 107-16. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Morgan, Edward P. "The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten: Media Culture and Public Memory of the Civil Rights Movement." In *The civil rights movement in America: Essays*, edited by David Levering Lewis and Charles W Eagles, 137–66. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986.

"Social Networking Fact Sheet." Pew Research Center Internet Science Tech RSS. December 27, 2013. Accessed April 02, 2016. http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/.

Terri Thornton. "Lessons from Justine Sacco's Tweet Heard 'Round the World - MediaShift." MediaShift. January 07, 2014. Accessed November 18, 2016. http://mediashift.org/2014/01/lessons-from-justine-saccos-tweet-heard-round-the-world/.

Ulmer, Gregory L. "Electracy: The Internet as Fifth Estate." *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, July 1, 2013.

Ulmer, Gregory L. "Flash Reason." *CyberText Yearbook*, 2013.

Ulmer, Gregory. "The Learning Screen." In *Networked: A Networked Book About Networked Art*, n.d.

Wood, Helen. 2007. "The mediated conversational floor: An interactive approach to audience reception analysis." *Media, Culture & Society* no. 1: 75. *Academic OneFile*, EBSCO*host* (accessed February 2, 2016).

APPENDIX A

Kennesaw State University
AMST 4000
Media Literacy: A Cultural Approach
Semester:
Instructor: V. Schill
E-mail: vschill@kennesaw.edu (preferred method of communication)
Office:
Phone no.
Fax no.
Office hours:
Credit hours: 3
Class location:
Class meeting times: Tuesdays and Thursdays

AMST 4000 – Media Literacy: A Cultural Approach

This course provides historical and cultural contexts for examining how, as well as for

and by whom, media is created. This includes studying how media is disseminated and

consumed, and then reflected back into society by media consumers.

Using a variety of texts, students will explore histories, theories, and events that have,

and remain, critical to the production of media. They will identify themselves as media

consumers and producers, and explore ways to create and consume media that is

informed by research, culture, factual accuracy, and critical thought.

Prerequisite Requirements

Prerequisites: As determined by the Interdisciplinary Studies program coordinator.

Introduction

Welcome to AMST 4000 – Media Literacy: A Cultural Approach. Over the next several weeks, we will review the history of media in a cultural context, examine how pop culture reflects social issues, look at how social movements are created and impacted by and through media, and analyze the ways media are created and consumed and the subsequent impact such media have when refracted back into society.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students should be able to meet the following goals:

• **Goal 1**: identify, compare, differentiate between, and provide examples of the major themes covered in this course, including: cultural and social identities, media and mediums, media literacy, content, production, agenda setting, discourse, cognitive dissonance, symbolic annihilation, stereotypes, and prejudice;

• **Goal 2**: evaluate how creators of media portray culture, and explain why one medium may have a different social impact than another with regard to media consumers;

• **Goal 3**: name major authors, texts, and theories related to American Studies, and explain how aspects of each work relate to media literacy;

• **Goal 4**: demonstrate media literacy when explaining how and why media artifacts are

created, consumed, and disseminated;

• **Goal 5**: demonstrate their ability to analyze a text using close reading and paying

attention to the context of the work; and

• **Goal 6**: explain how events in American history impacted culture and media, and

appraise how different mediums affect cultural norms in American society today.

Required Texts and Materials

• Appler, Keith. "The Future and the Commodity: Walter Benjamin and Eric Overmyer's On the Verge." *Modern Drama* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 95-114. *Literary Reference Center*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 2, 2016). **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

•Delwiche, Aaron, and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson. "What Is Participatory Culture?" In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 3-9. New York: Routledge, 2013. **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

• Holtzman, L., & Sharpe, L. (2014). *Media messages: What film, television, and popular music teach us about race, class, gender, and sexual orientation* (Second ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-07665617576 **(required.)**

• Kuklick, Bruce. "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." American Quarterly, 1972., 435, JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed November 9, 2016). **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

• Marx, Leo. "American Studies. A Defense of an Unscientific Method." *New Literary History* 1, no. 1 (1969): 75-90. doi:10.2307/468374. **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

• McLuhan, Marshall, "The Medium Is the Message." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. 107-16. Rev. ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

