

Critical Media Studies

Tuesdays, 11a-1p; Thursdays, 12-2p

Location: AC223



INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Sarah Lynn KleeB, PhD

Office: HW414

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10-11am; Thursdays 10am-12pm, or by appointment

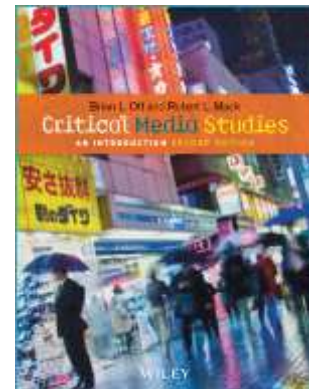
Email: sarah.kleeB@mail.utoronto.ca

REQUIRED TEXT

Ott, B.L. & Mack, R.L. (2013). *Critical Media Studies: An introduction* (2nd ed.) Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

“The centrality of the media, all media, to human experience—from the conduct of everyday life, to the exercise of power, to the creation of culture—is inescapable.”

~ Roger Silverstone



The textbook is available in the UTSC bookstore. Additional articles will be available through Blackboard (PDFs or links) or online via the University of Toronto Library website.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Media is ubiquitous in contemporary society. Every aspect of human experience—the personal, social, economic, political, cultural, moral and aesthetic—is mediated, and the distinction between everyday reality and media reality is becoming increasingly blurred for many. The institutions that produce, control, and disseminate media texts and images operate as “consciousness industries” that influence how we understand ourselves and the world around us.

Simultaneously, new forms of media made possible by digital technologies are in the process of destabilizing these very institutions and understandings. As a result of its centrality, the study of media is a key topic of research in the humanities and the humanistic social sciences. This course provides a broad overview of media studies and offers theoretical and critical thinking tools to examine what it means to live in a highly-mediated, media-focused visual culture.

The primary learning objective of MDSA01 is to increase students' media literacy skills, and in this class we will critically evaluate the form and content of media, including the visual, and analyze their underlying ideologies and implications within social, cultural, political and economic realms. We will study media through a variety of theoretical frames, and students will learn how to apply these frames to analyze and make arguments about specific media artifacts, including textual and visual forms.

CRITICAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: 20% OF FINAL MARK, DUE JUNE 8, 2018

Synopsis: For this assignment, you will **select ONE mass mediated text** (i.e., film, television show/episode, advertisement, video game, song, literary work, magazine, newspaper, internet site, etc.), research it, and write a **four-page critical analysis** of the text that utilizes **one of the 12 theoretical perspectives** explored in class (Marxist, organizational, pragmatic, rhetorical, cultural, psychoanalytic, feminist, queer, reception, sociological, erotic, or ecological). Your chosen media artifact should be **no more than 2 years old** (e.g., no earlier than 2016).

A detailed guide to this assignment can be found on the course website via Blackboard. You will submit this essay online via Blackboard by midnight on the due date. Please upload your essay (file name format: LastName, FirstInitial, StudentNumber, CourseCode, EssayTitle) in one of the following formats: **.doc, .docx, or .pdf.**

Late Penalty: The essay is due by midnight on **June 8, 2018**. Late work will *only be accepted (without penalty) with a documented excuse*, and details regarding possible extensions and methods of submission for late work should be discussed with your Instructor or TA. Please note that being "too busy" is not a valid excuse for late work – all students carry a heavy workload, so unless your circumstances are truly unique and verified, you are expected to submit work on the due date. Late submissions without documentation will result in the following loss of points: 10% + 1 point per day. **Late assignments without appropriate documentation will NOT be accepted after one week.**

Note that the last day to submit any and all term assignments is June 18, 2018, per UTSC's sessional dates, available online. No work will be accepted after this date.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, as do your Instructor and TAs. As such, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy in cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. *All violations of the standards of academic integrity will be reported to the necessary university officials.* Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments: Using someone else's ideas or words (via direct quotes, paraphrases, and summarizations) without appropriate acknowledgement. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the Instructor. Making up sources or facts. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment, including copying and/or modifying the work of your peers.

On tests and exams: Using or possessing unauthorized aids. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work: Falsifying institutional documents or grades. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

ADDITIONAL METHODS OF EVALUATION

Along with the critical essay assignment, your progress will be evaluated through two exams:

1. Midterm (Chapters 1-6): 40% of final mark
2. Final exam (Chapters 7-14): 40% of final mark

The exams will cover material from course readings and lectures and will be comprised of multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, and matching type questions (Scantron). The midterm will be held in class on May 29th, and the final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar.

