Media Industries

HU 3882, Fall 2011
Michigan Technological University
Tues/Thurs 12:35-1:50 p.m.
Walker Arts 109

Dr. Sue Collins
Humanities Department
Office: Walker Arts 341
Voicemail: x73260
Office hours: Thurs 2-3 p.m. & by appt.
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Course Description

This course offers a critical survey of key issues and debates concerning the political economy of U.S. media organizations and their practices. We will explore the historical, regulatory, and economic contexts of their operations, highlighting contemporary issues of media convergence, conglomeration, ownership, regulation, and policy. The course content will focus on major sectors of media, such as print journalism, film, broadcasting, music, and digital technologies. It will consider the contemporary moment of industry practices (production, distribution, labor, technological innovation) and how these intersect with political, social, and cultural issues. The course will also cover the historical roots that give rise to the interests and arguments involved in media policy and the shifting political landscape influenced by media consolidation.

Why take this class? The media industries are pervasive forces in contemporary life. Industry economics and policy-making have important consequences for how news and entertainment function within the systems of commerce, governance, and social life. A critical evaluation of the workings of the media industries allows us to assess their value to the public interest and participatory democracy. Students interested in communication and media studies will develop proficiency in understanding critical perspectives on the media industries, as well as industry-generated documents in order to conduct research and to assess research claims and findings. Students will work individually and in groups on several research exercises, as well as in groups for a final research project on one sector of the media industry.

Required Texts:

On-line Resources:
Blackboard: Additional reading will be posted on BB. (If you print these out, please do so with a double-sided printer.) All written assignments will be uploaded onto BB.
Course website: suewcollins.com; “Media Industries”
Requirements and Grading

20% Attendance and participation:
You are expected to arrive on time, having read the week’s assigned readings, and prepared to participate in discussions and exercises, so please bring the readings to class. This grade will be evaluated, in part, on the basis of how often you ask and answer questions, make relevant comments, and contribute to class discussion in a regular and meaningful way. More than two absences will affect your final grade. If you have eight absences or more you will NOT receive a passing grade. Please be aware that absences are not an acceptable excuse for not having done the required work. You are expected to find out what you missed from a classmate in the event that you are absent. If you have a special problem with attendance, please bring it to my attention as soon as possible.

It is important to me that you demonstrate your commitment to participation in this class by arriving on time. I consider it a significant distraction for students to enter and exit at times other than the designated start and finish of the class. Your cooperation is appreciated.

****Note: All students are required to bring the week’s current readings to class as part of their participation in the course.

10% Industry news reports (two presentations -5 pts each)

35% Assignment/exercises:
- Blog review (5 pts)
- Historical research (2 pts)
- Moving image archives (3 pts)
- Interactive industrial model (5 pts)
- Issue brief (10 pts)
- Failed production (5 pts)
- Creative labor profile (5 pts)

20% Quizzes (4 in-class quizzes)

15% Final group project (and web presentation to class)

****Note: Students are expected to complete all the work for this class, but at a minimum, each 5 point and higher assignment (including group project) must be completed to receive a passing grade in this class.

Evaluation Standards and Policies:

A = Excellent. Work is outstanding work in all respects. This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary and analysis. Writing demonstrates impressive understanding of readings, discussions, themes and ideas. Includes skillful and precise use of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, and fluent expression, which is well organized and grammatically polished.

B = Good. This work demonstrates a thorough and accurate understanding of course material, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. Written work reflects competence, but is
somewhat general or a bit vague, or otherwise lacking in precision, and stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Although analytical, writing presents more description than analysis. Arguments are solid but not thoroughly original or polished. Source materials, examples, illustrations are used appropriately and articulation/writing is clear. Papers have been carefully proofread.

C = Adequate/fair. This work demonstrates somewhat fragmented understanding of readings, discussions, themes and ideas. Shows acquaintance with reading and ideas, but not intellectual engagement. Written work is choppy and arguments somewhat difficult to follow, examples are vague or irrelevant, and ideas are imprecise. Source materials may be used inadequately or inappropriately, and arguments lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations, are incomplete or expressing some significant errors or weaknesses. Writing/articulation veers toward underdeveloped ideas, off-topic sources or examples, personal anecdotes, creative writing etc., or may be loaded with typos and other technical errors.

D = Unsatisfactory. This work demonstrates a serious lack or error in understanding, and fails to express acquaintance with readings, discussions, themes, and ideas, in short, the most rudimentary aspects of the course. Written work is choppy, fractured and unclear. Arguments follow little logical development, or work presents little discernable argument whatsoever. Sources may be used entirely inappropriately or not at all, and writing/articulation appears deficient.

F = Failed/Unacceptable. This work does not demonstrate understanding of topics, ideas, and readings. This also includes the grade for work not submitted or attempted, or work that has been plagiarized.