• Nieguth, Tim. The Politics of Popular Culture : Negotiating Power, Identity, and Place. Montreal: MQUP, 2015. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016). **(PDF provided on D2L.)**

• Overmyer, Eric. *On the Verge, or The Geography of Yearning.* New York, NY: Broadway Play Publishing, 1986. **(required.)**

• Shank, Barry. "The Continuing Embarrassment of Culture: From the Culture Concept to Cultural Studies." American Studies 38, no. 2 (1997): 95-116. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40642905 **(PDF provided on D2L)**

• Access to a computer with reliable Internet access and sound and video capabilities.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy:

Attendance policy: This is a 4000-level course, and as such, your peers and I expect you to attend class prepared and willing to engage in the topics we will discuss, and will treat you in kind. This course is a foundation for you to make informed decisions about how you choose to consume and create media, and the cultural impact such decisions carry. As such, the class relies on your participation in assigned readings, case studies, projects, assessments, and class discussions. You must submit assignments on time, and stay abreast of any changes to the course or materials. Please make sure you have access to your readings in each class module prior to that week.

If you miss more than four classes, you will receive an automatic "0" (letter grade: F) in the course.

Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal. You are responsible for determining your enrollment status in all classes to protect your financial aid monies. Not attending a class for which you are registered is not the same as withdrawing from the course. You must complete an online withdrawal to be removed from a course. If you stop attending class but do not complete an online withdrawal BEFORE the last day to drop without academic penalty, you will receive a grade of WF, which counts as an F in calculating your grade point average and counts as a completed course for determining your financial aid award.

The last day to withdraw without academic penalty is _.

Assignments and Grading:
Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Grade Breakdown—1000 total points possible

- **Reflection Essays: 10 percent (100 pts. total/20 pts. each; see breakdown below)**

- **Journal Project: 30 percent (300 pts. total; see breakdown below)**

- **In-class Discussions: 10 percent (100 pts. total)**

- **Quizzes: 20 percent (200 pts. total/100 pts. each)**

- **Midterm Exam: 15 percent (150 points)**

- **Final Exam: 15 percent (150 points)**

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- **Reflection Essays: 100 points (total)**

Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned 5 separate discussion questions related to specific concepts or terms covered in the related class session. You will respond to/answer each 350-400 word essay question using texts used in class from both that week and previous weeks to demonstrate your mastery of the course materials presented.

Instructions: Each essay assignment must be typed, and include the following information at the top of the document:

The essay question

Your first and last name

Your preferred email address

AMST 4000

Date

Details are important. In addition to making sure your essays are on-topic and use texts and concepts discussed in class, you must also be sure to adhere to the basic requirements for the writing assignments section in your syllabus. You must also include an accurate word count at the bottom of each essay. You will be graded for correct use of grammar and spelling. The KSU Writing Center is available to assist you in this.

The five essays are worth a combined 10 percent of your final grade. With this in mind, it is wise to think about how you want to approach each essay question, as well as what texts you will use to inform your essay responses, as we move through the materials and concepts in class. Essay questions can be found in the course schedule at the bottom of this syllabus.

To help you stay on track, there will be a mid-semester status check of your journal and scrapbook, where you will be accountable for having completed three of the six total journal and accompanying scrapbook entries. Your completed essays must be turned in at the beginning of class on the designated due date. Please see the course schedule at the bottom of the syllabus for due dates.

*Note: Essay topics and due dates are subject to change. Please check D2L often, as I will post any changes in the "Announcements" section. I will also provide this information in class, so please plan to attend each class meeting so as not to miss out on any information.

Essays will be graded within two weeks of submission, and will be returned to you in

Essay grading details:

Each essay must include all of the following (breakdown is for each essay):

Heading: 2 points (10 pts. total)

- The essay question
- Your first and last name
- Your preferred email address
- AMST 4000
- Date

Essay format: 2 points (10 pts. total)

The essay submission must adhere to the font, size, and writing requirements in the syllabus, and must include an accurate word count at the bottom of each submission.

Essay response: 10 points (50 pts. total)

Each essay must directly address the essay question provided by accurately and insightfully explaining your response using texts that illustrate your grasp of topics, terms, and theories covered in this course to support your analysis.

