

**CM342D.01: Media, Culture, and Society  
Spring 2015**

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Tuesday, Thursday 1:40 pm – 2:55 pm  
**Cohn Hall Rm 131**

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 12:15 – 1:30 pm (open)

Also available on Wednesdays 11:00am – 1:00 pm (by prior appointment only)

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**Course Description** (from the Loyola University Maryland undergraduate catalog):

Students explore the impact of media on culture and social structure through the close examination of cultural products including books, television shows, music, and advertising. Using a wide range of theoretical constructions, students learn to analyze the social meanings of cultural objects.

**Learning Objectives**

1. To understand how media systems are integrated and shaped by larger systems of power and cultural understanding and, how in turn, those systems of power and stratification are dependent of communications.
2. To develop critical tools to explore how non-dominant groups including women, people of color, social class, and sexual orientation are represented in the media; the significance of those representations, the role of those representations in the reproduction of inequality and how those representations have changed over time.
3. To develop a meaningful understanding of the evolution of media systems and how inequality of access combined with the proliferation of platforms influence social perceptions and interaction, as well as social structure.
4. To write analytically about issues of race, class and gender in conjunction with media systems.

**Required Texts and Materials**

Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated: the social lives of networked teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

De Zengotita, Thomas. (2005). *Mediated: How the media shapes your world and the way you live in it*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Johnson, Steven. (2005). *Everything bad is good for you*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Kidd, Dustin. (2014). *Pop culture freaks: Identity, mass media, and society*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Additional readings and materials will be required each week. They will be posted online and can be accessed via the course Moodle page. **READINGS ON MOODLE ARE LABELED WITH (M)**

I will use Moodle to post course lecture slides. Slides will be available prior to class (by 12 noon the Friday of the week before class).

## **COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Expectations**

We will look at a lot of fun media content in this course. At the same time, we'll also review some complicated and challenging concepts. Students who wish to be successful in this course will come to class prepared by having done the readings ahead of time and be able to discuss with the larger group. Part of being an active contributor in class is offering your own commentary on the material. It will also be important to respect the comments and questions of your fellow students as we work to answer some tough questions. It is your job as students to keep up-to-date with the course schedule. It is my job as the professor to keep you informed of any changes in schedule. Some of the material we may look at may contain mature content. You are free to step out of class without penalty if some of the content makes you feel uncomfortable.

### **Contacting Me**

Email is the best way to reach me ([abbecker@loyola.edu](mailto:abbecker@loyola.edu)) with any course related questions. If your email arrives during normal business hours (M-F, 9am – 5pm), I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. I do not check my email regularly during the evenings and weekends. Please remember to put CM 342 in your email subject line and remember that while email is electronic, it is still a form of professional communication.

### **Contacting You**

I plan to contact you via email at your Loyola.edu account. It is your responsibility to regularly check this account for announcements and notes about the course. If there is a change in schedule, I will send out important information via email so please check your messages daily.

## Office Hours

My office hours are posted on the syllabus. Please feel to drop in during my open office hour times on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While I will be around most Wednesdays for office hours, it's a good idea to email me ahead of time if you'd like to stop by. I am also available to meet with you at other times; simply email me to set up an appointment. If you make an appointment with me, I expect you to keep it. If you need to cancel, please email me 24 hours ahead of time.

## Technology Policy

While laptops, cell phones, and tablets are useful for multi-tasking, they can sometimes pose a distraction. I'm going to trust you to use technology appropriately while in the classroom. I understand that sometimes emergencies arise and you may need to step out and answer a phone call. Please let me know ahead of time if something is going on and just step out quietly and discreetly. I expect students to be active participants in the classroom—we only meet for 2 ½ hours each week. I'll give you my full attention; I expect you to do the same.

## Attendance

Attendance at class (and on-time arrival) is expected. I understand that sometimes things happen or that you might get sick during the course of the semester. Please take care of yourselves and don't bring your germs to class.

