Mass Communication 630
Seminar in Analysis of Media Performance

Semester: Spring 2015
Catalog: #10071
Class Time: Tues 7-9:50p
Classroom: Manzanita Hall 212
Final Exam: None

Elizabeth Blakey, J.D., Ph.D.
Office: Manzanita Hall 327
Hours: Wed 10:45-1:45p and Fri 8:30-9:30a
Email: elizabeth.martinez@csun.edu
Twitter: @professorstory

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Extended application of research and evaluation techniques as used in mass communication research to describe the quality of news media performance. This seminar focuses on quality of news performance in the digitally mediated public sphere as shaped by social forces and emerging communication technologies.

PREREQUISITES AND RESTRICTIONS
This course is restricted to graduate students. Prerequisite is MCOM 600.

OVERVIEW
In this course, students learn research and evaluation techniques used in mass communications research, including classical and contemporary theories, research methods and ethics, and media history. Students examine theories of the public sphere and mass communications more generally as a basis for assessing the quality of news media performance. What constitutes a public sphere? What are the theories and practices of the public sphere? How can those theories be applied to describe the quality of news media performance? The public sphere is thought of a universally available forum in which persons of equal standing discuss the issues of the day—openly, freely, and rationally. The public sphere is an idea and an ideal, but it is also an actual forum, both physical and mediated. Early theorists found the public sphere located in lecture halls, coffee houses and other physical places, and in mediated form, especially printed materials, such as pamphlets and newspapers that were in mass distribution after Gutenberg.

Despite the promise of an equalitarian, open, free and rational forum, scholars and media watchers have long debated the extent to which the public sphere is characterized by equality, universal access, freedom of expression, and rationality. The topic becomes more complicated when the public sphere is comprised not only of physical places and mass distributed news in print form. We are no longer talking about people talking over coffee and newspapers in a public place. The public sphere is now flooded with layers of mediated discussions in print, broadcast, and digital. Parts are private, rather than public. The digital aspects include electronic communication networks, websites, digital books, social media, and phone and tablet apps. Social and mobile media have brought into light the underlying question who speaks in the public sphere and to whom. We see convergence across multiple dimensions. Moreover, the range of mass communication is local and global, bringing issues of nationalism and legal governance to the fore.
Considering the unequal, fragmented, regulated and chaotic elements of the public sphere, the questions become: What is the quality of news performance within the digitally mediated public sphere? Is the digital public sphere in fact a public sphere as traditionally understood? What are its constituent parts? Who are the social actors? What are influences on the public sphere? The media dynamics? The goals and quality? The media effects? What are the parameters, advantages and limitations of the digital public sphere? How can the quality of news performance be improved in the digitally mediated public sphere?
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course will be able to:

• Analyze the quality of media performance along multiple dimensions, including political, social, cultural and economic measures
• Define the parameters, advantages and limitations of the digitally mediated public sphere
• Apply relevant theories to particular cases and situations, engaging in critical analysis and comparison, and research locating scholarship relevant to well-defined research questions bearing on assessment of the quality of news media performance
• Assess the quality of news media performance orally and in written report(s)

REQUIRED TEXTS


3. Articles and handouts listed below and to be specified and located on web or in databases.

SEMINAR RESPONSIBILITIES AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Ten class sessions out of the semester are designated as seminar sessions (see schedule). All students are to participate in every seminar by reading in advance and discussing the issues with one another. All students are to post a short question (50 words or less; intended to prompt seminar discussion) at least 8 hours before each seminar class begins (by 11 a.m. that morning), except for the leader of the day. Every student will lead seminar on one assigned session during the semester. Leaders must send presentation slides to the professor twenty-four hours before the session (by 7 p.m. the day before). Leaders are to present key points for 10 to 20 minutes and then lead an interactive discussion of all the assigned readings, including exercises and examples (see below). In addition to taking leadership roles and actively participating in seminar discussions each week, over the course of the semester, all students (1) select an aspect of the digital public sphere to study; and develop a literature review and a well-defined research question; (2) design a methods-and-data collection plan; (3) collect a data; and (4) complete a written analysis of the quality of a news media performance related to that aspect of the public sphere.

POINT SYSTEM

Questions Posted for Seminar Days: 10% 20
Leadership on Assigned Date/Topic: 15% 30
1. Literature Review and Research Question: 15% 30
2. Methods and Data Collection Plan: 5% 10
3. Data Collection: 5% 10
4. Written Analysis: Quality of a News Media Performance: 50% 100

200  *Minus unexcused absences*
GRADING SCALE
Letter grades will be calculated by adding up total points earned, subtracting for unexcused absences, then dividing the total points earned (out of a possible 200) by two and applying this grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>59 or &lt;= F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEADERSHIP DAYS
Leadership includes: (1) a formal presentation of the key points of the readings using presentation software (PowerPoint, Keynote or similar); (2) at least one summary handout of highlighted ideas or key concepts, not an outline of every point in every reading; (3) at least one theoretical exercise; and (4) at least one news analysis/example with interactive exercise. In addition, leaders are to prepare and ask prompt questions to start and continue the seminar conversation.

DETAILS AND DEADLINES
Although some assignments are lower in points or percentage compared to other assignments, each assignment over the course of the semester is intended to improve the quality of the final written paper. Thus, attention to detail is expected on each assignment. Late assignments are not accepted.

ATTENDANCE
Five points will be taken off for each unexcused absence, starting with the second unexcused absence. (More than one unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.) The sign-in sheet will be picked up at the start of class. Latecomers will not be allowed to sign in, but will be allowed to enter quietly and take part in the class session. Being late counts as an unexcused absence.