Grammar and spelling: 3 points (15 pts. total)

Each essay is written using proper grammar, and correct spelling. Please see the KSU Writing Center for help with this, if necessary.

Citations: 3 points (15 pts. total)

You must include the sources you cite in each essay at the end of the entry.

*No late submissions will be accepted, so please ensure that you plan ahead. Note that essays need to be printed and ready to submit at the beginning of the class in which they are due, and technological issues will not be accepted as a means to make up the assignment.

- **Journal and Scrapbook Project: 300 points (total)**

The project is to be completed by you individually, and is due the last day of class.

Instructions:

For this assignment, find clips from current events, articles, screenshots, and other media artifacts (six total), along with a 250-300 word journal entry informed by texts used in class to describe the artifact and its relevance to the course materials presented.

The journal and scrapbook project contents must be presented in a binder, with a cover page that includes the following information:

Your first and last name

Your preferred email address

AMST 4000

Spring/Fall Semester

Presentation is important. In addition to making sure your journal entries and scrapbook artifacts are presented professionally and neatly, please make sure to adhere to the basic requirements for the writing assignments section in your syllabus. You must also include an accurate word count at the bottom of each written journal entry. You will be graded for

correct use of grammar and spelling. The KSU Writing Center is available to assist you in this.

For each journal entry and related scrapbook entry, place the media artifact first (glued to an 8.5 x. 11 piece of white paper, unless printed out), followed by your written response and summary.

This project is worth 30 percent of your final grade. With this in mind, it is wise to begin thinking about what types of media artifacts you want to submit, as well as what texts you will use to inform your journal entries.

To help you stay on track, there will be a mid-semester status check of your journal and scrapbook, where you will be accountable for having completed three of the six total journal and accompanying scrapbook entries. Your completed project is due the day of the final exam.

Graded projects can be retrieved from the IDS department after the last day to submit final grades.

Project grading details:

Media artifacts: 5 points each (30 points total)

The artifact chosen must be relevant to the course material, and properly displayed in your binder.

Cover page: 5 points (total)

You must include a cover page with ALL of the following information:

- Your first and last name

- Your preferred email address

- AMST 4000

- Spring/Fall Semester

Journal entry format: 15 points (total)

The journal entry must adhere to the font, size, and writing requirements in the syllabus, and must include an accurate word count at the bottom of each entry.

Journal entries: 5 points each (30 points total)

Each journal entry must accurately and insightfully explain the relevance of your chosen media artifact, using texts that illustrate your grasp of topics, terms, and theories covered in this course to support your analysis.

Grammar and spelling: 10 points

Each journal entry is written using proper grammar, and correct spelling. Please see the KSU Writing Center for help with this, if necessary.

Citations: 10 points

You must include the sources you cite in each journal entry at the end of the entry.

*No late submissions will be accepted, so please ensure that you plan ahead. Note that the project needs to be printed, assembled, and ready to submit at the beginning of the last day of class, and technological issues will not be accepted as a means to make up the assignment.

● **In-class Discussions: 100 pts. (total)**

Time spent in class will be used as an opportunity to discuss theories, texts, and ideas related to the course. These discussions will be informed by your readings, as well as your essays. Failure to participate in class discussions will adversely affect your score.

● **Quizzes 200 points (total)**

There will be 2 quizzes throughout the course of this class, worth 100 points each.

Quizzes can include the following question formats: multiple choice, true/false, short

answer, and/or fill-in-the-blank. There are no make-up quizzes, so please be prepared to

take each quiz on the scheduled date and time.

● **Midterm Exam 150 points (total)**

The midterm exam is comprehensive, meaning questions on the exam can include

materials from all content covered up to the week of the exam. The exam is made up of

25 questions total (6 pts. per question) and includes multiple choice, true/false, and

fill-in-the-blank questions. There are no make-up midterms, so please be prepared to take

the exam on the scheduled date and time.

● **Final Exam 150 points (total)**

The final exam is comprehensive, meaning questions on the exam can include materials

from all content covered during the course. The exam is made up of 25 questions total (6

pts. per question) and includes multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

*There are no make-up finals, so please be prepared to take the exam on the scheduled date and time.

