

Sam Houston State University
Department of Mass Communication

MCM 466: Changing Roles of Mass Media (3 credits)
Fall Semester 2009

- Lecturer:** Dr. Marc Edge e-mail: mwe003@shsu.edu
- Office:** 308B Rather phone: 294-4445
- Office Hours:** MW 2-3 p.m. TTh 1-2 p.m. or by appointment
- Class Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00-4:20 p.m. **Location:** 125 Rather
- Prerequisite:** Junior standing
- Description:** A study of the trends, people, and economic, social, political and technological factors that produced the institutions and traditions of the American mass media. Emphasis is placed on the changing roles of media and the impact of new communications technologies in the 21st century.
- Objective:** To gain factual knowledge, learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories, gain a broader understanding and appreciation, and develop a clearer understanding of the changing roles of mass media.
- Method:** Instruction will include lectures, presentations, class discussion, screening and discussion of videos, and assigned readings.
- Assessment:** Exams and quizzes may include true/false and multiple choice questions. Exams may also include short answer and essay questions. A term paper written in scholarly style will research a subject of particular interest to the student.
- Grading:**
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| Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Quizzes | 20% |
| Term paper | 20% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
- Texts:** Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier than the sword: How the news media have shaped American history*. 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), 2007.
- Neil Postman, *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. (New York: Penguin), 1985.
- Readings:** Supplemental readings will be posted on Blackboard or available online.
- Midterm:** The midterm exam will be held on Oct. 14.
- Final Exam:** The take-home final exam will be distributed on Dec. 9.

Attendance: Attendance and participation are mandatory and will be used as the deciding factor in grading. Students who do not provide a valid reason in advance for any unavoidable absence will not be allowed to make up any quiz or exam missed. Students with more than three unexcused absences will have their final percentage lowered by 1% for each additional absence.

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Note: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center . For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

Schedule of Classes

Week 1		Readings
Aug. 24	Introduction	
Aug. 26	Video: <i>Buying the War</i>	Gore, Bamford
Week 2		
Aug. 31	Newspapers and the Public Sphere	Postman, Ch. 1
Sept. 2	The Power of the Press	Streitmatter, Ch. 1-2
Week 3		
Sept. 7	No class – Labor Day	
Sept. 9	Understanding Media	Postman, Ch. 2
Week 4		
Sept. 14	The Penny Press: Economics of News	Postman, Ch. 3
Sept. 16	The Professionalization of Journalism	Schudson
Week 5		
Sept. 21	The Telegraph: News at the Speed of Light	Postman, Ch. 4
Sept. 23	Photojournalism: How the Other Half Lives	Streitmatter, Ch. 3-4
Week 6		
Sept. 28	From Politics to Profit: Selling Ads	Postman, Ch. 5
Sept. 30	The Golden Age of Yellow Journalism	Streitmatter, Ch. 5
Week 7		
Oct. 5	The Magazine Revolution	Streitmatter, Ch. 6-7
Oct. 7	Propaganda: Selling the War (again)	Lippmann
Week 8		
Oct. 12	The Rise of Public Relations	Lieberman
Oct. 14	Midterm exam	

Week 9

Oct. 19 Film: The Power of Moving Images

Oct. 21 Video: *Birth of a Nation*

Week 10

Oct. 26 Radio: News As It Happens Streitmatter, Ch. 8

Oct. 28 Video: TBA Streitmatter, Ch. 9

Week 11

Nov. 2 Television: The Most Powerful Of All Postman, Ch. 6-7

Nov. 4 Video: *Good Night and Good Luck* Streitmatter, Ch. 10

Week 12

Nov. 9 TV News: From Social Change to Social Control Postman, Ch. 8-9

Nov. 11 Video: *JFK: Breaking the News* Streitmatter, Ch. 11-12

Week 13

Nov. 16 Investigative Reporting: Watergate Streitmatter, Ch. 13

Nov. 18 Video: *All the President's Men* Postman, Ch. 10-11

Week 14

Nov. 23 Talk Radio: Galvanizing the Right Streitmatter, Ch. 14

Nov. 25 No class – Thanksgiving

Week 15

Nov. 30 The Internet: To Infinity and Beyond Lemann, Gunther

Dec. 2 The Rise of the Blogosphere Lyons, Eaves & Owen

Week 16

Dec. 7 9/11: Failing the American Public? Streitmatter, Ch. 15

Dec. 9 Review Streitmatter, Ch. 16

Supplemental readings

Aug. 26

Al Gore, "Introduction," in *The Assault on Reason*. (New York: Penguin), 2007. Available online at: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1622015,00.html>

James Bamford, "The Man Who Sold the War," *Rolling Stone*, Nov. 17, 2005, Available online at: http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/8798997/the_man_who_sold_the_war/

Sept. 16

Michael Schudson, "Question authority: A history of the news interview in American journalism, 1860s-1930s," *Media, Culture & Society*, October 1994. Available on Blackboard.

Oct. 7

Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the news*, Chapter 1. Available on Blackboard.

Oct. 12

Trudy Lieberman, "'Answer the &\$%#* Question!'" *Columbia Journalism Review*, January/February 2004. Available on Blackboard.

Nov. 30

Nicholas Lemann, "Amateur Hour: Journalism without journalists," *New Yorker*, August 7, 2006. Available online at http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/08/07/060807fa_fact1

Marc Gunther, "Can the Washington Post survive?" *Fortune*, August 6, 2007. Available online at http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2007/08/06/100141340/index.htm

Dec. 2

Daniel Lyons, "Attack of the Blogs," *Forbes*, November 14, 2005. Available online at <http://members.forbes.com/forbes/2005/1114/128.html>

David Eaves and Taylor Owen, "Blogosphere at age 10 is improving journalism," *Toronto Star*, July 30, 2007. Available online at <http://www.thestar.com/comment/article/241165>