

MEDIA STUDIES (MSS)

MSS 119. Sign Language Workshop. 1 Credit.

The course presents an introduction to basic sign language, its basic vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar. Students gain practice in reading and execution of signs.

Offered: Every year, Spring

MSS 200. Special Topics. 3 Credits.

The subject considered varies each semester depending on faculty and student interests.

Offered: As needed

MSS 220. Media, History and Memory. 3 Credits.

This course examines the relationship between media, history and memory, focusing on the role various media play in shaping both individual and collective memories of historical figures, events and eras. Students are introduced to historical research methods and evaluate a variety of archival media texts, including photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, newsreels, movies, TV shows and audio recordings. These media texts are viewed as historical artifacts that reflect the particular historical, cultural and political context in which they were developed while also possessing the ability to influence both contemporary and future audiences.

Prerequisites: Take EN 102.

Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

UC: Humanities

MSS 231. Media and Society. 3 Credits.

The objectives for this course are twofold: to foster an understanding of the social context within which media professionals work and to provide an environment in which students develop analytical skills required for effective and ethical participation in our media-saturated culture as citizens and potential media professionals. Students create a mock proposal for a media project in which they address how different cultural, political, economic and technological structures create constraints and leave open the possibilities for media practitioners, users and audiences. They also work in teams to critique contemporary social media issues.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101.

Offered: Every year, Spring

MSS 299. Independent Study. 1-6 Credits.

Students may arrange to do an-depth study of a topic arranged with an instructor.

Offered: As needed, All

MSS 300. Special Topics. 3 Credits.

Topics vary each semester depending on faculty and student interests.

Offered: As needed

MSS 311. Diversity in the Media (WS 311). 3 Credits.

This course examines the role of media in the construction of social categories such as gender, race, class and sexual orientation. Students learn about the media as one of a number of social institutions—including religion, education and family—that influence our understanding of cultural difference. The course presents a variety of perspectives that address diversity in relation to both print and electronic media, emphasizing popular culture. Media diversity issues are analyzed in relation to ownership, representation, audience reception and the media workforce. Junior status required.

Prerequisites: Take WS 101 or COM 120 or MSS 101.

Offered: Every other year

MSS 320. Communication Technologies: Evolution and Impact. 3 Credits.

Stories about the development and diffusion of old communication technologies, such as the telegraph, provide lessons for understanding the wide-ranging impacts of relatively new technologies, such as the Internet and smart phone. This course helps students to develop a sophisticated understanding of the roles, functions and impacts of communication technologies—past and present—in everyday life, and prepares them to evaluate the potential and implications of emerging technologies.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101.

Offered: As needed

MSS 332. Media Research Methods. 3 Credits.

The course introduces students to a variety of media research methods through readings and hands-on exercises. Goals include helping students become knowledgeable and critical readers of media-related research produced in both industry and academic settings, and teaching students fundamental aspects of conducting media research and leading-edge strategies for effectively communicating research findings. Students perform original research using techniques including interviews, focus groups, content analysis and surveys. They also learn about statistics, social media tracking and research ethics. Junior status required.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101; and MSS 231.

Offered: Every year, Fall

MSS 340. Communications Law and Policy. 3 Credits.

This course helps students to develop an awareness and understanding of laws, regulations and professional standards of practice that apply to the work of communications practitioners. Attention is given to First Amendment guarantees, libel, privacy, journalist's privilege, copyright, media and advertising regulation. Selected cases are highlighted as examples of opinions handed down by state and federal courts. Junior status is required.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101.

Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

MSS 345. Media Users and Audiences (WS 345). 3 Credits.

This course considers popular, institutional and academic perspectives on media users and audiences in the U.S. and abroad. Students develop an understanding of how people choose and interpret media content, how marketers and media producers perceive audiences, how social media use blurs boundaries between audiences and producers and popular assumptions about media effects on audiences. Students develop and apply critical thinking and written and oral communication skills in assignments that address contemporary debates surrounding audiences and media users, including an in-depth analysis of fan cultures. Junior status required.

Prerequisites: Take EN 102 or EN 103H; and COM 120 or WS 101.

Offered: Every year

MSS 346. Global Communication. 3 Credits.

The course analyzes the roles information media and popular culture play in modern debates about political power, global economy and cultural identity. The relative influences of different communication technologies in relationships among global, transnational and local cultures also are examined.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101.