General Policies

Grading*:

A = 900-1000, B = 800-899, C = 700-799, D = 600-699, F = 599-0

*****Note**: Grades are not "rounded" in this course. Ex: A student's work averages 89.9 percent at the conclusion of this course will receive a letter grade of "B."

The last day to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is posted on the KSU's online Academic Calendar each semester.. For other important dates, please visit the Academic Calendar on the KSU Office of the Registrar's site here:

http://registrar.kennesaw.edu/datesanddeadlines/fall2016.php

Course content:

This class relies on your reading the assigned texts, taking notes, completing reflection essays, and preparing for class prior to our class. Not reading the material is not only detrimental to you as a student, but also adversely impacts your peers as we discuss the topics in class. It is my sincere hope that we can engage in lively, respectful class discussions—this is only possible if you have done the readings.

To facilitate your understanding of the materials, as well as help me to tailor our discussions, I will include ungraded essay questions throughout the semester based on topics we're covering in class so that you are prepared for class discussions.

Please take notes during class and in your readings, as these will help you in composing your essays, as well as in studying for your quizzes and exams.

Please plan to disengage from your cell phones and chat tabs while in the classroom. Laptops and tablets are permissible for use in helping facilitate in-class discussions (i.e. finding examples online that relate directly to the topic being discussed).

I will make announcements of important events, any course changes, or cancellations at the beginning of each class, so please arrive on time.

A note on classroom discussions:

While these are friendly discussions among peers, most cover sensitive topics, so please proceed with care and follow the golden rule. Also, text-messaging language is never acceptable in emails, essays, or any communication in academic courses. Make sure that your essays are well thought-out and substantive, and illustrate your understanding of the topic(s) so that you are able to actively participate in the class discussions. Failure to participate in the discussions will adversely impact your participation grade. Please exhibit courtesy and professionalism in all communication in this course, including in-class discussions and emails.

Basic requirements for writing assignments:

Please submit all writing assignments typed in 12 point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1" margins standard. *Make sure you keep a copy of everything you submit as a backup, in case you need to submit proof of work completed.*

Late papers and assignments:

Late papers and assignments are not accepted. Please plan to complete your assignments well in advance of class, as there have been instances where power outages, connectivity, and other tech issues have occurred that may prevent you from completing your readings and assignments. If you do encounter a personal equipment failure, there are computers located throughout campus that are designated for student use.

Attendance:

Please plan to attend class on time, on the dates and times listed, and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions. You are responsible for all materials covered in the modules, as well as participating in your group's project (exception: if you choose to complete the project on your own/individually). If you miss a class and/or submission deadline, understand that no make up assignments, quizzes, or exams are available.

Participation and in-class guidelines:

This is a 4000-level course, and as such, your peers and I expect you to attend class

prepared and willing to engage in the topics we will discuss, and will treat you in kind.

This course is a foundation for you to make informed decisions about how you choose to

consume and create media, and the cultural impact such decisions carry. As such, the

class relies on your participation in assigned readings, case studies, projects, assessments,

and class discussions. You must submit assignments on time, and stay abreast of any

changes to the course or materials. Please make sure you have access to your readings in

each class module prior to that week.

If you miss more than four classes, you will receive an automatic "0" (letter grade: F) in

the course.

Many of the topics covered in this course are sensitive in nature. During the course of our

class discussions, you may not always agree with topics discussed or opinions expressed.

Please be mindful of your conduct, as these disagreements must not become personal

attacks. We must always assume that everyone is doing the best that they can (see also

KSU statement on Disruption of Campus Life).

While I am confident that this will be a non-issue, please be aware that aggression,

personal attacks and/or disruptions will not be tolerated. Everyone receives one warning.

If you decide not to engage in thoughtful, professional behavior, I will ask you to leave

the class and will deduct 200 points from your final grade per offense. Additionally, you

will not be allowed to return to class before meeting with me to discuss the impact of your decision on the course and your grade. This is not negotiable. Extreme cases will be forwarded to SCAI for mediation.

