

# **SOCI 341**

## **SOCIOLOGY OF THE MEDIA**



**Term:** Winter 2016

**Schedule:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:45-10:00

**Classroom:** FG B030

**Professor:** Gabrielle Trépanier-Jobin

**Office number:** H-1125-02

**Office Hours:** Fridays, 13:15-16:15 pm

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### **OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to sociological debates on the relevance and impact of mass media in our society. With a focus on North American media, this course takes a historical perspective to explore the rise of the mass media and the transformation of its relation with culture, especially popular culture. Particular attention is given to themes such as media and identity, national identity, media structures and ownership concentration, media texts and audiences.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Getting familiar with the main concepts, theories and authors of a discipline called “Sociology of the Media”.
- 2) Engaging with research on media that emerged from various fields of study, but that is relevant to sociologists.
- 3) Understanding the social implications of media texts with regards to issues such as ideologies, propaganda, sexism, racism, education, fandom, privacy, fiction/reality, etc.
- 4) Applying sociological theories and using social science methods to study media texts.
- 5) Engaging in debates around media and developing critical thinking skills.

### **ASSIGNED READINGS**

The weekly readings (mandatory and optional) are available on our Moodle website and should be read before the first course of the week. You must bring copies of the mandatory readings to class, either in electronic or paper form, because you might need them during class discussions and group activities.

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## **SCHEDULE & REFERENCES**

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### **January 7 – Presentation of the syllabus**

### **January 12/14 – Introduction**

- Media Sociology: A Reappraisal – Waisbord, 2014
- The Medium is the Message – McLuhan, 2003

### **January 19/21 – Media Ideological Effect**

- Culture, the Media and the 'Ideology Effect' – Hall, 1977

### **January 26/28 – Gender, Race & Class Stereotypes**

- Film and Stereotype – Schweinitz, 2011
- Rethinking Stereotypes – Perkins, 1979
- The Role of Stereotypes – Dyer, 1993
- The White of their Eyes – Hall, 1981

### **February 2/4 – Propaganda & Censorship**

- Manufacturing Consent – Chomsky & Herman, 2002
- The Ten Commandments of Propaganda – Patrick, 2013
- The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl (film) – Müller, 1995
- Oeil de Vichy (film) – Chabrol, 1993
- Why We Fight (film) – Capra, 1942-1945
- Animated Soviet Propaganda (film) – Borsten, 2006

### **February 9/11 – Media Ownership & the Culture Industry**

- The State of Media Ownership and Media Markets – Winseck, 2011
- The Culture Industry – Adorno & Horkheimer, 1973
- Media Industry Sociology – Havens, 2014

### **February 16/18 – Media Violence**

- Violence, Horror and Sexually Explicit Images – Staiger, 2005
- Media and Violence – Boyle, 2005
- Media Violence – Haugen & Musser, 2008

## **February 23/25 – Mid-term break**

### **March 1/3 – Soap Operas**

- Soap Opera – Cantor & Pingree, 1983
- No End to Her – Nochimson, 1992
- Loving With Vengeance – Modleski, 1982
- Love and Ideology in the Afternoon – Mumford, 1995
- SoapLife (documentary) – Brockmann, 2012
- Le coeur a ses raisons (tv show)

### **March 8/10 – Reception Studies**

- Media Reception Studies – Staiger, 2005
- Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse – Hall, 1973
- Agency, Social Interaction and Audience Studies – Butsch, 2014

### **March 15/17 – Documentary & Reality**

- Representing Reality – Nichols, 1991
- Cinema Verite in America – Mamber, 1974
- Nanook of the North (documentary) – Flaherty, 1922
- Primaries (documentary) – Drew, 1960
- Chronicle of a summer (documentary) – Morin & Rouch, 1961
- Pour la suite du monde (documentary) – Perrault, Brault, Carrière, 1964
- Les glaneurs et la glaneuse (documentary) – Varda, 2000
- Night and Fog (documentary) – Renais, 1955

### **March 22/24 – Reality TV**

- Reality TV – Murray & Ouellette (eds), 2008
- Buying into American Idol – Jenkins, 2006
- Big Brother (tv show) – Chen & Proctor, 2000
- Survivor (tv show) – Parsons, 2000
- Judge Judy (tv show) – Spreckman & Switzer, 1996

### **March 29/31 – Media Fandom**

- Understanding Fandom – Duffet, 2013
- Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers – Jenkins, 2006
- Textual Poachers – Jenkins, 1992

### **April 5/7 – Satirical TV & Social Criticism**

- Comic Politics – Matthews, 2000
- Watching With The Simpsons – Gray, 2005
- The Simpsons (tv show)

## **April 12 – Review**

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Participation – 15%, individual, logbook due for April 12**

A portion of your grade will be determined by your participation and engagement. This does not simply mean attending class, but also participating in class activities and uploading content on our Moodle website when required. You will be allowed (and sometimes asked) to use your phone, tablet or laptop in class, but please refrain from checking emails, Facebook, Twitter, news or playing games unless it is related to the course. Students who do not comply will lose points. Each week, you will have to write, in your logbook, a short comment or question of 70 words that engages with the assigned readings and that focuses on one key theme or argument that you find interesting or challenging. You will have to submit a paper copy of your logbook at the end of the last class. The comments or questions will be evaluated on the basis of their relevance to the assigned readings.

### **Oral presentation – 40%, team of 3-4 persons, topics distributed on January 19**

Each week, two teams of 3-4 students will have to prepare an oral presentation of 20 minutes on an object of research that features on the list and that is related to the topic of that week. In addition to providing pertinent information about their object of research, they will have to explain its sociological significance in light of theories and readings. The teams have to mobilize at least four reliable sources to backup their affirmations. The presentations will be followed by a 10 minute period of questions and discussion that the teams will have to animate. The Power Point / Prezi / Google Slides presentations have to be submitted by email 24 hours before the presentation and should respect the rules about plagiarism.

- Respect of the guidelines (deadline, quotations, references): /4
- Quality of the writing (grammar and syntax): /4
- Organization and coherence (development of ideas, logic, transitions): /10
- Quality of the argument and originality: /10
- Pertinence and good use of the sources: /12

### **Take home exam – 45 %, individual, due for April 19**

On April 12, I will release five open-ended questions about the content that we have learned in class and you will have one week to answer four of these questions. You are encouraged to use

the class material (PowerPoint presentations, notes and assigned readings), as well as other sources (optional readings, book chapters, journal articles, pertinent online websites, etc.).

- Respect of the guidelines (deadline, number of pages, quotations, references): /4
- Quality of the writing (clarity, flow, grammar and syntax): /5
- Organization and coherence (development of ideas, logic, transitions): /12
- Quality of the argument: /12
- Pertinence and good use of the sources: /12

All assignments can be submitted in either French or English.

## **EVALUATION SCHEME**

A+	90 – 100
A	85 – 89
A-	80 – 84
B+	77 – 79
B	73 – 76
B-	70 – 72
C+	67 – 69
C	63 – 66
C-	60 – 62
D+	57 – 59
D	53 – 56
D-	50 – 52
*F	30 – 49
or	
FNS	
R	0 – 29
NR	The student is unknown to the instructor

## **PLAGIARISM**

Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where it comes from! Use quotation marks when you reproduce material word for word.

## **ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

In order to keep our classroom a safe space where we can learn and discuss without feeling judged or disrespected, no intimidation, harsh comments or personal insults against other students or the instructor will be tolerated.