Officially, I allow **two** unexcused absences during the course of the semester. If you miss more than **two** classes, this will impact your class participation grade (see below). Please keep track of your absences yourself; I will not email you with updates of the number of classes you have missed. If you missed class, it is your responsibility to find out what material we covered and get the notes and announcements from another student; please don't email me asking for notes for missed classes. It is your responsibility to catch up – it is not my job to catch you up.

## Student Athletes

If you are a student athlete, please provide me with your travel and game schedule indicating when you will need to miss class to participate in athletic events. While travel for athletics is an excused absence, you will need to make up any missed work.

## Late Work/Missed Exams

**\*\*Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the following instances:**

1. hospitalization or illness, with a documented doctor's note; or

2. a death or serious illness in the family, with documentation from an immediate family member.

In all cases, the decision to allow a student to make up an exam/extend the deadline for an assignment, as well as the time period for completion, is up to the discretion of the professor.

In general, assignment due dates are published well in advance. If you know you are going to be out or away from your computer when an assignment is due online, please upload ahead of time.

If you are unable to take an exam given the reasons listed above, please try to contact me at least 24 hours ahead of time (if possible). Barring extenuating circumstances, students who miss an exam and do not make alternate arrangements ahead of time will receive a zero.

### **Students with Disabilities**

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Disability Support Services Office at (410) 617-2062 or Marcia Wiedefeld at [mwiedefeld@loyola.edu](mailto:mwiedefeld@loyola.edu). If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability, which requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need in this class.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to understand the meaning of the Honor Code (see: <http://iggy.loyola.edu/catalogues/current/undergraduate/general/studentlife.html#PageLink3>). **Ignorance of the Honor Code is not a valid reason for committing an act of academic dishonesty.** The following constitute violations of the Code and are defined in the **Community Standards Handbook**: cheating, stealing, lying, forgery, plagiarism, and the failure to report a violation. Please refer to the College Catalogue and Student Handbook for further explanation of the Code. Violations of the Honor Code may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Loyola College Honor Council.

Department of Communication policy reiterates that the university honor code applies to all CM courses, including this one. I will follow the Department of Communication's policy guidelines for honor code violations if any infraction of the code occurs. The department's policy is available upon request.

### **Student Support Services**

Loyola offers services to support students' academic and emotional development:

1. The Study Center, located on the third floor of Jenkins Hall, offers tutoring, writing coaching, and study skills guidance <https://www.loyola.edu/thestudy>;
2. The Writing Center offers consultations on writing technique and is located in Jenkins Hall 011 <https://inside.loyola.edu/writingcenter/index.html>. Make an appointment by calling 5415 or emailing [lwc@loyola.edu](mailto:lwc@loyola.edu).

## The Loyola Difference

What makes this Loyola University course different from similar courses taught at other universities? The difference is the Jesuit educational philosophy. Here are some of the ways that the Jesuit philosophy influences and enhances this course.

Concern for the World. The Jesuit philosophy affirms the goodness of the world and encourages a realistic knowledge of our society. In practical terms, this means that we do not restrict ourselves to text material. To help us relate what is going on in the world with course content, learning will include critical analysis of the practitioner world.

Concern for Critical Thinking. In Jesuit education, particular care is given to developing the imaginative, the affective, and the creative dimensions of the student, as well as the development of logic through argument and counter-argument. This means, whatever the course subject matter, there will always be room for the subjective, the opinion, and the intuition. In this course, we are encouraged and expected to question assumptions and assertions.

Emphasis on Communication Skills. A Jesuit education prepares students for active participation in their businesses and communities. Full participation is impossible without well-exercised skills in written and oral communication. Course assignments will include opportunities to practice and improve your communication skills. You will be required to make both written and oral presentations for this class.

Concern for Ethics and Values. Jesuit education is value-oriented; it does not take place in an ethical vacuum. This means much more than the obvious proscription of plagiarism, cheating, and similar academic dishonesty. It means that, whenever possible, the ethical implications of course material or relevant situations will be raised and discussed.