Electronic devices:

While laptops and tablets are permitted in this course, if internet surfing is a distraction for you, I ask that you limit this activity to your time outside of class. Thanks in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

Communication:

Please feel free to contact me via email from your student email account. Address your correspondence to vschill@kennesaw.edu, and include "AMST 4000" in the subject line. If you've emailed me and have not received a response, please check your "Sent" folder to ensure your email was delivered to the correct email address; copy-and-paste your message into a new email from your student email account that you will then send to vschill@kennesaw.edu so that I can respond.

I will make every effort to respond to your emails as quickly as possible (usually within 3-5 days), however, I may hold my response until the next class meeting/week if I think that the answer can wait and will benefit everyone in the class, at which point I will respond at the beginning of the next class meeting.

Netiquette:

In the spirit of the course topic, and in the interest of respect for me and your peers, all members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

When emailing or engaging in electronic communication, please be mindful of your audience. That is to say, the tone and content of your emails should maintain professionalism and courtesy. If you are unclear on this, please review this Netiquette link: http://distanceed.hss.kennesaw.edu/elearning/netiquette.html

Learning how to professionally format your emails now, and getting into the habit of doing so consistently, will serve you well when applying for jobs post-graduation, communicating with supervisors and peers. This is especially relevant in a course that heavily focuses on creation of media content. Moreover, being mindful creates a better experience for both parties in that it demonstrates respect and forethought. Don't use slang or text message language, or emoticons. Communications that do not adhere to these standards will receive a score of 0; emails that do not adhere to these standards will not receive a reply.

Meeting with your instructor:

In the rare event that you have a question or concern that cannot be addressed via email

or after class, please email me to arrange a time to set up a meeting. Please arrive

prepared, and write down any questions prior to the meeting time so that we can best use

our time.

KSU Writing Center:

The KSU Writing Center is a free service offered to all KSU students. Experienced,

friendly writing assistants work with you throughout the writing process on concerns

such as topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and mechanics.

Rather than edit your paper for you, writing assistants will help you learn strategies to

become a better writer on your own. For more information or to make an appointment

(appointments are strongly encouraged), visit http://kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/ or stop

by Room 242 in the English Building.

As of Fall 2013, the Writing Center is also available online through the KSU Writing Center website: http://writingcenter.kennesaw.edu/

Prerequisites:

Be aware that ALL prerequisites are strictly enforced; it is your responsibility to map out

your course of study accordingly; i.e., make sure you take prerequisites into account

when making plans for future semesters. If you have questions, please contact your

academic adviser.

Disruption of Campus Life:

It is the purpose of the institution to provide a campus environment which encourages academic accomplishment, personal growth, and a spirit of understanding and cooperation. An important part of maintaining such an environment is the commitment to protect the health and safety of every member of the campus community. In order to promote these goals, students should be familiar with and abide by the rules against disruption of campus life.

Disruptive and Dangerous Conduct

No student shall act in a manner that can reasonably be expected to disturb the academic pursuits of others or infringe upon the privacy, rights, or privileges of others, or the health or safety of him/herself or other persons.

Disruptive Speech

That speech is prohibited which: a) presents an immediate or imminent clear and present danger or b) is disruptive to the academic functioning of the institution.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with Student

Disability Services at http://studentsuccess.kennesaw.edu/sds/. Student Disability

Services will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this

documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this

documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams.

Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon

as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

FERPA:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects

the privacy of student education records once the student has reached 18 years of age (20

U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Under that law we cannot release your student ID

number, grades, performance evaluations, or any other personal or academic information

to anyone but you, unless you provide written permission to do so.

Global learning:

Kennesaw State University is a learning-centered institution emphasizing creativity, diversity, global awareness, leadership, ethics, teaching excellence, digital literacy, technological competence, and community engagement. KSU has adopted a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), an educational process that enhances one's competencies for participating productively and responsibly in the diverse, international, intercultural, and interdependent world.

Getting Help:

- If you're having technical difficulties, please start by visiting http://uits.kennesaw.edu/

- You may submit a service request by emailing studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu. Please include the nature of the problem, your NetID and your preferred contact method (email address and/or telephone number).

- You may call the Student Help Desk at 470-578-3555.

- Walk in: Kennesaw Campus – Tech Annex TX 110 (Building #361) OR Marietta Campus - Lower Level H Building.

