

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**MASTER SYLLABUS**

**SOCI 250: Sociology of the Mass Media**

**Created by: Amani Awwad, Ph.D.  
Updated by: Amani Awwad, Ph.D.**

**SCHOOL of BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS  
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
*Last Updated: May 2015*  
FALL 2021**

- A. **TITLE:** Sociology of the Mass Media
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** SOCI 250
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 Lecture Hours per Week for 15 Weeks
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No
- E. **GER CATEGORY:** No
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall or Spring

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course students will explore the component and the basic concepts of mass media. Special emphasis is on the social construction power of the mass media. The positive role of the mass media will be explored as well as the negative impact. The social control function of the mass media will be explained. The course is aimed at providing a critical assessment of the social construction power of the mass media with an emphasis on images, content and context as presented in the mass media. The course will explore the images of various segments of American society as presented in the mass media including racial/ethnic groups, gender and sexual orientation, age and class.

- H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:** SOCI 101 or permission of instructor

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<i><u>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</u></i>	<i><u>ISLO &amp; Sub-Sets</u></i>
a. Describe the basic components and concepts of mass media.	1 Communication [W]
b. Explain and assess the various theories of mass media, coming from Sociology and the Social Sciences. Including basic premise, assumptions and limitations of these theories.	2 Critical Thinking [CA]
c. Examine the role of mass media in constructing appropriate and suitable definitions, as perceived by society, of norms that guide human behavior within the complex arena of gender relations, race and ethnic dynamics, both from macro and micro orientation.	2 Critical Thinking [IA]

KEY	<b><u>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5]</u></b>
ISLO #	ISLO & Subsets
1	<b>Communication Skills</b> Oral [O], Written [W]
2	<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry &amp; Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS]</i>
3	<b>Foundational Skills</b> <i>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR]</i>
4	<b>Social Responsibility</b> <i>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</i>
5	<b>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</b>

- J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** No
- K. **TEXTS:** To be determined by the instructor

## L. REFERENCES:

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- Biagi, Shirley (1993). *Media/Reader: Perspectives on Mass Media-Industries, Effects, and Issues*. Wadsworth Publishing Company.
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- Butler, Judith. (1997). *Excitable speech: A Politics of the Performative*. Routledge
- C. Canton, Gregg Lee (1998). *Empirical Approaches to Sociology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. (Second Edition).
- Clover, Carol J. (1992). *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton University Press.
- Conteau, David and Hoynes. William. (1997). *Media/Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*. Pine Forge Press.
- Dines, Gail and Humez, Jean M. (Editors) (1995). *Gender, Race and Class in Media: A text reader*. Sage publications.
- Dominick, Joseph R. (2013). *The dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in transition*. (12th, edition). McGraw-Hill.
- Hanson, Janice and Maxcy, David J. (Editors) (1999) *Sources: Notable Selections in Mass Media* (Second Edition). Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.
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- Harris, Richard Jackson (1994). *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication* (Second Edition). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Holeton, Richard (1998). *Composing Cyberspace: Identity, Community, and Knowledge in the Electronic Age*. McGraw-Hill.
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- Langer, Sidney (2013). *From Slavery to 9/11: Readings in the Sociology and Social Psychology of Extreme Situations*. (Edition NO.01). Pearson publication.
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- Mulvey, Laura. (1989). *Visual and other Pleasures*. Indiana University Press.
- Rampton, Sheldon and Stauber, John, (2003). *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq*. Penguin Press.
- Rapping, Elayne. (1994). *Mediations: Forays into the Culture and Gender Wars*. South End Press.
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- Rutherford, Paul. (2004). *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Marketing the War against Iraq*. University of Toronto Press.
- Ryan, Michael and Kellna, Douglas. (1988). *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*. Indiana University Press.
- Surette, Ray (1992). *Media, Crime and Criminal Justice: Images and Realities*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Wekesson, Carol (Editor), (1995). *Violence in the Media*. Green haven Press.
- Whetmore, Edward Jay. (1993). *Media America. Media World: Form, Content, and Consequence of Mass Communication* (5th Edition). Wadsworth Publishing Company.

**M. EQUIPMENT: Technology Enhanced Classroom**

**N. GRADING METHOD: A -F**

**O. SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:  
Exams • Quizzes • Assignments • Participation/Discussion**

**P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

I. What is Mass Media? Components and Basic Concepts

- A. Definition of Mass Media
- B. Components of Mass Media
- C. Basic Concepts

II. Theoretical Perspectives on the Mass Media

- A. The Sociological Paradigm and the Mass Media
  1. The structural functional paradigm
  2. The social conflict paradigm
  3. The symbolic interactionist paradigm
- B. Selected Theories of the Mass Media
  1. Social Learning Theory--observational learning, Modeling Theory: the issue of media violence
  2. Cultivation Theory: extensive exposure to media television
  3. Socialization Theory and prolonged exposure to media
  4. Agenda setting and audience orientation
  5. Uses and Gratification Theory: the role of the active audience
  6. Schematic Theory and information processing

III. Functions of the Mass Media and Audience Orientation

- A. Functions of Mass Media
  1. Manifest vs. latent functions
  2. The mass media as an agent of social control: dysfunctional mass media
- B. Audience Orientation of the Mass Media
  1. Active vs. passive audience
  2. The ideological impact/consequences of active audience and the passive audience

IV. Social Constructionism and the Mass Media

- A. Theoretical Bases
- B. The Social/Historical Context
  1. The intended message
  2. The targeted audience
  3. Content analysis
  4. Contextual analysis
- C. Symbolic and General Impact/Consequences
  1. Negative impact and stigmatization
  2. The media as an agent of propaganda
  3. The role of the media in creating appropriate labels and/or images

## V. Minorities in the Mass Media: The Case for Racism, Discrimination, and Exaggerated Stereotypes of Various Minority Groups

### A. The Four Stages of Minority Portrayals:

1. Non-recognition
2. Ridicule
3. Regulation
4. Respect

### B. Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Mass Media: A Sample of Stereotypes, Racism, and Discrimination

1. African Americans
2. Hispanic Americans
3. Native Americans
4. Jewish Americans
5. Arab Americans
6. Asian Americans

### C. Gender and Sexual Orientation

1. Femininity and masculinity within the genre of horror movies and action movies
2. Femininity and masculinity within the genre of early Western movies
3. Femininity and masculinity within the genre of the soap opera, romance novels, and the advertising and music industry
4. The gay and lesbian agenda and the mass media

### D. Other minority groups

1. The elderly and the mass media
2. Classism in the mass media
3. The physically challenged and the mass media

## VI. Ideological Wars in the Mass Media: Constitutional Challenges

### A. Constitutional Debates and the Mass Media

1. Freedom of speech vs. censorship
2. Legal implications of the First Amendment
3. Whose freedom of speech is protected and whose message is censored: ideological implications and consequences

### B. Winners and losers in the ideological warfare's in the mass media: a sample

1. The rating game
2. Violence in the media
3. Pornography
4. Sex education and the mass media
5. Hate speech
6. Rap music