

**Sociology of Mass Media
SYO 3460**

Instructor: Dr. Deana Rohlinger
E-mail: drohling@fsu.edu
Office: 221 Claude Pepper Building
Phone: 644-2493
Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30am to 11am and Thursday 2pm to 3pm

Teaching Assistant: Christian Vaccaro
E-mail: cvaccaro@fsu.edu
Office: 509 Bellamy
Phone: 644-8157
Office Hours: Posted on Blackboard

“People who like to avoid shocking discoveries, who prefer to believe that society is just what they were taught in Sunday School, who like the safety of the rules and maxims of what Alfred Schutz called ‘the world-taken-for-granted,’ should stay away from sociology.” –Peter Berger

“Citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for meaningful democracy.” –Noam Chomsky

Course Description:

The course examines the history and function of mass media in the United States. This is an important area of sociological inquiry because mass media shape American culture, influence social life, and affect how we see others and ourselves. This course is divided into three segments. The first segment examines the political economy of mass media. Specifically, this segment highlights the economic factors that determine the kinds of entertainment and news programming available to us, the audience. The second segment examines theories regarding the ways and extent to which mass media and advertising affect American culture and society. This segment focuses on how mass media and advertising affect our actions, thoughts, and what we value. The final segment of the class analyzes how mass media construct race, gender, and sexuality in advertising, television, and film, and how these constructions influence our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand how sociologists evaluate mass media and their influence on American society.
2. To understand the theories and concepts related to the study of mass media.
3. To think critically about mass media and their influence on society and our lives.

Required Texts:

Croteau, David and William Hoynes. 2003. *Media Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. ISBN# 0761987738

Schor, Juliet. 2004. *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. New York: Scribner. ISBN# 0684870568

** There are also several articles, essays and chapters that are required readings for the course. These are available through blackboard. These are Adobe pdf files and therefore you will need an updated copy of Adobe which available free online.

Here is the Official Copyright Notice: This course website may contain copyrighted materials that are used in compliance with U.S. Copyright Law. Under that law, materials may not be saved to your computer, revised, copied, or distributed without permission. They are to be used in support of instructional activity as part of this course only and shall be limited to the duration of the course, unless otherwise specified by the instructor or owner of the material. You may only download or print materials at the direction of your instructor, who knows which materials are copyrighted and which are not.

Course Policies and Requirements:

Assigned Readings. All readings should be done prior to the day that they are to be addressed in class. These readings are required and will serve as the basis for class discussion and the quizzes.

Attendance. Florida State University policy requires attendance to all classes. I will occasionally take attendance through in-class assignments and these records will be used to determine borderline grades. More importantly, I will introduce new material during class that will be included on the quizzes. Thus, attendance is critical for your success in the class. If you miss a class, ask a classmate for his/her notes.

Short Papers (25 points each). You will complete two short papers over the course of the semester.

1. For the first short paper, you will watch one hour of sitcoms on television. The first ½ hour, you will watch **WITHOUT** sound and take notes on how the program visually orients your experience. Questions you should think about while watching the sitcom are: How well can you follow the plot of the program without hearing the dialogue? What do you learn about the characters from their non-verbal behavior? How “visual” is the program? Does it primarily rely on visual gags and stunts? The second ½ hour, you will listen to a sitcom **WITHOUT** the visuals (throw a blanket over the screen). How does this change the experience? Is it more difficult or easier to follow the story line? Do you hear laugh track and have no idea what is so funny? What do you learn about the characters from what they say and how they say it? After viewing and listening to television, respond to your experience. Compare and contrast viewing versus listening. Remember, while you want to use examples from the sitcoms to support your points, you do not want to summarize the shows. Your paper should draw on some of the questions listed above to analyze your experience. Your paper must be typed and should be between 4 and 5 pages in length. Please use a 12-point font.
2. For the second short paper, you will write a critical analysis in response to the films *Color Adjustment* (which will be viewed in class) and *Bamboozled* (which you will view outside of class). I will provide more detail on this paper later in the semester. Your paper must be typed and should not be more than 5 to 6 pages. Please use a 12-point font.

Exercises (10 points each). There are two exercises due during the semester.

