

## SPC 424 Special Topics in Media Criticism

### Credit Hours: 3

In-Class Instructional Hours: 3

Labs: 0

Field Work: 0

### Catalog Description:

Prerequisite. Junior or Senior Standing

Critical analysis of mass media, including print, broadcast and digital; focus on the role of media in a particular context (such as electoral politics or war).

### Reasons for Revision:

(Fall 2005) This course (formerly JBS 424, Media Criticism and the Vietnam War, revised in 1987) combines its predecessor, along with COM 425 Media Criticism and Presidential Campaigns (revised in 1993) into a single course with different topical possibilities. This revision allows the Communication Department to respond to contemporary issues by focusing on media criticism in various contexts: war, politics, natural disaster, and so on. This proposal is part of a general program review, through which Communication seeks to update its courses in light of departmental experience with the previous program version, evolving departmental needs, and expanding scholarship in the field. Additionally, the department is undertaking this revision to position itself for accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Note: As part of this overall revision, speech and criticism courses are being re-labeled as SPC rather than COM to distinguish between the humanistic base of the new SPC courses and the applied nature of the courses that will retain the COM prefix.

<b>Student Learning Outcomes:</b>	<b>Course Content References:</b>	<b>Assessment:</b>
Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:  1. Articulate the critical perspective and persuasive impact of mass-mediated messages in a particular context such as war or electoral campaigns	I, II	1. Exams, papers, applied projects, presentations
2. Demonstrate familiarity with contemporary literature in mass media criticism in a particular context	I, II, III, IV	2. Exams, papers, applied projects, presentations
3. Explain key theoretical and critical approaches to mass media messages in a particular context	I, II	3. Exams, papers, applied projects, presentations
4. Demonstrate a critical perspective and analytical approach in evaluating mass media artifacts and messages in a particular context	I, II, III, IV	4. Exams, papers, applied projects, presentations
5. Critically analyze media presentations in a particular context	I, II, III, IV	5. Exams, papers, applied projects, presentations

**Course Content:**

- I. Theoretical premises
  - A. Role of media in democratic society
  - B. Characteristics of media criticism
  - C. Contemporary theories and principles of media communication
- II. Rhetorical perspective
  - A. Traditional approach
  - B. Contemporary approaches
- III. Media criticism
  - A. Critical-analytical framework of media criticism
  - B. Qualitative methods of research and analysis
  - C. Quantitative methods of research and analysis
- IV. Media artifacts
  - A. News and public events programming
  - B. Information media (i.e. documentaries and talk TV/radio)
  - C. Entertainment media (i.e. film and television)
  - D. Specialized media (i.e. organizational media and editorial cartoons)
- V. Media v/v military (topical example)
  - A. Media and government
  - B. Media and military conflict
  - C. Media and anti-war protests
- VI. Media v/v politics (topical example)
  - A. Media and government
  - B. Media and electoral process
  - C. Media and political parties
- VII. Media v/v natural disaster (topical example)
  - A. Media and preparation for natural disaster (tsunami, hurricane, flood, wildfire)
  - B. Media and emergency response
  - C. Media and analysis/aftermath of natural disaster

## **Resources:**

### Current Scholarship in the Field

#### Media Analysis Focus

- Asa, A., & Berger, E. (2004). *Media analysis techniques* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
- Bagdikian, B.J. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon.
- Bignell, J. (2002). *Media semiotics: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Manchester UK: Manchester University Press.
- Brock, D. (2004). *Misstating the state of the union: Right-wing media distortions about the Clinton and Bush presidencies*. New York: Akashic.
- Orlik, P.B. (2000). *Electronic media criticism: Applied perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahway NH: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.

#### Media and Politics Focus

- Alterman, E. (2004). *What liberal media? The truth about bias and the news*. New York: Basic [Reprint].
- Graber, D.A. (2002). *Mass media and American politics*. Washington: CQ Press.
- Leighley, J.E. (2002). *Mass media and politics: A social science perspective*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- McChesney, R. (2004). *The problem of the media: U.S. communication politics in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Monthly Review.
- McChesney, R., & Scott, B. (2004). *Our unfree press: 100 years of radical media criticism*. New York: New Press.
- Parry-Giles, T., & Parry-Giles, S.J. (2005). *The prime-time presidency: The West Wing and U.S. nationalism*. Champaign IL: University of Illinois.
- Sabato, L.J., Stencel, M., & Lichter, S.R. (2001). *Peepshow: Media and politics in an age of scandal*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Street, J. (2001). *Mass media, politics, and democracy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Basingstoke UK: Palgrave.

#### Media and War Focus

- Hess, S., & Kalb, M.L. (2004). *Media and the war on terrorism*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- Katovsky, B., & Carlson, T., (2004). *Embedding: The media at war in Iraq*. Guilford DE: Lyons.
- Palmer, N. (ed.). (2004). *Terrorism, war and the press*. Cambridge MA: Harvard/Joan Shorenstein Center.
- Seib, P. (2004). *Beyond the front lines: How the news media cover a world shaped by war*. Basingstoke UK: Palgrave.
- Seib, P. (2004). *Beyond the front lines: How the news media cover a world shaped by war*. Basingstoke UK: Palgrave.

Street, J. (2001). *Mass media, politics, and democracy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Basingstoke UK: Palgrave.

Western, J. (2005). *Selling intervention and war: The presidency, the media, and the American public*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

#### Media and Natural Disaster Focus

Alexander, D. (2000). *Confronting catastrophe: New perspectives on natural disasters*. New York: Oxford USA.

Frye, K. (2003). *Constructing the heartland: Television news and natural disaster*. Creskill NJ: Hampton.

Platt, R.H. (Ed.). (2000). *Disasters and democracy: The politics of extreme natural events*. Washington DC: Island Press.

#### Periodicals

Communication Quarterly

Critical Studies in Mass Communication

Journal of Applied Communication Research

Journalism of Broadcasting and Electronic Media

Journal of Communication