

MFS 100: Introduction to Media Studies

Fall 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:20pm

128 Harbert

Dr. Nora Stone // nestone@bsc.edu // 127 Berte Humanities

Office Hours: T/Th 10:30am-1:30pm

Course Description

An introduction to critical analysis of mass media in the context of contemporary culture and social institutions. Explore how mass media, such as film, television, social and interactive media, affect and reflect cultural values, political attitudes, personal identity, and behavior. Students learn basic media literacy by developing conceptual tools for thinking critically about mass media, with a special emphasis on how various media shape and convey meaning; and the impact that the form, function, and institutional production of media have on local, national, and global communities.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the complex interactions between media and society
- Gain a historical overview of print media, film, radio and television
- Trace the relationship between aesthetic choices and industrial structures
- Learn how interactive media and global media flows are changing traditional ideas of communication, community, and authorship
- Understand the centrality of advertising to the media industries
- Consider the legal rights and moral responsibilities of filmmakers and journalists
- Explore the concept of Fair Use and remix culture

Required Materials

Peyton Paxson, *Mass Communications and Media Studies: An Introduction* (2nd edition)

Other readings available on Moodle

Films available to watch through BSC Library or for rent on major streaming platforms

Notebook and pen

Assignments

Media Journal – 15%

For one 24-hour period, keep a journal of your interactions with media.

Film Scene Analysis – 15%

Analyze a film scene you find emotionally and psychologically effective.

Media Research Project – 20%

Research one type of interactive, remix, or globalized media that you participate in.

Quizzes and Brief Assignments – 10%

Occasional pop quizzes in class. Reflections submitted on Moodle.

Midterm Exam – 15%

Final Exam – 15%

Participation – 10%

You are expected to contribute to class and group discussions.

***Assignments are subject to change.

*** Assignments have firm due dates. If you submit an assignment late, your grade on the assignment will be reduced by one letter-grade each day late.

Attendance Policy

You are allowed three absences without penalty. I do not need to know why you are absent. No absences beyond three will be excused. After the three absences, each additional absence will result in a 5% deduction from your final overall grade.

Excessive tardiness will accumulate into absences. Three partial attendances (missing more than 5 minutes of class) will count as one absence.

Please get in touch if you must miss class for athletics, religious observances, or serious illness.

If you are absent, contact a classmate—not the professor—to get lecture notes and other info you may have missed.

Other Course Policies

Plan to take notes by hand in class. Research indicates that taking notes by hand results in better comprehension and retention of class material. If you need to take notes in another manner, please send me your accommodations letter from the Office of Accessibility.

Cellphone and smartwatch use in class is forbidden. Keep your phone tucked away, with sounds turned off, during class. Using your phone or smartwatch during class will hurt your participation grade.

Course Schedule

Week 1

August 25 – Introductions

Week 2

August 30 – Mass Communication, Advertising

Read: Chapters 1, 2, 3 in Paxson

September 1

Read: Cara Dickason, “Selling Smart TV Surveillance”

Week 3

September 6 – Newspapers

September 8 – NO CLASS – DR. STONE ON FILM SHOOT

Week 4

September 13 – Newspapers, Print Media

Read: Chapter 4 in Paxson

September 15

Week 5

September 20 – Movies: history, industry structure

Due: Media Journal

September 22

Read: Chapters 5, 10 in Paxson

Week 6

September 27 – Movies: form and narrative

Read: Bordwell/Thompson/Smith, “Significance of Film Form” and “Narrative Form”

September 29

Week 7

October 4 – Midterm Exam

October 6 – NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Week 8

October 11 – Movies: corporate ownership, visual effects, independent film

Read: Martin Scorsese, “I Said Marvel Movies Aren’t Cinema. Let Me Explain.”

Read: David Betancourt, “*Batgirl* has been canceled. Here’s what’s lost.”

