Life in America during the time period of its involvement in Vietnam was full of stark, almost schizophrenic contrasts. While some people were enjoying unparalleled social, economic, and educational opportunities, other people were being denied these same opportunities—because of their sex, or the color of their skin, or their social and economic positions. While many people were living the good life, other people were living not so well or in abject poverty. And, while many young men (and women) were having the time of their lives in this country, other young men were losing their lives in the jungles of Vietnam—eventually at a rate of over a thousand a month.

Required Texts:


A sturdy folder/binder—to hold your Journal Responses and all the other documents you will produce for this course. Note: Bring the pens, pencils, magic markers, crayons, etc. you like to write with to class so you can use them to write, draw, doodle in class. **Important Note: Save EVERYTHING you generate for this class for your portfolio.

Course Description:

This course is intended to help you develop and strengthen your communication practices and your oral, visual, and written literacy skills. You will make oral presentations (individually and in small groups) that require visual (and aural) support, and you will compose documents that require formatting decisions, to show evidence of your competence with the communication practices that rely on the endless literacies that permeate our public and private lives. Plus, you will find and analyze written documents, speeches, songs, graphics, etc. to determine what kinds of communication media and strategies are—or are not—appropriate and/or effective for different situations. Drawing on your analyses, you will propose and then produce a substantial piece of communication media—an essay, brochure, poster, presentation, report, web site, etc.—that utilizes the skills you develop.

Course Goals:

By the end of this semester, you should have:

Acquired a wide repertoire of oral, written, and visual communication strategies and tools.

Assessed different communicative contexts in order to decide which media, strategies, and tools are appropriate for the situation and audience.

Developed a range of strategies for effectively giving and getting feedback and for assessing your own communicative products.

Learned to make explicit and question the cultural, temporal, and personal assumptions that underlie communication practices.
Course Grading:

Participation: 50%

Participation means reading the assigned readings and writing responses to them, coming to class prepared, being an active group member, and contributing to class discussions. Note: Bring your journal responses to class every day. Attendance is essential because more than a few absences will affect your final grade. A lot of work is going to be done in class during class discussions. If you can not make it to class, please notify me -- before class if possible. If you miss a class, you are responsible for making up the missed work.

All major assignments (which are underlined) are due as listed on the syllabus. All major assignments that are turned in late will affect your final grade in this course. **Note: You must complete ALL required assignments to receive a passing grade in this class.

Written Work and Oral and Visual Presentations: 50%

This portion of your grade will be based on ALL of the written or oral assignments listed under Course Requirements. I will discuss my grading policy in detail in class.

Note: Write a Journal Responses for EVERY reading assignment, EVERY class discussion, and EVERY video or movie shown in class. (When in doubt, write.) In these responses, REFLECT ON and DISCUSS the assignment(s). This means you must write more than a summary of assignment, class discussion, or video or movie. (Send me an email as soon as possible after you finishing reading this sentence stating that you reached this point in this syllabus.) Hand in your Journal Responses during the next class period (even if I forget to ask for them), and I will read and evaluate them, and return them to you during the next class period if possible. Responses can be either typed or handwritten -- if hand-written, please make them legible. I will accept late Journal Responses up until two weeks after they were due.

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and/or course schedule to better serve the needs of the students and the course.

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action office (3310).