

MEDIA STUDIES (MSS)

MSS 131. Media Innovators. 3 Credits.

This course examines how media companies develop and refine media products and platforms. Learners examine how media companies anticipate and/or respond to different cultural, technological, and economic structures that create constraints and leave open the possibilities for media practitioners. Using a case study approach, the course explores how decision-makers have adapted to the dynamic media marketplace, the types of data they solicit, and the ways in which they confront the risks associated with creating and distributing media products.

Prerequisites: None

Offered: Every year

MSS 200. Special Topics. 0-3 Credits.

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

Prerequisites: None

Offered: As needed

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

This course examines the relationship between media, history, and memory, focusing on how media shape both individual and collective memories of historical figures, events, and eras. Students learn how the past informs the present and how current media "re-present" the past. The course pays particular attention to who controls the historical narrative and the work done to recover forgotten/excluded voices and include their stories in U.S. history. In the major course project, students interview a family or community member about a specific historical event. The resulting essay, video, podcast analyzes the media's influence on both individual memory and collective memory.

Prerequisites: Take EN 102 or EN 103H

Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

UC: Humanities

MSS 240. Is AI Taking Over? Disruption, Disinformation, and the Future Of Communication. 3 Credits.

This course helps students understand how technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, facial recognition, and location-based services are radically transforming the way we communicate in disparate fields, including the media, science, art, politics, and business. Through critical analysis of technology, communication and power, students will understand how the promises of new technologies can be seized and warped, yielding significant disruptive consequences. Students will also develop critical thinking, research and writing skills, including accessing, analyzing, and properly citing sources for research on technology and media.

Prerequisites: Take EN 102.

Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

UC: Breadth Elective

MSS 300. Special Topics. 3 Credits.

Topics vary each semester depending on faculty and student interests.

Prerequisites: None

Offered: As needed

MSS 311. Diversity in the Media (WGS 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 WGS 101 or COM 120.

Offered: Every other year

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

This course explores the rapid spread of technology in the 21st century. Students examine the development, diffusion, and cultural impact of older technologies (e.g. the telephone, radio, television) for lessons that can be applied to more recent technological developments (e.g. the smartphone, streaming media, and social media). This blueprint is then used to predict, evaluate, and critique emerging technologies and the effects that they may have on culture, politics, economics, and everyday life in the next 10-20 years.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120.

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, MSS 131.

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 MSS 131 or ADPR 101 or ADPR 102.

Offered: Every year, Fall and Spring

MSS 345. Media Users and Audiences (WGS 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, popular assumptions about media effects on audiences and how social media use blurs boundaries between audiences and producers. Students develop and apply critical thinking and written and oral communication skills in assignments that address contemporary debates surrounding audiences and media users.

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

Offered: Every other year

MSS 349. Political Communication (PO 349).**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. In the major course project, student teams develop a comprehensive campaign communication strategy for a political candidate.

Prerequisites: Take COM 120 or PO 101.

Offered: Every other year

MSS 400. Special Topics.**3 Credits.**

Topics vary each semester depending on faculty and student interests.

Prerequisites: None

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 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? The final course project involves creating a plan for a celebrity to rehabilitate/reshape their public image.

Prerequisites: Take MSS 131.

Offered: Every other year

MSS 442. Media Critics and Influencers.**3 Credits.**

This course focuses on the impact of two types of content creators - professional media critics and social media influencers. Students explore what it takes to be a professional critic by analyzing and producing criticism of TV, movies, music, apps, games, etc. Students also study what makes today's top influencers so successful and create their own social media influencer content, including reviews, demos, and tutorials. Students develop their critical voice and brand while creating engaging content aimed at a target audience. In the final Content Creation Project, students create and promote content for their own public blog, vlog, or podcast.

Prerequisites: Take MSS 131.

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 131.

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 131.

Offered: Every other year

MSS 445. TV and Society: From Sitcoms to Streaming.**3 Credits.**

The relationship between television industries, audiences, and programming is constantly evolving. Yet what persists is television's power to critique, regulate, and transform societal values, norms, and identities. This seminar examines how major national events from the civil rights movement to 9/11 have been reflected in and shaped by television series such as *The Smothers Brothers*, *All in the Family*, and *Mad Men*, television's role in identity formation (class, gender and sexuality, racial and ethnic, etc.), and the influence of new technologies on television industries and content.

Prerequisites: Take MSS 131.

Offered: Every year, Spring

MSS 450. Media Studies 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.

Prerequisites: Take MSS 131.

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. Capstone: Media 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 in their capstone project, a Media Consultant Report. Students also are expected to demonstrate professional oral and written communication skills in their final project and a weekly Media Trends blog. Senior status required.

Prerequisites: Take MSS 131 and MSS 332 or ADPR 332

Offered: Every year, Spring