- The hours of operation can be found by visiting http://uits.kennesaw.edu/support

- Answers to many common questions can be found here: Ask the KSU Service Desk

Make-Ups

Very rarely, you may encounter a technological issue beyond your control. Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from UITS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST email your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. These make-up opportunities are solely at your instructor's discretion.

Academic Resources:

- Academic Tutoring Services: http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/student-resources/tutoring.php

- Disability Resources: http://studentsuccess.kennesaw.edu/sds/

- Library: http://library.kennesaw.edu/

- Writing Center: http://writingcenter.kennesaw.edu/

Student Support and Wellness Resources:

- Career Services Center: http://careers.kennesaw.edu/

- Counseling and Psychological Services: http://studentsuccess.kennesaw.edu/cps/

- Center for Health, Promotion, & Wellness: http://studentsuccess.kennesaw.edu/wellness/

- Student Health Clinic: http://studenthealth.kennesawstateauxiliary.com/

Advising:

Understand that, ultimately, advising is a student's responsibility. While faculty and advisers are here to assist, course selections are a student's choice. Students are responsible for calculating how their course selections will affect their graduation date. The Registrar's Office is the entity that reviews credits for graduation, and the Registrar's response to a student's Petition for Graduation form is the university's official word on graduation status.

Course Calendar
(Tentative; check D2L often for any changes.)

Unit 1: Theoretical background and Terms	
Week 1.1	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, Ch. 1-"The Connections" (pp. 3-33) -Review syllabus -What is "cultural competence?" -What is "cultural neutrality?" Is this possible? (pp. 18-20)
Week 1.2	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, Ch. 1-"The Connections" (pp. 34-58) -Discuss terms (pp. 54-55) -Practice essay (in-class): Summarize Art Silverblatt's 5 elements of media literacy (p. 34), and explain why this helps in analyzing media texts. *Review study questions on p. 56 for Quiz 1
Week 2.1	Reading: Marx, "American Studies: A Defense of an Unscientific Method" (PDF on D2L) -Discuss practice essays. -How does Marx assert that the image becomes a symbol?
Week 2.2	Reading: Marx, "American Studies: A Defense of an Unscientific Method" (PDF on D2L)-continued -How does one's personal experience influence communication (i.e. interpretation)? -Discuss personal examples where the theories Marx discusses apply in popular media texts.
Week 3.1	Reading: Shank, "The Continuing Embarrassment of Culture: From the Culture Concept to Culture Studies" (PDF on D2L) -In-class, small group exercise: List how British Cultural Studies affected American Studies, as outlined in the reading.

Week 3.2	Reading: McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message (pp. 107-116) (PDF on D2L) -What is meaning-making? -How does the act of meaning-making affect communication? **-Essay 1: What does McLuhan mean when he states that "the medium is the message?" (Due Week 4.1)**
Week 4.1	***Essay 1 due** -Discuss Essay 1 as a class. -Discuss Final Project. -In-class, small group exercise: Quiz 1 review.
Week 4.2	***Quiz 1**
Unit 2: Media Representation and Society	
Week 5.1	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, ch. 6 "Sexual Orientation and the Fabrication of 'Normal'" (pp. 453-481) -How do entertainment media portray LGBTQ characters now v. the 1950s-60s?
Week 5.2	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, ch. 6 "Sexual Orientation and the Fabrication of 'Normal'" (pp. 453-481) - continued -Discuss "hegemony" and "normalcy" (p. 454) -Discuss terms on pp. 476-480. **-Essay 2 (from the reading, #2 on p. 481): What are some examples throughout history of discrimination in laws and policies against people who are or are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered?**
Week 6.1	***Essay 2 due** -Discuss Essay 2 in class. -In-class, small group activity: Discuss study questions from the reading (from p. 481)

