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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COMM 326 - Spring 2005

Course Description:

This course examines the structures, practices and functions of the mass media in society, based on critical approaches. This semester, the course focuses on journalism and on how news reports play an important symbolic role by reinforcing or altering public perceptions of ideas, events, and people. After an introduction to news values and practices, the course discusses critical perspectives on the news media, including semiotics, political economy, framing analysis, and organizational approaches. The course then investigates the representations of African Americans in the news media and how these representations shape audiences' attitudes on race. Finally, several contemporary and critical issues will be introduced, including public journalism, Latino news, feminist perspectives, as well as the relationship between news, war, and terrorism. One of the main purposes of the course is to provide methodological and analytical tools for a critical understanding of newsmaking processes and institutions.

Textbooks:

- Howard Tumber (ed.), *News: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Both books will be available through Tulane Bookstore.

Required texts:

Besides the textbooks, we will work with several articles and book chapters which will be available online at *Electronic Reserves* (E-Res: <<http://eres.library.tulane.edu/>>) and as a packet at the Department of Communication. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the classes for which they are listed in the syllabus and student should bring the texts and/or their notes to class to enhance their participation in the discussions.

Blackboard:

Blackboard will be used for this course for posting announcements, assignments, grades and other information. The system can be assessed at: <<http://blackboard.tulane.edu/>>. If you have problems using the system, you can call the help desk: 862.8888.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is required and attendance will be taken in every class meeting. You can miss three class sessions without penalty in your participation grade. Seven absences will result in notification of the Dean's office. Unexcused absences after notification will result in the final grade recommendation of a "WF" to the Dean.

Evaluation:

Your course grade will be based on the following:

- a) Midterm: It will consist of an in-class exam covering Parts I and II of the syllabus;
- b) Assignments: Students will develop two projects for the analysis of news media texts. One will focus on the semiotic method and the second will apply content analysis. Detailed instructions for both assignments will be provided later on;
- c) Participation: It is very important that students complete all the assigned readings before each session. The course will adopt a seminar format, meaning that I expect students to participate in class discussions. You should prepare at least two questions about the assigned readings and bring them to class. I will call students and ask for their questions and comments on the readings;
- d) Final: The final exam will be an in-class exam. It will require good command of all course contents, but will focus on Parts III and IV of the syllabus.

Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm Exam	- 30%	Participation	- 15%
Final Exam	- 30%	Assignments	- 25%

Grading scale:

A+	97.0 to 100.0	B+	87.0 to 89.9	C+	77.0 to 79.9	D+	67.0 to 69.9
A	94.0 to 96.9	B	84.0 to 86.9	C	74.0 to 76.9	D	64.0 to 66.9
A-	90.0 to 93.9	B-	80.0 to 83.9	C-	70.0 to 73.9	D-	60.0 to 63.9
						F	00.0 to 59.9

Academic dishonesty:

Remember that plagiarism is a form of cheating. Do not present someone else's ideas as yours, without citing the source. Buying or finding papers on similar topics of the course in the Internet is a form of plagiarism. Also remember that turning in the same paper for credit in two courses is a violation of scholarly ethics. This course adheres strictly to the Tulane Honor Code, available at: <<http://www.tulane.edu/~uc/honorcode.htm>>

Course Schedule:

PART I
INTRODUCTION TO NEWS AND NEWSMAKING

Jan 11 - Introduction to the procedures and contents of the course

(No readings)

Jan 13 – Definitions of News

- * Walter Lippmann, "Public opinion", *News*, pp. 5-10.
- * Robert Park, "News as a form of knowledge", *News*, pp. 11-15.
- * Daniel Boorstin, "The image", *News*, pp. 16-20.

Jan 18 – Objectivity and professionalism

- * Michael Schudson, "Discovering the news", *News*, pp. 287-296.
- * Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as strategic ritual", *News*, pp. 297-307.
- * John Soloski, "News reporting and professionalism", *News*, pp. 308-319.

Jan 20 – Introduction to newsmaking

- * Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, “The structure of foreign news”, *News*, pp. 21-31
- * Bernard Roshco, “Newsmaking”, *News*, pp. 32-36
- * Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, “News as purposive behavior”, *News*, pp. 37-48.

Jan 25 – Gatekeeping

- * David White, “The ‘Gatekeeper’”, *News*, pp. 66-72.
- * Pamela Schoemaker, “Gatekeeping”, *News*, pp. 73-78.
- * Warren Breed, “Social control in the newsroom”, *News*, pp. 79-84.
- * Walter Gieber, “News is what newspapermen make it”, *News*, pp. 218-223.

PART II
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN NEWS ANALYSIS

Jan 27 – The semiotic method

- * Jonathan Biegnell, *Media Semiotics: An introduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997 (chapter 1, “Signs and myths”, pp. 5-29).