- The first will examine race in advertising. For this exercise, you will need to purchase one or more of the following mainstream magazines: *GQ*, *Esquire*, *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Men’s Health*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Allure*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *InStyle*, *Jane*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Redbook*, or *Vogue*. While you may choose other magazines, it is important that you do **NOT** choose magazines that target minorities such as *Asian Fusion*, *Ebony*, *Essence*, *La Mujeres*, *Familia*, *Vibe*, *Black Men*, *Jade Magazine*, and *Bueno Vida*. Once you have your magazines, find 10 ads of minority women, 10 ads of white women, 10 ads of minority men, and 10 ads of white men. You will then need to analyze these images, noting the differences you find in terms of how race and/or ethnicity are depicted in contemporary advertisements. Pay attention to where minorities are placed, the characteristics attached to race and ethnicity, and the kinds of products being sold. Remember, the focus of this analysis is race and ethnicity rather than gender and sexuality. Thus, you want to compare depictions of minority models to those of white models. **Bring your advertisements to**

class on the day of the assignment, we will be discussing them. Do not forget to put your name on the back of the advertisement since you will receive points for the ads themselves. Your paper should be 2 to 3 double spaced pages and discuss your main findings with reference to particular ads that you found.

- The second exercise examines gender in advertising. Using the same magazines, take 20 ads of **ONLY** women (not couples) and 20 ads of **ONLY** men and conduct a similar analysis. In this analysis you want to pay particular attention to the characteristics attached to women and pay attention to where women are shown, the kinds of activities in which they engage, the positions of their body, their facial expressions and gaze as well as how masculinity is defined (what characteristics to “real” men possess) and proved in contemporary advertising. **Bring your advertisements to class on the day of the assignment, we will be discussing them. Do not forget to put your name on the back of the advertisement since you will receive points for the ads themselves.** Your paper should discuss your findings and be 3 to 4 double-spaced pages and discuss your findings of men and women separately as well as offer a comparison/general discussion of gender.

Course Exams (40 points each). There are two tests in the course that will cover class readings, lecture, films, and discussion. The tests will consist of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer. Please note that make up tests will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. If a make up quiz is granted, it will take the form of an essay test.

Media Project (50 points). You will work either alone or with one or two other individuals and complete a media project. At the end of the semester, you and/or your small group will hand in your project and a project summary/rationale. Guidelines regarding the final project will be handed out and discussed in class.

Important Dates for the Media Project:

- A detailed outline of your project is due on October 25th. The outline should describe the project rationale in detail (particularly how your project relates to the class), the components of your project (provide descriptions of articles, a film shooting and editing schedule, or campaign slogans and advertisements), and provide an account of your progress to date. This should be between 2 and 3 pages typed. You may include rough drafts of any part of your project at this time. I will provide you detailed comments on your outline, so the more information you provide me the better. The outline is worth 5 points of your final project grade and it must be handed in with your final project.
- If you want me to give comments on a rough draft of your project, it must be handed by November 27th.

NOTE: All final projects must be handed in during the scheduled final in my office (12:30pm to 2:30pm on Friday). I will not accept any projects after 2:30 pm on Friday December 14th. There are no exceptions.

Extra Credit. Extra credit opportunities will be provided in class throughout the semester. Opportunities for extra credit will arise during class discussion and, as such, you must be in class to know of these opportunities. All assignments, deadlines, and extra points that may be earned will be provided in class.

Procedures for turning in your papers, exercises and projects: You are required to turn in a clean and readable hard copy of your paper at the beginning of class and to submit your paper to Turnitin.com by 5pm the day the paper is due. Final projects must be uploaded to turnitin by 2:30pm on Friday December 14th. Students agree that by taking this course the required assignments they hand in will be submitted to Turnitin.com for review. All submitted papers will be checked for originality, become source documents

in the Turnitin.com database, and used for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in papers submitted in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of the use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website. **BE SURE THAT YOUR SOFTWARE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE TURNITIN PROGRAM PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE.**

To use this feature:

1. Click the *assignments* link in the course.
2. Click the folder named *papers*. A list of available paper assignments will appear.
3. Click the *view/complete* link next to the assignment you want. The submission form will open.
4. Click the *browse* button to locate the file you want to submit. Be sure to name your paper.
5. Click *submit* to upload the selected file to Blackboard.
6. Print your confirmation sheet, which verifies that you successfully uploaded your paper. This is very important because I have not way of verifying your attempts to turn in a paper and, as such, unsuccessful attempts will result in a late penalty.

NOTE: You will not earn a grade on paper assignments until both a clear hard copy has been received by the professor and an electronic copy has been uploaded to turnitin.com.

Late Work Policy: All hardcopies of the papers are due at the beginning of class. Any work turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class is considered late and will be penalized 10%. Another 10% will be deducted for each class period that the paper is late.

Grading Rubric.