Week 6.2	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, ch. 3 - "Is the United States a Classless Society?" (pp. 140-176) -Discuss terms on pp. 221-222. -What is the "American Dream?" (p. 145) -In-class, small group activity: List some ways the "American Dream" has changed over the course of U.S. history, as outlined in the text, paying special attention to the role of capitalism in the gradual development of social classes in America.
Week 7.1	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, ch. 3 - "Is the United States a Classless Society?" (pp. 177-221) -How did the Occupy movement impact media discussions of class/classism (pp. 174-176)? -How is class portrayed in popular entertainment media (p. 179-182)? *Study questions on p. 223 in preparation for the Midterm Exam.
Week 7.2	Reading: Holtzman & Sharpe, ch. 5 - "Stories of Race in Popular Culture" (pp. 309-314) -Discuss terms on pp. 396-398. ***Essay 3: Choose one of the race/ethnicities broken down within the chapter, then answer the 8 questions on p. 311.**
Week 8.1	***Essay 3 due** -Discuss Essay 3 in class. -What is "symbolic annihilation?" -In-class, small group activity: Midterm Exam review (time permitting).
Week 8.2	***Midterm Exam**

Unit 3: The Politics of Media	
Week 9.1	Reading: Melançon, ch.7 - "Leaving Nothing on the Tarmac" from *Politics of Pop Culture* (pp. -) -What does the author define as "true politics" (p. 102)? -How does the author suggest we "displace borders" (i.e. sympathy, dialogue, friendship; [p. 103]).
Week 9.2	Reading: "Introduction" from *Politics of Pop Culture* (pp. 3-18) -How do the authors define "culture?" -In-class, small group activity: Explain in plain terms the definition of culture we discussed: "a boundary marker between different social groups and as a focal point of individual and collective identity."
Week 10.1	Reading: "Introduction" from *Politics of Pop Culture* (pp. 3-18) continued -Small group presentations from Week 9.2-"Culture" definitions. -How did American history shape cultural identities in the U.S.? -How does this impact media production and consumption?
Week 10.2	Reading: Wilton, ch. 1 - "A Very Useful Engine: The Politics of Thomas and Friends" from *Politics of Pop Culture* (pp. 19-33) ***Essay 4: How does "Thomas and Friends" illustrate social hierarchy?**
Week 11.1	***Essay 4 due** Reading: Wilton, ch. 1 - "A Very Useful Engine: The Politics of Thomas and Friends" from *Politics of Pop Culture* (pp. 19-33) continued -Discuss Essay 4 in class.

Week 11.2	Reading: Delwiche & Jacobs Henderson, "What Is Participatory Culture?" (PDF on D2L) -What is participatory culture? -How does symbolic annihilation relate to participatory culture? -How is participatory culture used to bring attention to marginalized groups?
Week 12.1	-In-class, small group activity: Find examples of participatory culture in social media (online) and present to the class. (Ex: Disney princess redux on Pinterest and Tumblr) -Quiz 2 review (time permitting).
Week 12.2	***Quiz 2**
Unit 4: Media, Communication, and Society	
Week 13.1	Reading: Barnlund, "A Transactional Model of Communication (PDF on D2L) -What is the "Transactional Model of Communication?" Is it similar to any other models discussed this semester? -How does Barnlund define "communication?"
Week 13.2	Reading: Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies" (PDF on D2L) -How does the act of assigning meaning affect how one encodes or decodes a message? ***Essay 5: How does personal experience factor into meaning-making/decoding?**

Week 14.1	***Essay 5 due** Reading: Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies" (PDF on D2L) continued -Discuss Essay 5 in class. -In-class small group activity: Discuss ways that encoding a message can affect how a message is decoded. What are some possible outcomes? Can you think of media that may be particularly vulnerable to (mis)interpretation (ex. twitter)?
Week 14.2	Reading: Overmyer, *On the Verge* (pp.1-44) -Class discussion
Week 15.1	Reading: Overmyer, *On the Verge* (pp.44-88) -Class discussion
Week 15.2	Reading: Appler, "The Future and the Commodity: Walter Benjamin and Eric Overmyer's *On the Verge*" (PDF in D2L) -How does Overmyer feel about Benjamin's views? Adorno's views? -What is the Dialectical Image? ***Final Projects due next week**
Week 16.1	***Final Projects due** -In-class, small group activity: present final projects to peers and discuss. -Final Exam review (time permitting).
Week 16.2	***Final Exam**

*Each assessment is cumulative; this is to say that any materials covered in class or in your readings can appear in the quizzes/midterm/final exam.