Feb 1 – The semiotic method applied to news

- * Jonathan Biegnell, *Media Semiotics* (chapter 4, “Newspapers”, pp. 81-108).

Feb 3 - Who owns the news media? The political economy perspective

- * Ben Bagdikian, “The media monopoly”, *News*, pp. 148-154.
- * Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, “Culture, communications, and political economy”, *News*, pp.155-165.
- * John McManus, “Market driven journalism: Let the citizen beware”, *News*, pp. 180-190.

Feb 8 - No class (Mardi Gras Break)**Feb 10 – Hegemony and Framing: from Vietnam to El Salvador**

- * Todd Giltin, “The whole world if watching”, *News*, pp. 267-279.
- * Daniel Hallin, “From Vietnam to El Salvador: hegemony and ideological change”, in D. Hallin, *We Keep American on Top of the World*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 58-86.

Feb 15 – Alternative journalism: the case of Radio Venceremos from El Salvador

- Screening of the documentary “Taking by the Sky by Storm” and debate with Santiago, founder of *Radio Venceremos*.
- * Radio Netherlands, “Where are the rebels now?”.
 - * Larry Rohter, “Fearless rebels of the airwaves surrender to pop”, *New York Times*, 5/26/95.

Feb 17 – The propaganda model

- * Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, “Manufacturing consent”, *News*, pp. 166-179.

Feb 22 – The organizational approach

- * Mark Fishman, “Manufacturing the news”, *News*, pp. 102-111.
- * Herbert Gans, “Deciding what’s news”, *News*, pp. 235-248.

Feb 24 - News sources and ideology

- * Leon Sigal, “Reporters and officials: the organization and politics of newsmaking”, *News*, pp. 224-234.
- * Stuart Hall et al., “Policing the crisis”, *News*, pp. 249-256.
- * Richard Ericson et al., “Negotiating control: a study of news sources”, *News*, pp. 280-284.

March 1 – The method of content analysis

- * Anders Hansen et al., *Mass Communication Research Methods*. New York: New York University Press, 1998 (Chapter 5, “Content Analysis”, and chapter 8 “Analyzing Visuals”).

March 3 - MIDTERM EXAM

PART III

NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

March 8 – Screening of the documentary “The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords”.**March 10 - The black press**

- * Charles Simmons, *The African American Press*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998 (chapters 1-3, pp. 9-50)

March 15 – Racial attitudes and the media

- * Entman and Rojecki, chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-45.

March 17 – Black representations in network news

- * Entman and Rojecki, chapters 3 and 4, pp. 46-77.

March 22 and 24 – No class (Spring break)**March 29 – Race and news coverage of crime and poverty**

- * Entman and Rojecki, chapters 5 and 6, pp. 78-106.

March 31 – News representations of affirmative action and of black leaders

- * Entman and Rojecki, chapters 7 and 8, pp. 107-143.

April 5 – Media representations of African Americans: conclusions

- * Entman and Rojecki, chapter 12, pp. 205-225.

PART IV
CONTEMPORARY AND CRITICAL ISSUES

April 7 – The public journalism movement

- * Davis Merrit, “Public journalism and public life: why telling the news is not enough”, *News*, pp. 365-378.
- * Michael Schudson, “What public journalism knows about journalism but doesn’t know about ‘public’”, in T. Glasser (ed.), *The Idea of Public Journalism*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1999, pp. 118-133.

April 12 – Latino television news

- * América Rodriguez, *Making Latino News*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999 (chapter 5, “Nationhood, nationalism, and ethnicity in the making of U.S. Latino news”, pp. 75-106).

April 14 – Feminist perspectives on journalism

- * Lisbet van Zoonen, “A tyranny of intimacy? Women, femininity and television news”, in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds.), *Communication and Citizenship*. London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 217-235.

April 19 - Globalization

- * Jeremy Tunstall, “World news duopoly”, *News*, pp.191-200.
- * Robert Picard, “Global communications controversies”, *News*, pp. 355-364.
- * Jo Bardoel, “Beyond journalism: a profession between information society and civil society”, *News*, pp. 379-391.

April 21 – News and war

- * Daniel Hallin, “The ‘uncensored’ war: the media and Vietnam”, *News*, pp. 329-339.
- * Barbie Zelizer, “CNN, the Gulf War, and journalistic practice”, *News*, pp. 340-354.

April 26 - Journalism after September 11

- * Michael Schudson, “What’s unusual about covering politics as usual”; and
- * Silvio Waisbord, “Journalism, risk, and patriotism”. Both in Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan (eds.), *Journalism after September 11*. London: Routledge, 2002.

April 28 - Conclusions and course evaluation

FINAL EXAM:

COMM 326-01 (3:00-4:15 p.m.): Monday, May 9, 10:00 a.m. – noon.

COMM 326-02 (4:30-5:45 p.m.): Friday, May 6, 10:00 a.m. – noon.