J382 Media Sociology, Spring 2013

Course: #07715  Wednesday 12 to 3:00, CMA A3.128

Instructor: Stephen D. Reese, School of Journalism
Contact information: BMC 5.310, 471.1666, steve.reese@austin.utexas.edu
Office Hours: Monday 2:00 to 4:30 and by appointment
Faculty website: http://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/reese/

The course title is general, but broadly speaking we are concerned with how media logics develop that convey, shape, and define public life, and how that logic is tied to social structures: political, economic, and cultural. The logic of journalism is the most directly relevant to the political communication process and receives the most attention, but the current issues for research that concern us include conceptualizations of media production, measuring media logics (framing), globalization, and the closely related issues of the new media (cyberspace). The broad course domain is also characterized by the subfield ICA Encyclopedia of Communication heading: “Media Production & Content.” The goals of the class include the following:

- To introduce research on media content and influences on it, otherwise known as media sociology
- To identify different theoretical frameworks helpful in explaining media content
- Stimulate your own theoretical thinking through group activity, an original paper and class discussion
- To find ways to make sense of and apply these conceptual frameworks to present discussions of professional issues, including media bias and press performance

Download: School of Journalism academic ethics policy

Texts

Required


Recommended


**Other required readings:** (available in pdf format on Blackboard and Mendeley).


Schedule

Date  Topic

Getting Ready: some oldies but goodies

Jan. 16  Introductions, getting ideas, critiquing ideas, ethically

Gitlin (1978)
Mills (1959)
School ethics statement

http://journalism.utexas.edu/sites/journalism.utexas.edu/files/attachments/graduate/academic-ethics-policy.pdf

Be prepared to discuss questions and suggested additions to ethics policy

The basics: The Hierarchy of Influences

Jan. 23  Framework of study
Mediating the Message revised chapters 1 and 2 (check BB)
Reese (2008) Encyclopedia overview
Reese & Ballinger (2001)

Jan. 30

Individual level
Carlson, Making memories matter (in Berkowitz)
Mediating revised individual level chapter
Deuze, “What is journalism?” (in Berkowitz)

Feb. 6

Routines
Tuchman (1973)
Breed (1955)
Singer, The socially responsible existentialist (in Berkowitz)
Berkowitz, Blasphemy as a sacred rite/right (in Berkowitz)

Feb. 13

Organizational
Bantz et al. (1980)
Robinson, Institutionalization of online news (in Berkowitz)
Ryfe, A study of newsroom culture (in Berkowitz)
Lee & Chan (2009)

Feb. 20

Extra media and ethnography issues
Mediating the Message revised extramedia chapter
Reese (2009) Gans chapter
Cottle (2007)

Feb. 27

Ideological
Reese (1990)
Handley, Israeli image repair (in Berkowitz)
Reese & Lewis (2009)
Ettema, Crafting cultural resonance (in Berkowitz)
Carlson, War journalism and the “KIA” journalist (in Berkowitz)

Current issues: shifting views of people, structures, sites

March 6

New institutionalism and field theory
Benson (2004)
Ryfe (2006)
Ryfe & Blach-Orsten (2011)
Sparrow (2006)
Benson (2006)

March 13    Spring break, no class

March 20    Geography of media sociology: Comparative and globalization issues

Hanitzsch, “Deconstructing journalism culture” (in Berkowitz)
Berglez (2008)
Fahy & Corcoran (2009)
Reese (2008)
Reese (2010)

March 27    Online convergence issues

Anderson (2010)
Anderson, Blowing up the newsroom (in Domingo)
Reese et al. (2007)
Howard (2002)
Lewis (2011)

Doing media sociology

April 3     Online news ethnography

Boczkowski, Epilogue (in Domingo)
Selections from Domingo & Paterson, TBA

April 10    Selections from Domingo & Paterson, TBA
consult as needed on papers

April 17    Review of recent literature (class member led)
(paper drafts due)

April 24    Review of recent literature (class member led)

May 1       paper presentations

Final paper deadline: TBA
Note: I presume that the articles you select from the “recent literature” will be central and relevant to your paper. Be sure to send them to me electronically for posting on Blackboard by April 12th.

Grading

The bulk of your performance will be based on your ability to contribute to and finish an original research project, suitable for conference presentation and/or publication. Depending on class interests there may be a collaborative project that you can connect your work to. This obviously will depend on your ability to learn the relevant literature, synthesize those aspects relevant to your research, pose appropriate research questions and hypotheses, identify appropriate methods and materials for analysis, and writing up the results. Regular attendance is assumed, of course. The following tasks will be scheduled:

**Discussion leading (15%):** prepare handout for class based on class readings for a given day that helps identify key issues in theory and method and help lead discussion on those readings.

**Research critique presented in class (20%):** Identify key recent research article relevant to project for critique and presentation in class (2 page write-up, with one page handout). Discuss its relevance, theory, method, strengths and weaknesses, assumptions, etc. These articles will presumably be helpful in updating our class readings and adding to the class bibliography. Be sure to provide full citation, hard copy and pdf file if possible to the instructor by Monday of the week in question to distribute to the class.

**Preliminary research proposal (15%):** Prepare 5 to 7 page double-spaced paper that identifies a key media sociology issue, reviews relevant literature, suggests appropriate data and ways to access them, and suggest analytic approaches for coding, categorization, etc. Include your bibliography. I may ask that these be prepared and discussed in class, which I’ll describe in greater detail later.

**Final paper (50%):** Refine literature review, questions, analysis, and discussion for final research article based on project. Paper will have the usual sections and follow the norms of a research presentation in the field, suitable for submission to ICA or related conference. This may be collaborative with approval by the instructor. Further details and guidelines to be reviewed in class.

To be satisfactory, you must show evidence of having connected your chosen issue or study to some of the conceptual areas covered in class and having examined recent work in your area by citing recent articles (2006 to present) in scholarly journals (*J&MCQ, Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Political Communication, International Journal of Press/Politics, Media Culture &...*)