Concern for the Individual. Finally, the primary hallmark of a Jesuit education is cura personalis, individual care and concern for each person. Feel free to request an individual review or to discuss any issue at any time. Loyola faculty members are duty bound to serve students. Posted office hours are when I am guaranteed to be available, but students will be met at all other times as well, as much as possible.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>
Paper 1: Media Inventory	10%
Paper 2: Media Analysis	15%
Final Research Paper	25%
Presentation	10%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Participation	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grading**

A	94-100	<p><b>Grading Policy:</b> Students <b>earn the grades they deserve</b> based on the quality of the work completed; <b>students are not given grades</b>. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their grades on Moodle and monitor their progress/status in the course.</p> <p><b>In general, I do not change grades unless there is some sort of administrative error.</b> Students are always welcome to come to office hours to discuss grades 24 hours after the grade is posted online. <b>I will not discuss grades or grade complaints/concerns over email.</b></p>
A-	90-94	
B+	87-90	
B	84-87	
B-	80-84	
C+	77-80	
C	74-77	
C-	70-74	
D+	67-70	
D	60-67	
F	Below 60	

### **Assignments**

**Paper 1: Media Inventory.** (10%) The objective of this paper is to make you aware of your own media consumption. You will be asked to monitor your media use for one week and then write a 3-4 page paper (1000 words maximum) describing when and why you use media now (or how you used it in the past) and for what purposes or outcomes. The first half of the paper should detail your media usage and will count for 50% of the grade. The second half of the paper (also 50% of the grade) should focus on self-reflection and address these key questions:

- How much (and which) of your media usage is routine? (You engage with the same media at the same time, habitually)
- How much (and which) of your media usage is social? (You experience it with other people or interact with other people.)
- Has your media usage changed over time (e.g., since you entered college)?
- In reflecting on your media usage, what has surprised you?

- What do you think is significant about the answers to the above questions?

A more detailed grading rubric will be provided later in the semester.

**This paper will be due on Moodle by 12 noon on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.**

**Paper 2: Media Analysis.** (15%) Put your propeller hat on or step into the latest middle school fad. Think back to your favorite commodity from your childhood (book, cartoon, movie, song, etc.) **OR** your favorite hero from your adolescence and take a deeper look. Using the arguments presented in de Zengotita's *Mediated* about the products of our childhood and their deeper meanings **OR** the twilight of heroes, construct a 5 page essay (1500 words maximum) that offers a detailed reflection on the significance of your chosen commodity or hero. Spend the first ¼ of the paper describing the product or hero in detail. Use the balance of the paper to address the key questions listed below. Be sure to use the Blob, mediation, and other key concepts from *Mediated* as a framework:

- What does this media product or hero say about our larger cultural experience?
- What about your cultural experience as a child? (or as an adolescent)?
- What is this cultural object's (hero's) significance? Or upon deeper reflection, is it (or him/her) insignificant?
- What can you offer in terms of a critique of the cultural product's mode of production/the media's treatment of your hero?
- What is the "real experience" of interacting with this media product or hero as a child/adolescent? Now as an adult?
- How has your perception of this product or hero changed from childhood/adolescence given your reading of *Mediated*?

A more detailed grading rubric will be provided later in the semester.

**This paper will be due on Moodle by 12 noon on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.**

**Final Research Paper:** (25%) This larger assignment (8-10 page paper; 2500 words maximum) requires you to engage in and collect original research. While a more detailed assignment sheet and rubric will be provided later in the semester, the final research paper requires you to respond to the following question.

- Take a closer look at a larger media product (a television series spread across multiple seasons, the work of a major artist, a genre of music, a form of television like the sitcom, a film or book series, a genre of Internet content, the albums of a prominent musical artist, etc.) and discuss: (a) the history of that cultural product and/or artist, (b) the lessons it offers in terms of cultural production, (c) what the product says about representations of individuals and groups, and (d) the ultimate significance of this product as a cultural force.

Past projects have focused on important key television series like: Mad Men, Sex and the City, Entourage, M\*A\*S\*H. Other projects have looked at genres of content (reality TV programming, punk music, video games, young adult novels, characters in animated movies, etc.) We will spend more time brainstorming potential topics of interest later in the semester.

A more detailed grading rubric will be provided later in the semester.

