Soc 120 : Sociology of the Media  
Seattle Central Community College  
Winter 2007

Gillian Murphy  
Office: 4106E  
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M-W-Th 12:00 – 1:30 BE 4104

Office Hours: M-F 9-9:50

Course Reader: available in Copy Services (BE 3105) and on reserve in the Library

Seattle Post-Intelligencer: Available outside my office daily

Course Website: http://seattlecentral.edu/faculty/gmurphy/

Course Objectives

The media is a pervasive influence in our lives. In this course we will explore the media in social context, with a specific focus on ways that power relationships among various social groups affect and are affected by the messages being transmitted.

Learning Outcomes

This course will help students:

1. Distinguish between sociological and individualistic perspectives
2. Develop a critical engagement with media
3. Explore ways that the media affects and is affected by power relationships in society

Prerequisites: English 101 is strongly recommended

Films: We will watch approximately one film each week. Some films include material that may be offensive or objectionable to some viewers. You may choose to not take this class if you object.

Disability accommodations: If you need course accommodations based on a documented disability, have any emergency medical information, or need special arrangements in the event of a building evacuation, please inform me of your needs. For other assistance, contact Disability Support Services (206-587-4183 Voice/TTY; Room BE 1147).

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

Contacting the Instructor

I will generally be available to meet with students in my office after class and during my office hours. Outside of those times, the best way to contact me, or to arrange an appointment, is via email. I will usually respond to your emails within 24 hours. I will provide you with plenty of support in this course, but I can not do so 24/7. Thanks for understanding.

Instructor Responsibilities

I will provide you with a course schedule. I will not make large adjustments without consulting with you. I will grade and comment on your assignments in a timely manner. I will reply to your questions in a timely manner. I will provide you with or direct you to the information that you have requested or we will find it together. I will support you to the best of my abilities in your efforts to successfully complete this course.
Student Responsibilities

1. Participation and Preparation

I will take attendance every class. This is a course that requires your participation! You bring something to this course that no one else could bring. Your experiences in the social world will inform your comments, and we will all learn something from you.

In order for your participation to be productive, you will have to be prepared. This means that you have completed the reading assignment and that you have thought about it. You should start by allowing yourself enough time to complete the readings. If at all possible, please spend at least a little time with the newspaper before class and each day. The papers are available to the class at no charge and can be picked up outside my office.

This class will make heavy use of discussion as a learning tool. Discussions are a chance for you to process and explore the media, to explore new ideas and concepts.

Ideally, your comments will be all of the following:
- Relevant to the topic (imagine that!)
- Thoughtful and substantial (a challenge!)
- Respectful (naturally!)

The sociological perspective may run contrary to your own experience of the world; you may struggle to understand and apply the concepts introduced in the course. Some of the thinking I will ask you to do will be difficult. It is also possible that the work I ask you to do does not seem very challenging. Whatever your experience of the course, I request that you take your work in the class seriously and that you pay attention to ways this course can deepen your understanding of the world around you. I firmly believe that everyone can get something out of this course.

2. Following the Schedule

It is the student’s responsibility to know when assignments are due. Due dates are listed in the course schedule.

3. Communication

If you don’t understand something, then please ask for clarification. Your willingness and ability to communicate with me and with your classmates will influence your success in this course.

It is imperative that you treat others with respect in all aspects of this course. In my mind, when you are giving your attention to your cell phone, you are not showing due respect for others. Please turn off your phone and put it away during class. Or leave. You decide. Of course if you need your phone to be on in case of a family emergency, please set it to vibrate and minimize interruption should you need to take a call.
Reflection Papers

There will be approximately one brief reflection paper assigned each week. The assignments will be distributed in class. These papers must be typewritten and should integrate course readings and material covered in class.

Article Summaries

Some articles in the course summary are marked (Summary). You will be required to turn in a brief summary of the article in class. These summaries will be no more than a paragraph and will contain, in your own words, a summary of the article’s main idea. These summaries are a resource you can use during discussions or while working on other papers.

Other Assignments

Details on other assignments, including the technology presentation and final project, will be handed out in class. Assignments due in class on Wednesday will usually be handed out in class on Monday.

Late Work

Barring an unforeseen event that is both out of your control (such as a serious accident) and documented by an appropriate third party, late work will not be accepted. Please contact me if you need to communicate with me about an absence. This policy is not intended to punish a student who needs assistance.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating: Acquiring answers during examinations that are not one’s own.

Plagiarism: To take and use as one’s own the writings or ideas of another person.

Maximum consequences: You will receive a 0.0 for the course.

If you are having trouble in the course, I will help you or direct you to someone who can. The best thing you can do for yourself (and that no one can do for you) is give yourself enough time to do your work.

Grading Summary

Your final grade is computed as follows. The course is designed to reward consistent participation. I can tell you from experience that missing assignments will affect your grade much more quickly than you think it will.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation &amp; Attendance</th>
<th>20 % of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>25 % of final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>20 % of final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Presentation</td>
<td>10 % of final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>25 % of final grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a rough outline of the course. I reserve the option to make small adjustments as necessitated by the natural course progress or by inclement weather, etc… I’ll give you as much advance notice of such changes as practicable.

All work is DUE on the date indicated.

**Section 1 : Media in Our Lives**

1/3 Introduction to the Course
1/4 Todd Gitlin: Media Unlimited p 45-70
1/8 Changes Affecting Traditional Mass Media
1/10 News Media and Society

**Section 2 : Making Music**

1/11 TBA
1/15 MLK Birthday – No Class
1/17 Jeff Sharlett: Big World: How Clear Channel Programs America. *Harpers*
1/18 Reflection Paper

**Section 3 : Gender and Sexuality in the Media**

1/22 Are We Really Living In A Rape Culture
   Gloria Steinem: Erotica vs Pornography
1/24 TBA
1/25 Iris Marion Young: The Five Faces of Oppression
   Reflection Paper

**Section 4 : Images of Ourselves vs. Media Images**

1/29 Goffman: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
1/31 TBA
2/1 Reflection Paper

**Section 5 : Media Ownership**

2/5 Media Code Of Ethics
Ch 8: Newspapers
2/7 TBA
2/8 Reflection Paper

**Section 6 : It Starts So Young**

2/12 Kaiser: Zero to Six: Electronic Media in Lives of Kids
2/14 *Taking Sides*: Is TV Harmful for Children?
2/15 Prepare For Debate

**Section 7 : Media and Social Change / War**

2/19 Presidents Day: No Class
2/21 Jackie Smith et al. "From Protest to Agenda-Building" *Social Forces*
2/22 Reflection Paper
2/28 TBA
3/1 Reflection Paper
Section 8 : The Production of Humor
3/5  TBA
3/7  Malcom Gladwell : The Formula. *New Yorker*
3/8  Reflection Paper

3/12  Final Project Presentations
3/14  Final Project Presentations
3/15  Final Project Presentations