**For your research paper, please follow this format: in the upper left corner, include your name, course name, date, and assignment heading or paper title (no title pages). Type all work, double space, number all pages using a header in the upper right hand corner, and STAPLE multiple pages (no paper clips, please). Follow a formal style manual for guidelines on citations, quotations, bibliography, etc. Make sure you edit/proofread your paper before submitting. Your grade will partly be based on your ability to follow the norms and conventions of writing using Standard English styles and conventions. Also please see the forthcoming handout: “Content, Style & Form.”

Recommended style manuals:


**LATE ASSIGNMENTS are subject to a drop in a letter grade, unless approved by me.

**PLAGIARISM is not tolerated and will result in failing the assignment and possibly the course.

Here is how the University defines plagiarism:

*Plagiarism:* Knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation. This includes but is not limited to reading or hearing another's work or ideas and using them as one's own; quoting, paraphrasing, or condensing another's work without giving proper credit; purchasing or receiving another's work and using, handling, or submitting it as one's own work.

Please note that all materials used in the construction of your written work (notes, outlines, rough drafts, etc.) should be saved until you have received a passing grade from me.
University Policies:
Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance with the University's policies. For more information on this serious breach of conduct, see:
http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:
Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310.

For more information on these policies, see:
Affirmative Action:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aoa/
Disability Services:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability
Equal Opportunity Statement:

Course Schedule (subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read (due by this date)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) T August 30</td>
<td>Introduction/course overview</td>
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2) TR Sept 1 **Media Industries as a field of study**
H&O: Introduction: (start with “The Genesis of the Media Industries”) pp. 3-12

3) T Sept 6 **Historical context: film**
Kindem, “Hollywood’s Star System: A Historical Overview” BB
H&O: chpt 3 Schatz, “Film Industry Studies and Hollywood History”

4) TR Sept 8 **Historical context: broadcasting**
Streeter: “A Revisionist History of Broadcasting, 1900-1934” BB

5) T Sept 13 H&O: chpt 4, Johnson: “Historicizing TV Networking: Broadcasting, Cable, and the Case of ESPN”

6) TR Sept 15 H&O: chpt 5, Meyers, “From Sponsorship to Spots: Advertising and the Development of Electronic Media”

7) T Sept 20 **New media, new models**
H&P: chpt 6, Marshall, “New Media as Transformed Media Industry”

****QUIZ 1****

8) TR Sept 22  Understanding media industries today  
H&L: chpt 1, “Key Concepts in Media Industry Studies”

9) T Sept 27  Structures in ownership  
H&L: chpt 2, “Media Industry Mandates”

10) TR Sept 29  Media industries and technology  
H&L: chpt 3, “Technological Conditions of the Media Industries”

11) T Oct 4  Regulation and strategies  
H&L: chpt 4, “Regulation of the Media Industries”

12) TR Oct 6  Why media markets are different  
McChesney: “The Market Uber Alles” BB

13) T Oct 11  Conditions of production  
H&L: chpt 5, “Economic Conditions in Media Production”

****QUIZ 2****

14) TR Oct 13  Labor processes and production culture  
H&L: chpt 6, “Creative Practices and Roles Involved in Making Media”  
Christopherson, “Labor: The Effects of Media Concentration on the Film and Television Workforce” BB


16) TR Oct 20  H&P: chpt 11, Deuze, “Convergence Culture and Media Work”  
Davis: “New Firms in Screen-Based Media Industries” BB

(Oct. 21 is the last day to withdraw with a “W” on transcripts)


18) TR Oct 27  Distribution and audience measurement/participation  
H&L: chpt 7, “Distribution and Exhibition Practices”  
H&L: chpt 8, “Auxiliary Practices”

19) T Nov 1  H&P: chpt 12, Napoli, “Media Economics and the Study of Media Industries”

****QUIZ 3****

21) T Nov 8  **Forces of change**
   H&L: chpt 9, “Growth of the Symbolic Economy”
   Stokes: “Researching Media Industries and the Culture Industries” BB

22) TR Nov 10  H&L: chpt 10, “Digitization”
   Goldsmith & Wu, “The Filesharing Movement” BB

23) T Nov 15s  H&L: chpt 11, “Globalization”
   H&P: chpt 8, Curtain, “Thinking Globally: From Media Imperialism to Media Capital”

24) TR Nov 17  H&P: chpt 17, Hartley, “From the Consciousness Industry to the Creative Industries: Consumer-Created Content, Social Network markets, and the Growth of Knowledge

Nov 21-25  Thanksgiving Holiday --- enjoy!


   ******QUIZ 4****

26) TR Dec 1  Group Projects

27) T Dec 6  Group Projects

28) TR Dec 8  Group Projects