185-200 =	A
179-184 =	A-
174-178 =	B+
166-173 =	B
159-165 =	B-
153-158 =	C+
145-152 =	C
139-144 =	C-
133-138 =	D+
125-132 =	D
119-124 =	D-
118 and lower =	F

Note: *Missing work is not sufficient reason for grade of Incomplete (I).* An incomplete will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

Academic Honor Code. "Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the

instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy" (<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>).

Courtesy in the Classroom. Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no cell phones, no ipods, other fancy electronics, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, sleeping, etc. during class. **Please turn off your cell phones, ipods, and other electronic devices during class time.** If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about kids or other family members, keep it on vibrate. If you would like to use a laptop for note taking, please use it for this purpose. Please excuse yourself from the classroom if you decide to use your laptop for playing games, checking e-mail, blogging, and so on. It is distracting to the students around you. Entering and leaving is distracting to your instructor and other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please make sure the door does not 'bang' as you enter or leave. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade. Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly.

Scholarly comments are: Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs; are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable behaviors in the classroom are: (a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the discussion leader or myself to prevent this problem. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course. These guidelines also apply to on-line content.

Cheating and Plagiarism. The Provost and legal counsel of Florida State University warn us that any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others. If you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you must place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late. Do NOT appropriate the concepts, phrases, or ideas of other people without giving them credit. If you do so, you risk losing your good name and getting into legal trouble. Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or possibly an "F" for the course and may be reported to the University Judicial Office. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Your paper would be considered as "plagiarized" in part or entirely if you do any of the following:

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.

- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references.
- Submit a paper in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact: Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Bldg., Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, (850)644-9566 (voice), (850)644-8504 (TDD). E-mail: SDRC@admin.fsu.edu. Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

Day	Topic and Assignments
Week 1 August 28	Introduction and the Political Economy of Mass Media Introduction to the course
August 30	Media Society: Chapter 2
Week 2 September 4	Political Economy of Mass Media Blackboard: Ted Turner on Big Media; The Titanic Sails On; and The Internet is Good for the News
September 6	Media Society: Chapter 3
Week 3 September 11	Journalists and the News <i>Paper 1 Due</i>
September 13	Media Society: Chapter 4
Week 4 September 18	How Mass Media Affect Our View of the World Blackboard: Bias in the News
September 20	Media Society: Pages 231-239 Blackboard: Covering Race, Ethnicity and Conflict in the News
Week 5 September 25	Media Effects: The Violence Debates Blackboard: Yes, violent media has negative effects and No, violent media does not have negative effects
September 27	The Cool Hunt (On Blackboard- allow several minutes for downloading)
Week 6 October 2	Media Effects: When Consumer Culture and Media Merge Born to Buy Chapters 1 and 2
October 4	Born to Buy Chapter 3 and 4

Week 7	Media Effects: When Consumer Culture and Media Merge Continued
October 9	Born to Buy Chapters 6, 7 and 9
October 11	Media Society Chapter 8
Week 8	Test One Week
October 16	Wrap up and Review
October 18	<i>Test One Today</i>
Week 9	The Social Construction of Race an Introduction
October 23	Media Society: 204-212 Blackboard: The Whites of their Eyes and White Negroes
October 25	Blackboard: Watching Race (allow several minutes to download) Film: Color Adjustment <i>Outline for final project due</i>
Week 10	The Social Construction of Race Continued
October 30	Blackboard: Race and Mass Media Film: Color Adjustment
November 1	Blackboard: Here Comes the Judge and Ling Woo in Historical Context <i>Exercise One due</i>
Week 11	Constructing Gender
November 6	Media Society pages 212-222; Blackboard: Once in a Lifetime; In Their Prime; Cinderella; and The Wicked Stepmother's Tale; and Contested Images of Femininity
November 8	Blackboard: The More You Subtract, The More You Add; Forget the Rules! Enjoy the Wine; and Relax and Enjoy the Revolution
Week 12	Constructing Gender
November 13	<i>Bamboozled Paper Due</i>
November 15	Blackboard: Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity; A Gentleman and a Consumer; Beer Commercials; Ralph, Fred, Archie, and Homer; and In an Imperfect World, Men with Small Penises Are Unforgivable
Week 13	Constructing Gender
November 20	Blackboard: Behold the Man (allow several minutes to download) <i>Exercise Two Due</i>
November 22	Thanksgiving Day

Week 14
November 27

Resistance

November 29

Media Society: Chapter 9

Week 15
December 4

Course Conclusion
Wrap up and review

December 6

Test Two Today

The class final exam time is Friday December 14th from 12:30pm to 2:30pm. Final projects must be turned in at during your scheduled final.