



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

WATER TOWER CAMPUS/SPRING 2024

COMM 201-201 (1877)—MEDIA THEORY AND CRITICISM

Instructor: Milan Pribisic, Ph.D. (mpribis@luc.edu)

Class meetings: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9:20 am to 10:10 am, School of Communication, Room #010

Student Hours: By appointment only (either in person on campus or on Zoom)

TEXTS: Dixon, Mark. *Media Theory for A Level: The Essential Revision Guide (MT)*; ISBN: 978-0-367-14543-9

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the study of traditional mass media and new, digital media from a historical, critical, and interpretive perspective. We live in a mediated environment; how media work on us as individuals and as cultures and what effects their power have on us are only some of the questions that media theory tries to answer to engage in criticism of our past and present, and to envision a more ethical and productive mediated world future.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course reviews sociological/ethnographic approach, semiotics, discourse and content analysis and other methods of media analysis; it also surveys those theories that approach media as historical, cultural practices that go beyond media technologies and texts to envelope media as businesses with specific political economy, media as agents of change, and experiential aspects of media production and consumption. After taking this course the students will be able to:

identify major media theories and research methods, their main tenets and application contexts [MEDIA THEORY LITERACY SKILL];

apply the critical and technical vocabulary (media theory as a body of knowledge) to describe, analyze and critique media [MEDIA CRITICISM SKILL];

conduct individual and team research to describe, analyze and critically (self-)-reflect on the variety of media texts [COLLABORATION SKILLS, NETWORKING SKILLS, PRESENTATION SKILLS; WRITING SKILLS].

apply the ability to meet deadlines [TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS]

STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITIES AND ATTENDANCE: I am using the discussion teaching method which includes traditional lecturing but stresses interactive discussion between teacher and students and among students in small groups and small group projects; all students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to actively participate in discussions and activities after reading the required material. **Participation** grade (50 points) is based on student's class attendance (10 points) and active contribution (40 points), on conducting the weekly assignments (short reflection papers, short group presentations, Discussion forums ...) in a timely manner according to the deadline (the weekly, participation assignments past due date will be automatically marked with 20% points deduction and accepted for seven days past the due date; beyond that date no late weekly, participation assignments are accepted). **No show to class means no attendance points [three unexcused absences are acceptable; beyond that number your attendance grade will be lowered].** If you miss a workshop with a scheduled assignment, you will be given the opportunity to make it up **ONLY** if you provide a medical doctor's excuse or an official letter stating you were representing Loyola University Chicago at an event.

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES: I strive to create a learning environment for the students that supports a **diversity** of experiences, perspectives, and thoughts, and honors our unique identities (including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, ability ...). This starts with a land acknowledgement, that is by our awareness that Chicago sits on the homelands of the Council of the Three Fires--Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa, as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk nations. Speaking of names, if you have a name and/or set of pronouns different from those on your Loyola records, please let me know. I am here to help guide you through the course materials and address any questions/concerns you might have. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside the class, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will respond to your requests in a timely manner (within 24 hours when possible) and will provide constructive feedback on them (this also includes the

assignments). I am still (like many of us) in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said/posted in class by classmate or instructor that made you feel unsafe, please contact me. I will be available to meet with you either on campus or online by appointment.

TITLE IX NOTICE OF REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE CAMPUS PARTNERS

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Campus Partner (“RCP”) under Loyola’s Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation (located at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as an RCP I am required to report certain disclosures of sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and/or domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation under Illinois law to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect

<https://www.luc.edu/hr/legal-notices/mandatedreportingofchildabuseandneglect/>

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform students who have experienced sexual/gender-based violence of available resources and support. Such a report will not generate a report to law enforcement (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Furthermore, the University’s resources and support are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take additional action to ensure the safety of the University community. If you have any questions about this policy, you may contact the Office for Equity & Compliance at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call The Line at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.),

and connect you with additional resources as needed. More information can be found at luc.edu/coalition or luc.edu/wellness.

STUDENT DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: As Loyola's mission statement holds, "We are Chicago's Jesuit, Catholic University-a diverse community seeking God in all things." Together, as a community rich in diversity, we are called to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith." Recognizing and appreciating the diverse collection of identities, experiences, perspectives, and abilities of the students, faculty, staff, and community partners with whom we collaborate, the School of Communication commits itself to enriching academic experiences through the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practices. For more information visit OEC site at:

[Office for Equity and Compliance: Loyola University Chicago \(luc.edu\)](http://luc.edu)

PRIVACY STATEMENT: Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording.

SAKAI (<https://sakai.luc.edu>) is an online learning tool that allow us to communicate and collaborate with each other during the semester. You will find on it the course syllabus, e-mail addresses of all course participants, announcements, online assignments, online gradebook, etc.

LOCUS (<https://locus.luc.edu>) is Loyola's information portal for a wide variety of tasks. The instructor posts on Locus the midterm academic alerts and the final grades.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious

violation of academic integrity. **Cheating** includes, but is not limited to, obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to another student during examination; obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination; using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom; falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines or any other action that, by omission or commission, compromise the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty; it is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of other without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited, to submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.; submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material; allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit, or purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper. The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://www.luc.edu/english/aboutthewritingprogram/theuseandmisuseofsourcematmaterials/#d.en.238783>

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard. Plagiarism or any act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the Office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The Office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SoC. If the student is not a member of the SoC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to a similar organization.

