

---

# Communication 147-01 & 02: Media Literacy



Photo by Ian Hayhurst, used under a Creative Commons for-attribution, non-commercial, share-alike license. Available at [www.flickr.com/photos/imh/3297961043/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imh/3297961043/).

---

**Instructor:** Bill Kirkpatrick  
**Office:** 327 Higley, 587-8512  
**Office Hours:** Monday-Tuesday, 4:30-5:30; or by appointment  
**Email:** [kirkpatrickb@denison.edu](mailto:kirkpatrickb@denison.edu)

---

## Course Summary

While most of us are proficient consumers of visual electronic media – we have the speed of symbol-recognition and comprehension skills to be adept "readers" – few of us have been taught to bring to that reading the critical skills we learn in the study of literature, music or art. This course examines how sound and images construct the "realities" that media presumably represent.

## Course Goals

The goal of this course is to help you acquire new vocabularies and skills of media analysis that will allow you to become a more critical and sophisticated consumer and producer of media. By the end of this class, you should be able to:

- Analyze the elements through which media texts are constructed in order to unpack the social, political, and/or ideological content of those texts.
- Situate your analyses within larger cultural contexts in order to explain how and why that content might matter (politically, culturally, etc.).
- Produce your own media texts with an awareness of the social, political, and/or ideological content of your work, as well as how it might be interpreted by others.

---

## Required Text (available at the bookstore)

Grossberg, Lawrence, et al. *Media Making: Mass Media in a Popular Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006.

---

## Assignments

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late assignments will be penalized ½ grade per day .

Photography Project	10%
Audio Project	10%
Video Project	10%
Midterm I (2/16):	20%
Midterm II (4/13):	20%
Final	20%
Class Engagement:	10%

---

## Policies and Expectations

Attendance: Your attendance and participation are integral to the success of the course as well as your own personal achievement. I will be taking attendance daily, and missing class or failing to participate constructively will definitely impact your class engagement grade.

Lateness: Be in your seat and ready to begin class at the scheduled start time. I am much more strict about lateness than absenteeism: I would rather you not come to class at all than interrupt your classmates by showing up late.

Preparation: Always bring that day's readings to class with you. The syllabus will always state clearly what you should read prior to each class, which assignments you should hand in, and what else you must do or bring for a given day. Late assignments will be penalized by a half-grade for each 24 hours of lateness (e.g. from B+ to B). If you know that you will have difficulty completing an assignment on time, let me know before the deadline and I will try to work with you if possible.

Written Work: All written work prepared outside of class must be typed (double-spaced), spellchecked, and proofread. Failure to run your work through a spellchecker (one more time before printing is a good idea) will automatically result in a 5% deduction from your grade for that assignment. Multiple-page documents must be stapled—I will not accept unstapled work (please note that paper clips and dog-ears are *not* staples). I also will not accept assignments by email under any circumstances—you must hand in a hard copy of the assignment on the due date in order to avoid a late penalty.

Grades: All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. The calculation of your grade will be based on a 1,000-point scale, and the weight of each assignment is listed above. If you are concerned about your grade, come talk to me as early as possible.

In-Class Behavior: You may not eat in class unless you bring enough for everyone (beverages are okay). You may not use computers in class without prior approval. Your cell phone or PDA must be turned off and put away during class. Points will be deducted from your participation grade if your phone rings, or if I notice you using your cell phone or PDA during class. If you absolutely need to have your phone on during class, talk to me at the beginning of the semester. **NOTE: TEXTING OR WEB-SURFING IN CLASS WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC ZERO FOR CLASS ENGAGEMENT FOR THE SEMESTER. THIS IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR AND THERE IS NO APPEAL: IF I THINK YOU'VE DONE IT, YOU'VE DONE IT. SO DON'T EVEN GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF SNEAKING IN A TEXT OR A QUICK CHECK OF YOUR EMAIL.**

Email Policy: I will regularly use email to send out announcements, changes in the syllabus, reminders about tests or due dates, etc. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly to keep up-to-date with these announcements. I will use the email address you have listed with the university; therefore, please make sure that this is indeed the correct address. I promise to answer all email from students within 24 hours (36 hours on weekends) and will hold you responsible for any announcements made via email within 24 hours of the announced change (36 hours on weekends).

Accessibility and Special Accommodations: It is important that the course be accessible to all students. If you need any alternative accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to be able to participate fully in the course, or if there are any external issues that may affect your work in this course, please contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support & Enrichment Center in 102 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in that office.

Academic Honesty: You may not turn in substantially similar work to two classes without the express consent of *both* instructors. All sources in your written work must be properly cited; if you have any doubts about correct citation, contact the Writing Center or any of the many paper and online guides to academic citation. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated, and students found to have committed plagiarism, **regardless of whether or not the plagiarism was committed intentionally and knowingly**, will face severe grade penalties and will also be reported to the university to face further academic discipline. You are encouraged to use the resources available in the library system and the Writing Center to guide your research. In addition, I call your attention to Denison's new statement on academic integrity:

"Proposed and developed by Denison students, passed unanimously by DCGA and Denison's faculty, the Code of Academic Integrity requires that instructors notify the Associate Provost of cases of academic dishonesty, and it requires that cases be heard by the Academic Integrity Board. Further, the code makes students responsible for promoting a culture of integrity on campus and acting in instances in which integrity is violated.

"Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted—not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. Students should ask their instructors for assistance in determining what sorts of materials and assistance are appropriate for assignments and for guidance in citing such materials clearly.

"For further information about the Code of Academic Integrity see <http://www.denison.edu/about/integrity.html>."

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Readings should be completed by that day's class, and you should come prepared to discuss them. Those that are not from the textbook (*MM*) are marked as either on electronic reserve (e-res) or on Blackboard (BB). Full citations for all articles will be available on Blackboard. The e-res password for this class is *discourse*.

*Every single thing on this syllabus is subject to change, so check your email for announcements and keep on your toes.*

### UNIT ONE: SOME FOUNDATIONS

Jan. 19	<b><u>Introduction:</u></b> <b>Communication is Constitutive</b>	
Jan. 21	<b><u>Foundations I:</u></b> <b>Not Media "Effects," Not "Truth"</b>	<i>MM</i> , xvii-17, 315-335
Jan. 26	<b><u>Foundations II:</u></b> <b>Interpretation vs. Decoding</b>	Smith, "Just a Movie" (BB link) <i>MM</i> , 17-33
Jan. 28	<b><u>Foundations III:</u></b> <b>Media History</b>	<i>MM</i> , 34-47, 51-64
Feb. 2	<b><u>Foundations IV:</u></b> <b>Financial Underpinnings</b>	<i>MM</i> , 99-132
Feb. 4	<b><u>Foundations IV:</u></b> <b>Making Meaning</b>	<i>MM</i> , 135-160
Feb. 9	<b><u>Foundations V:</u></b> <b>Interpreting Meaning</b>	<i>MM</i> , 161-192
Feb. 11	<b><u>Foundations VI:</u></b> <b>Ideology</b>	<i>MM</i> , 193-216
Feb. 16	<b><u>Midterm I</u></b>	
Feb. 18	<b><u>Lab I (325 Higley):</u></b> <b>Media Literacy for Students</b>	

### UNIT TWO: MEDIA AND POLITICS

Feb. 23	<b><u>Media and Politics I:</u></b> <b>News and Reality</b>	<i>MM</i> , 339-357
Feb. 25	<b><u>Media and Politics II:</u></b> <b>The Problem of the "Public"</b>	<i>MM</i> , 378-420 (skip Boxes 12.3-12.5)
Mar. 2	<b><u>Media and Politics III:</u></b> <b>Popular Politics</b>	Jenkins, "Photoshop for Democracy" (e-res)

### UNIT THREE: MEDIA SPECIFICITY

Mar. 4	<b><u>Lab II (028 Higley):</u></b> <b>Photoshop Elements</b>	Atomic Learning: Photoshop Elements 6 (BB link)
--------	---	---

- Mar. 9      **Media Specificity II:**  
**Photography**      Winston, "The Camera Never Lies" (e-res)  
Morris, "Photography as a Weapon" (BB)
- Mar. 11      **Media Specificity I:**  
**Telegraphy**      Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph" (e-res)  
TURN IN: Photoshop assignment

**SPRING BREAK, MAR. 13-MAR. 21**

- Mar. 23      **Media Specificity III:**  
**Radio**      Douglas, "The Zen of Listening" (e-res)
- Mar. 25      **Lab III (028 Higley):**  
**GarageBand**      Atomic Learning: GarageBand '09 (BB link)
- Mar. 30      **Media Specificity IV:**  
**Film**      Bordwell, excerpts from *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (e-res)
- Apr. 1      **Media Specificity V:**  
**Television**      Butler, excerpts from *Television* (e-res)  
TURN IN: Audio assignment
- Apr. 6      **Lab IV (325 Higley):**  
**iMovie**      Atomic Learning: iMovie '09 (BB link)
- Apr. 8      **Media Specificity VII:**  
**New Media**      Jenkins, "Introduction: 'Worship at the Altar of Convergence'" (e-res)
- Apr. 13      **Media Specificity VI:**  
**Video Games**      Gee, "Semiotic Domains" (e-res)  
TURN IN: Video assignment
- Apr. 15      **NO CLASS**
- Apr. 20      **Midterm II**

**UNIT FOUR: MEDIA IN A GLOBAL AGE**

- Apr. 22      **Media in Global Age I:**  
**Media Globalization**      MM, 421-455  
***EVALS: Sec. 01: 1:30-1:50, 100 FELLOWS***  
***Sec. 02: 3:00-3:20, 028 HIGLEY***
- Apr. 27      **Media in Global Age II:**  
**Global Media Fandom**      Jenkins, "Pop Cosmopolitanism" (e-res)
- Apr. 29      **Cultural Policy Issues III:**  
**The Internet and Global Policy**      Goldsmith & Wu, "Digital Borders" (BB link)  
Wu, "The Filtered Future" (BB link)

**FINAL EXAM:**      ***Sec. 01 (K): FRI., MAY 7, 2:00-4:00 P.M.***  
***Sec. 02 (J): WED., MAY 5, 6:30-8:30 P.M.***