WRITING RESOURCES

Advice on Academic Writing: <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/advice>

"How Not to Plagiarize": <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Information Regarding Academic Integrity:
<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/academic-integrity>

Style and Methods of Citation: Please use only the APA 6th edition citation format. A detailed overview of APA style and citation can be found here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

UTSC Writing Centre: The University of Toronto has a variety of sources of help for essay writing. If you have any concerns about the construction of your essay, I encourage you to attend sessions the UTSC Writing Centre. You can make a meeting to see a writing advisor or you can utilize their drop-in hours. **You can go to them at any stage in your writing process – whether you have a full draft or are just in the process of trying to figure out a thesis, or if you are somewhere in between, you are welcome to go in for advising.** See their website for more information:

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>

English Language Development Centre (ELDC): The ELDC at UTSC offers constructive and comprehensive assistance to native and non-native English speakers through the Reading and Writing through Email (RWE) program, Communication Café, and Fast-Track Your Academic Writing Skills Development (the Fast-Track session are held at multiple times throughout the first two weeks of term). RWE has proven to be very effective for many students in addressing their academic reading and writing needs. See their website for more information: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

LECTURE NOTES POLICY

Students are responsible for taking and keeping track of their own notes. If you miss a day of class, you are advised to request a copy of notes from your peers; one way to do this is to post on the Discussion Board available on Blackboard. The lecture slides for the course will be provided on Blackboard, but these are minimal, and **are not a viable substitute for attending lecture.**

A request for volunteer note takers for students registered with AccessAbility Services will be made at the beginning of the term. Students requiring this accommodation should discuss the process of retrieving notes with the staff in the AccessAbility office.

ACCESSIBLE LEARNING

Students requiring accommodations due to a disability, health-related issue, or unique learning style are welcome in this course. Both your Instructor and the University of Toronto are committed to accessibility. I have worked extensively with Accessibility Services at UTSC, and I am committed to helping all students achieve their academic goals. All enquiries will remain strictly confidential. If you require accommodations, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please let me know as soon as possible and contact Accessibility Services in room S302, or at: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/>.

CONTENT NOTE

As a course in Media Studies, we will – of course! – be engaging a variety of media examples and artifacts. At times, **this may include potentially disturbing materials, including coarse language/profanity, violence, brief nudity, and/or other “R-rated” materials.** While such items will not be used gratuitously, and while every effort will be made to provide advance notice of such materials, students must be prepared to engage and analyze potentially challenging materials, images, videos, and/or texts in this course.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO GRADING CRITERIA

Percentage	Letter Grade	Point Value	Definition	
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-89	A	4.0		
80-84	A-	3.7		
77-79	B+	3.3	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature
73-76	B	3.0		
70-72	B-	2.7		
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
63-66	C	2.0		
60-62	C-	1.7		
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal	Some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed
53-56	D	1.0		
50-52	D-	0.7		
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate	Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

COURSE TIMELINE

May 8: Course Overview: Why Study Media? What is “Critical Media Studies”?

May 10: Marxist Analysis

Read: Chapter 1, Introducing Media Studies, pp. 1-20, and Chapter 2, Marxist Analysis, pp. 23-55;

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, “A Propaganda Model”;

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas”.

May 15: Organizational Analysis

Read: Chapter 3, Organizational Analysis, pp. 56-80;

Donna Schwartz, “To Tell the Truth: Codes of Objectivity in Photojournalism”.

May 17: Pragmatic Analysis

Read: Chapter 4, Pragmatic Analysis, pp. 81-106;

Henry Jenkins, “The War Between Effects and Meaning: Rethinking the Video Game Violence Debate”

May 22: Rhetorical Analysis

Read: Chapter 5, Rhetorical Analysis, pp. 109-133.

May 24: Cultural Analysis

Read: Chapter 6, Cultural Analysis, pp. 134-161;

John Fiske, “Culture, Ideology, Interpellation”;

Douglas Kellner, “Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture”.

***May 29: Mid-Term Exam, Chapters 1 through 6, in class**

May 31: Psychoanalytic Analysis and Feminist Analysis

Read: Chapter 7, Psychoanalytic Analysis, pp. 162-192; Chapter 8, Feminist Analysis, pp. 193-213;

Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”.

June 5: Queer Analysis

Read: Chapter 9, Queer Analysis, pp. 214-241.

June 7: Reception Analysis and Sociological Analysis

Read: Chapter 10, Reception Analysis, pp. 245-265; Chapter 11, Sociological Analysis, pp. 266-284;

Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding";

Nicole Birch-Bayley, "Terror in Horror Genres: The Global Media and the Millennial Zombie".

Critical Essay Due by [midnight, June 8, 2018](#) – submit online via Blackboard

June 12: Erotic Analysis

Read: Chapter 12, Erotic Analysis, pp. 285-311;

Brian Ott, "(Re)Locating Pleasure in Media Studies: Toward an Erotics of Reading".

June 14: Ecological Analysis and Conclusions

Read: Chapter 13, Ecological Analysis, pp. 312-334; Chapter 14, Conclusion: the Partial Pachyderm, pp. 335-350;

Marshall McLuhan, excerpt from "The Medium is the Message".

***Final Exam, Chapters 7-14, scheduled by the Registrar**

Please keep the following in mind at all times:

I want you to do well in this course!