Read: Drew Magary, “Inside Hollywood’s Visual Effects Crisis”

October 13 – Movies, Television

Read: Chapters 7 in Paxson

Read: Samantha Chery, “HBO Max Removes Nearly 200 Episodes of *Sesame Street*”

Week 9

October 18 – Movies, Television

Due: Film Scene Analysis

October 20

Read: Chapter 10 in Paxson

Week 10

October 25 – Internet, Television, Music

Read: Chapters 8, 6 in Paxson

October 27

Week 11

November 1 – Internet, Interactive Media

Read: Chapter 9 in Paxson

Read: Casey Newton, “Why Vine Died”

November 3

Week 12

November 8 – Copyright, Fair Use, Remix

Read: Chapter 11 in Paxson

November 10

Week 13

November 15 – Globalization, Movies, Television

Read: Chapter 12 in Paxson

Read: Hyun-Jung Stephany Noh, “Korean Webtoons as an Original Source of Intellectual Property for K-Dramas”

November 17 – Surveillance Media

Read: Edward Ongweso, Jr., “*Ring Nation* Is Amazon’s Reality Show for Our Surveillance Distopia”

Week 14

November 22

November 24 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Week 15

November 29

Due: Media Research Project

December 5, 9am-noon: Final exam

Title IX

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe and healthy learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported, or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct. See the BSC Title IX website (www.bsc.edu/titleix) for more information, including a link to file an online report form and information about how and to whom to report in person. If you or a peer have experienced such misconduct, the Title IX webpage also includes information about the numerous resources available on campus and in the local community with whom the College encourages you to seek support. Confidential resources include counseling and health care providers, our Chaplain, and

numerous faculty and staff members who are trained in assisting students by answering questions and helping them navigate their choices in seeking further support and the reporting process.

Accessibility Statement

Students with a disability that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and require accommodations should be registered with BSC's Accessibility Office. If you are registered for academic accommodation, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodation that may be necessary. During this discussion you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability though you may do so at your discretion. If you have a disability but have not yet registered, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services and Resources, at 205-226-7909 (x1909) or smfoster@bsc.edu, or visit Norton 228. Keep in mind that no accommodation will be made unless and until the instructor receives official notification from the College.

Honor Code

I expect you will discuss assignments with your classmates. However, when you turn in your assignments, you need to be sure that what you have written is your understanding of the concept and not simply copied from another source. You must properly cite and reference all sources. If you are unsure how to do this properly, please reach out to me. If you are found in violation of the Honor Code by the Honor Council, you will receive no credit for the assignment, test, or quiz in question.

BSC Resources for Writers and Readers

Located in Humanities 102, the Writing Center offers in-person and virtual peer-to-peer tutoring and a quiet, supportive lab space to work on writing assignments. The Writing Center's tutors are students from a wide variety of majors on campus and have the range to address student writing needs with discipline specificity. Supervised and assisted by Writing Center directors, our tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. During these consultations, tutors do not "edit" papers; instead, they assist students in addressing any potential writing issues, including content development, grammar usage, and citation formatting. Each tutorial is about 30 minutes long, free of charge, and available on a drop-in basis. There is no limit to how many tutorials a student may attend. Once logged in, a director will take your information and pair you with a tutor for your 30-minute tutorial.

The Writing Center is open Sunday-Thursday, 2pm-8pm. To ensure a full 30-minute tutorial time slot, students are encouraged to be mindful of assignment-heavy weeks, keep track of due dates, and visit the Writing Center at their earliest availability during open hours. Please contact Dr. Anna Williams or Laura Tolbert (writingcenter@bsc.edu) with any questions or requests for virtual appointments.

Statement of Inclusion & Equity

MFS 100 supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. As outlined in the Birmingham-Southern mission, the College challenges students to engage in their community and the greater world, to examine diverse perspectives, and to live with integrity. Assignments outlined in the course syllabus will address diversity consideration

for communities, why those communities exist, who they serve, and how their practices reflect their values.