Offered: Every other year

- MSS 349. Political Communication (PO 348).** **3 Credits.**
 This course explores the relationship between media and politics in the U.S. Students learn about the history of political communication, the role of image-making and image-management in political communication, the impact of the media on public policy, and the current state of our mediated political culture.
Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101 or PO 101.
Offered: Every other year
- MSS 399. Independent Study.** **1-6 Credits.**
 Students may arrange to do an in-depth study of a topic under faculty supervision.
Offered: As needed
- MSS 400. Special Topics.** **3 Credits.**
 Topics vary each semester depending on faculty and student interests.
Offered: As needed, Fall and Spring
- MSS 420. Sports, Media and Society (SPS 420).** **3 Credits.**
 This course examines the social, political, economic and historical significance of the intersection of sports, media and society. Participants examine such questions as: What role have sports played in shaping cultures throughout history? What is the relationship between sports and media? How do sports, through the media, influence U.S. culture today? What is the role of sports media professionals in U.S. culture? Junior status required.
Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or MSS 101 or SPS 101.
Offered: Every year, Spring
- MSS 441. Celebrity Culture.** **3 Credits.**
 This seminar explores modern communication networks through the lens of celebrity. Through a variety of readings and videos, including pieces using media effects and cultural studies approaches, the course addresses the following questions: How, and by whom, is the idea of celebrity shaped? What cultural meanings are conveyed by celebrity? How does celebrity change the way we think about important social issues? What is the impact of celebrity on the industry? How is the concept of celebrity shifting? And just why are we so fascinated by celebrity?
Prerequisites: Take MSS 231.
Offered: Every other year
- MSS 442. Media Critics and Influencers.** **3 Credits.**
 In this course, students learn what it takes to be a professional media critic and/or a social media influencer. Students analyze and produce criticism of TV, movies, music, apps, games, etc. and study what makes today's top social media influencers so successful. Students examine some of the best practices in popular media criticism/influence while developing their own voices. They also learn to produce content aimed at engaging their target audience. In their final project, students create their own blog, vlog, or podcast.
Prerequisites: Take MSS 231.
Offered: Every other year
- MSS 443. Crime, Media and Culture.** **3 Credits.**
 This course examines the role of industrialized media in the social construction of crime, criminals, victims, social order, and deviance. We also consider why crime is represented so frequently in a variety of mainstream media genres, including news, docudramas, video games, popular music, and fictional dramas in both television and film. The course also discusses ways in which social media and digital surveillance technologies have been harnessed in relation to crime. Central themes of the course include theoretical debates related to media effects and critical media consumers, as well as how crime narratives can either demonize or glamorize segments of society.
Prerequisites: Take MSS 231.
Offered: Every other year
- MSS 444. Popular Music.** **3 Credits.**
 Despite its salience as a mass medium, popular music remains understudied in the discipline of media studies. Therefore, in order to provide students with a better understanding of popular music, this seminar involves the following: critically listening to and writing about popular music; considering music's role in identity (class, gender and sexuality, racial and ethnic, etc.) formation; examining the influence of media and technology on popular music; and understanding the music industry.
Prerequisites: Take MSS 231.
Offered: Every other year
- MSS 450. Senior Seminar.** **3 Credits.**
 This seminar includes an in-depth examination of issues and research perspectives in media studies. Topics vary each term, focusing on the different media and current literature in the field. Senior status required.
Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring
- MSS 491. Research Project.** **3 Credits.**
 Students conduct an in-depth research project under faculty supervision.
Prerequisites: Take MSS 332.
Offered: As needed
- MSS 495. Media Trend Forecasting and Strategy.** **3 Credits.**
 In this media studies capstone course, students analyze the various forces impacting media industries, professionals, and users, tracking current trends and forecasting future influences. Students study the issues facing media producers/users and strategize creative responses to the challenges of operating in an ever-changing media environment, applying critical thinking, research and creative problem-solving skills to real-world situations. Students also are expected to demonstrate professional oral and written communication skills. Senior status required.
Prerequisites: Take MSS 231 MSS 332.
Offered: Every year, Spring
- MSS 499. Independent Study.** **1-6 Credits.**
 Students may arrange to do an in-depth study of a topic under faculty supervision.
Offered: As needed