To maintain our culture of excellence and integrity, students are not to use Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted technology in the classroom unless they are specifically authorized to do so by their faculty for an assignment, a test, or a quiz, or any deliverable that will be graded.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (SAC): If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact SAC as soon as possible. Formal arrangements must be made through the office before course adjustments can be made. Additional information about the services available at:

<https://luc.edu/sac/sacstudents/>

MANAGING LIFE CRISES AND FINDING SUPPORT: Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (<https://www.luc.edu/csaa/>) for yourself or a peer in need of support. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: <https://www.luc.edu/dos/> or [LUC.edu/csaa; 773-508-8840; deanofstudents@luc.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@luc.edu).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: The attendance is taken at the beginning of the class! Up to fifteen-minute lateness is acceptable according to the academic rules; beyond that it is on your

own discretion to decide whether you should interrupt the class already in progress or not; in any case, if you enter the classroom after the attendance has been taken it is **your responsibility** to check with the instructor after the class to be sure to get the attendance credit. Repeated lateness beyond fifteen minutes will be treated as unexcused absence. No food/eating is allowed in the classroom.

ASSIGNMENTS: As stated below, the assignments consist of short, weekly assignments and class activities as part of the Participation grade, a Terminology Exam, an in-class Case Study Group Presentation and, instead of the final examination, Annotated Bibliography group paper due during the final examination week. There are rubrics for each graded assignment that will be available prior to each assignment.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS: I am using the cumulative point system which means each assignment carries a certain number of points—the points grading scale is listed below (to receive an A letter grade in the class you need to earn 285 points; for an A- letter grade you need 276 points ... to get a D letter grade you need to earn 195 points out of 300). Please respect the **24/7 grading policy**—wait 24 hours after receiving the grade to talk to me about it but talk to me about the grade within seven days if you have a question. After one week has passed, I will not discuss the grade for that assignment.

Participation (attendance [10pts] + active and critical contribution to the class activities including forums discussions; reflection assignments on readings, peer evaluations...)	50 points
Terminology Exam	50 points
Annotated Bibliography Group Paper	100 points
Case Study Team Project (In-class Presentation)	100 points

TOTAL= 300 POINTS:

A (95-100% EXCELLENT)=285-300;

A-minus (92%-94%)=276-284;

B+ (89%-91%)=267-275;

B (86%-88% GOOD)=258-266;

B-minus (83%-85%)= 249-257;

C+ (80%-82%)=240-248;

C (77%-79% AVERAGE)=231-239;

C-minus (74%-76%)=222-230;

D+ (71%-73%)=213-221;

D (65%-70% FAIR)=195-212;

F (less than 65% POOR)=below 195

STATEMENT OF INTENT: By remaining in this course, students are agreeing to accept this syllabus as a contract and to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(This is a plan; syllabus and calendar are open to change--all changes will be posted in Sakai and announced in class)

WEEK ONE of January 16: Course introduction and overview

What is media? What is theory?

What is criticism? Why media theory and criticism?

(Class lectures and discussions/Power Point)

WEEK TWO of January 22: Postmodern Theory/Postmodernism

READ: MT Chapter 5

I. MEDIA PRODUCTION

Political Economy Theory in Media (IN FOCUS—THE NEWS MEDIA)

Media Ownership: Concentration and Conglomeration

READ: MT Ch. 12 Ownership effects

WEEK THREE of January 29: Culture Industry, Media Professionals, and Media Regulation

READ: MT Ch. 13 Regulation

WEEK FOUR of February 5: Culture Industry, Media Professionals, and Media Regulation

READ MT Ch. 14 The Culture Industry

WEEK FIVE of February 12: ***II. MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS***

(IN FOCUS—THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA)

Representation

READ: MT Chapter 6

WEEK SIX of February 19: Narratology & Genre Theory

Semiotics

READ: MT Chapters 3, 4 & 6

WEEK SEVEN of February 26: Postcolonial Theory

READ: MT Chapters 7

WEEK EIGHT of March 4: **SPRING BREAK!**

WEEK NINE of March 11: Intersectionality

READ: MT Chapter 9

WEEK TEN of March 18: The How and Why of Media Criticism

FORMING TEAMS FOR THE FINAL TEAM PROJECT

WEEK ELEVEN of March 25: ***III. MEDIA AUDIENCE***

(IN FOCUS—CELEBRITY CULTURE AND FANDOM)

Reception Theory

READ: MT Chapter 17

NO CLASS ON FRIDAY, 29 MARCH—GOOD FRIDAY

WEEK TWELVE of April 1: **NO CLASS ON MONDAY, 1 APRIL—EASTER MONDAY**

Media and Identity

Media Modelling Effects

READ: MT Chapters 11 & 15

WEEK THIRTEEN of April 8: Fandom & The End of Audience

READ: MT Chapters 18 & 19

WEEK FOURTEEN of April 15: Terminology Exam (**MONDAY, 15 APRIL**)

TEAM PRESENTATIONS START

WEEK FIFTEEN of April 22: **TEAM PRESENTATIONS**

**LAST DAY OF CLASSES IS APRIL 26; THE EXAM WEEK IS APRIL 29 TO MAY 4
(OUR CLASS' FINAL EXAM/GROUP PAPER IS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY,
MAY 4th FROM 1:00 pm TO 3:00 pm).**