

Mass Media & Society

COMM 4485 On-Line
Spring 2005

Professor: Dr. Camilla Gant

Office: Humanities 142

Phone: 678.839.4933

Virtual Office Hours: Daily (via WebCT Private Mail)

Face-to-Face Office Hours: Mondays 10:00am – Noon & 1:00 – 4:00pm

Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30pm – 4:30pm

By Appointment

Overview

Mass Media & Society is a discussion centered survey of scholarship concerned with the social impact of mass media. You are expected to research, analyze, and reach considered judgments on opposing viewpoints presented by leading media scholars and commentators. It is hoped that this course will stimulate understanding and critical thinking about central controversial issues in mass media and society, and thereby position you to be more literate, responsible, and responsive 21st century media consumers and professionals. Discussion will center on central controversies concerning media's role in society, media ethics, media and politics, media regulation, media business, and the information society.

Learning Objectives

To demonstrate an understanding of central controversies concerning media's role in society, media ethics, media and politics, media regulation, media business, and the information society

To demonstrate ability to research, analyze, and reach considered judgments on opposing viewpoints concerning media's role in society, media ethics, media and politics, media regulation, media business, and the information society

Assigned Readings

Alexander, Alison & Hanson, Jarice, Eds. (2005). Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Mass Media and Society. Eighth Edition. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

Course Requirements

We will primarily use WebCT Discussion Board (DBoard) and Private Mail. For WebCT assistance, including one-on-one orientations and troubleshooting, contact the Distance Learning Help Line at 678.839.6248, or e-mail (distance@westga.edu) or visit the DL staff (Honors House). You are also encouraged to reference the [Distance Student Guide](#), [WebCT Orientation Center](#), and [Distance Learning Library Services](#) for online assistance.

WebCT Discussion Board

WebCT Discussion Board (DBoard) will serve as our virtual classroom for discussions and updates/announcements. You are expected to participate in weekly class discussions by responding to discussion assignments by deadline. Each week, I will post a discussion assignment in the *Current Discussion* forum. Discussion guidelines, including definitions, deadlines, and grading criteria are defined in the *DBoard Guidelines* course handout.

Each time you log in, it is important that you check the *Updates/Announcements* forum. I will post important updates in this forum, and you may also post general announcements in this forum. In addition to the *Updates/Announcements* forum, you may initiate or respond to general discussions or pose general questions (not assignment-centered) in the *General Discussions* forum.

Media Impact Case Study

You will be expected to conduct a midterm and final case study that examines the impact of a mass medium relative to one of the controversial topics covered in the assigned text. Guidelines, including deadlines and grading criteria will be defined in the *Media Impact Case Study* course handout.

WebCT Private Mail

WebCT Private Mail (e-mail) allows you to interact privately with me and your colleagues. It is important that you check your Private Mail each time you log in, particularly for messages from me. I process e-mail regularly on weekdays and occasionally on weekends. However, at minimum, I will process e-mail by 2:00pm each weekday. If you send me e-mail after 2:00pm on Fridays, I will respond by 2:00pm the following Monday. Please do not send e-mail related to this course to my UWG e-mail address.

Evaluation

Assignments will be weighted as listed below. I will post DBoard discussion averages bi-weekly and media impact case study grades within 5-7 weekdays of due dates. You may view your grades as well as overall class performance by clicking the WebCT *My Grades* icon.

Analytic Messages Average	35%
Response Messages Average	15%
Midterm Media Impact Case Study	25%
Final Media Impact Case Study	25%

Assignment and final grades will be based on the following scale.

A	90 – higher
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	59 – lower

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will NOT tolerated. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university rules. The State University of West Georgia Student Conduct Code defines academic dishonesty as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating or allowing academic dishonesty in any academic exercise. The Code defines cheating as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids; fabrication as falsification or unauthorized invention of any information or citation; and plagiarism as representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Direct quotations must be

indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

Weekly Schedule (see *Weekly Schedule* course handout)