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and anyone caught cheating will be reported to the dean of students and will receive a failing grade in the course. For a further explanation of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 613-615 of the 2010-2012 CSUN catalog. Please also remember that U.S. copyright laws protect much of the information posted on the Internet. Passing off this information as original work is a violation of CSUN’s plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the professor’s help, by including in their work and considerations of people and subjects from a variety of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other diverse groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

ACCOMMODATIONS
If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2054. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment.
Schedule of Classes and Readings
Reading Assignments Subject to Change

Week One:

Tues Jan 20

INTRODUCTION
A. Assessment of Quality of News Media Performance

Reading:

Syllabus

Model for Leadership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media and Society</td>
<td>Formal presentation of the key points on slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Inquiry: Theoretical Approaches</td>
<td>Summary handout (highlights, not every point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Media?</td>
<td>Theoretical exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is News? The Seal Beach Beauty Salon Shooting</td>
<td>News analysis/example with interactive exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the News Cycle? #OscarsSoWhite</td>
<td>News analysis/example with interactive exercise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As stated above, leadership of the seminar includes: (1) a formal presentation of the key points of the readings using presentation software (PowerPoint, Keynote or similar); (2) at least one summary handout (3) at least one theoretical exercise; and (4) at least one news analysis/example with interactive exercise. The elements listed above are a model for leadership days.

Week Two:

Tues Jan 27

PRINT - SEMINAR 1
A. Representation
B. Medium is the Message, Print as Agent of Change

Reading:

**Week Three:**

Tues Feb 3

**TEXT - SEMINAR 2**

A. News Values, Authorship, Structuralism

B. Modernity/Postmodernity, New Journalism

**Reading:**


---

**Week Four:**

Tues Feb 10

**BROADCAST - SEMINAR 3**

A. Frankfurt School, Media Events

B. Death of Newspapers? and Public Nature of Broadcast

**Reading:**


*Skim entire table of contents; select one or two chapters to read in depth.*

---

**Recommended Reading:**


**Week Five:**

Tues Feb 17

RESEARCH WORKSHOP 1

A. Social Research—Multiple Dimensions
B. Scientific Methods and Measures, Practicalities

Reading:

Research Methods -- Packet to be Distributed
Mass Communication Research Resources: [http://library.csun.edu/Guides/MCOM](http://library.csun.edu/Guides/MCOM)

**Week Six:**

**DUE FEB 24:** Literature Review and Research Question **

At least five original citations, mixed with citations from course APA style, 600 to 750 words
Well-defined question posed at the end of literature review -- How or Why . . .

Tues Feb 24

INTERNET - SEMINAR 4

A. Media Effects, Media as Public Sphere
B. Social Implications of the Internet, Web 2.0, Participatory Media

Reading:


Recommended Reading:


**Week Seven:**

**DUE MAR 3:** Methods and Data Collection Plan **

State the theoretical tradition (critical theory or cultural studies). State the method (survey, archival, field observation, content analysis). State the case or situation and how going to collect data.
**Week Seven (Cont’d):**

Tues Mar 3  
**SOCIAL - SEMINAR 5**  
A. Gatekeepers, Self-Produced Media, Hypertext  
B. Purposes and Practices of SoMe (Social and Mobile Media)  

**Reading:**  
Syllabus  

**Week Eight:**

**** DUE MAR 10: Data Collection ****

Provide data collection as far as has been collected, in accord with data collection plan. State plans for completion.

Tues Mar 10  
**POWER - SEMINAR DAY 6**  
A. Objectivity, Authorship, Poststructuralism  
B. Field Theory  

**Reading:**  
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/10/getting-grief-right/?smid=fbnytimes&smtyp=cur&bicmp=AD&bicsmlukp=WT.mc_id&bicsmt=1409232722000&bicsmet=1419773522000&r=1  

**Recommended Reading:**  
**Week Nine:**

**DUE MAR 17:** First Draft of Written Analysis **
Combine literature review, research question, data collection plan and a summary description of data collected (charts as appropriate) -- all in one document, 8 to 10 pages.

Tues Mar 17
GLOBAL - SEMINAR DAY 7
A. Globalization of Action, Globalization of News
B. Nationalism, Localizations

Reading:
* NOTE: Shortened reading list due to research and writing requirements.


Recommended Reading:

**Week Ten:**

**DUE MAR 24:** (Revised) First Draft of Written Analysis **
Bring two printed copies of current version of draft report to class for peer-review workshop.

Tues Mar 24
RESEARCH WORKSHOP 2
Reading: None

*Cesar Chavez Day and Spring Break -- Two Weeks without Session*

**Week Eleven:**

**DUE APR 14:** Second Draft of Written Analysis **
Interesting title, abstract (100 words), introductory paragraph, literature review, research question, methods and data collection statement (plan), and summary description of data collected (charts as appropriate) -- all in one document, 12 to 15 pages.
**Week Eleven Cont’d:**

Tues Apr 14

DIVERSITY

A. Identities and the Public Sphere(s)
B. New Media and Dominant Cultures

Reading:

* NOTE: Shortened reading list due to research and writing requirements.


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week Twelve:**

**NOTE: Shortened reading list due to research and writing requirements.**


**Recommended Reading:**


**NOTE: Shortened reading list due to research and writing requirements.**


**Recommended Reading:**


Week Thirteen:

Tues Apr 28
FREEDOM
A. Copyrights and the Creative Commons
B. Free Speech and Hate Speech
Reading:
   Media Law -- Packet to be Distributed

Week Fourteen: LAST CLASS

Tues May 5
Student Presentations of Written Analyses
NOTE: Report grade is dependent on attendance/participation that are mandatory for last class session. Grade on written report to be dropped 20% for failing to present (20 out of 100 points). Also, grade on written report to be dropped 10% for failing to attend and participate in the presentations of others (10 out of 100 points).

Final Exam: None

Grades posted online approximately one week after finals end.