The final research paper will be due online by the start of the final exam session.  
**(Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 pm)**

\*\* While more detailed instructions will follow for each assignment, it is important to note that all papers should be written in 12-point Times New Roman font. Papers should be double-spaced and have 1" margins all around. Make sure you add page numbers to your paper in the footer and put your name in the header (you'd be surprised how many people forget). A reference list (if applicable) should be on a separate final page(s). Everything should be uploaded as one word document (.doc or .docx) with your Last Name\_Assignment as the title (e.g., Becker\_Paper1). We use APA style for citing all references. For more information on APA style, visit:

<http://guides.indlibrary.org/content.php?pid=344229&sid=2972524>

**Presentation:** (10%). During the final weeks of the course, you will prepare a high-impact, brief presentation of your research paper (~5 minutes/kind of like a "TED talk"). In your presentation, you'll want to summarize your key argument, grab our attention, and engage with the audience. Your presentation will be evaluated by the instructor and receive peer feedback. We will pick presentation dates towards the end of the semester. All materials will be due online in advance of the first presentation session **(by 12:00 noon on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>)**

**Exam 1:** (15%) The first exam will primarily feature short answer and short essay questions about the material covered in lecture and course readings during the first half of the semester. The exam date is posted on the course schedule.

**Exam 2:** (15%) The second exam will primarily feature short answer and short essay questions about the material covered in lecture and course readings during the second half of the semester. The exam date is posted on the course schedule.

**Participation:** (10%) Participation is an integral part of this course. Your level of participation includes your contributions and preparedness for class, your engagement with course discussion, and your contributions using the #COM342 hashtag. Attendance is factored into participation as well.



	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignments</b>
Week 1	T 1/13	Introduction to Course	
	Th 1/15	Introductions/Media Inventory	Twitter Profile & Media Product
Week 2	T 1/20	Media Influence	De Zengotita Intro, Ch 1, Ch 2
	Th 1/22	<b>Merchants of Cool</b> /Mediation	De Zengotita Ch 3 & 5 (skip 4)
Week 3	T 1/27	Media Influence cont.	De Zengotita 6-end
	Th 1/29	Sociology of Popular Culture	<b>Media Inventory Due</b> Kidd Ch 1
Week 4	T 2/3	Race	Kidd Ch 2 NPR: Race on TV, (M) Viola Davis (M)
	Th 2/5	Class	Kidd Ch 3 – Skip Methodology Breaking Bad (M)
Week 5	T 2/10	Gender	Kidd Ch 4 Slate, Time, PBS articles (M)
	Th 2/12	<b>Makers Hollywood</b>	
Week 6	T 2/17	Sexual Orientation	Kidd Ch 5 Laverne Cox (M)
	Th 2/19	Disability	Kidd Ch 6 Max (M)
Week 7	T 2/24	<b>Exam 1</b>	
	Th 2/26	Current/Drawing Conclusions Research Paper Brainstorm	Kidd Ch 8 NY Times on #Gamergate (M)
<b>March 2 – 8 SPRING BREAK</b>			
Week 8	T 3/10	Is Popular Culture Good?	Johnson (Part One)
	Th 3/12	TV & Complexity	Johnson (Part One continued) Manly - NYT & Sorkin Way (M)
Week 9	T 3/17	<b>Media Analysis</b>	<b>Media Analysis Due</b>
	Th 3/19	Social Media - Introduction	Boyd Intro, 1
Week 10	T 3/24	Social Media: Addiction & Inequality	Boyd 3, 6
	Th 3/26	<b>Library Day – Meet at Lab B</b>	
Week 11	T 3/31	Social Media: Literacy & Publics	Boyd 7, 8
	Th 4/2	<b>EASTER BREAK (No Class)</b>	
Week 12	T 4/7	Gen Like	
	Th 4/9	The Internet & our Brains	Parisier (M) Carr (M)
Week 13	T 4/14	<b>Exam 2</b>	
	Th 4/16	Presentations	<b>Presentations due 12:00pm</b>
Week 14	T 4/21	Presentations	
	Th 4/23	Presentations	

**Exam Slot: Tuesday, May 5th @ 1:00 pm [FINAL PAPERS DUE ON MOODLE]**