

**CMN 455 Introduction to Media Studies  
(Sections 1&2)  
Spring 2022**

Location: Horton 115

Time: Tuesday & Thursday: 3:40pm-5:00pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Lin Zhang

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**Office:** Horton Social Science Center Room 145A

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:10 pm to 3:00 pm, and by appointment on other days/times **via Zoom**. Please email me know at least two hours in advance if you want to meet via Zoom and I will email you the meeting information.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introduction to the foundational theories in media studies and methods of conducting media studies. The purpose of the course is twofold. First, it introduces students to the field of media studies (key authors, debates, concepts), with a special focus on the relationship between media, culture, and power; second, it helps students situate the theories and concepts in relation to their lives as informed citizens and working professionals in a mediated global society, and learn to conduct critical research into and think critically about established categories and hierarchies of power and the role of media in reinforcing/challenging them.

The course is divided into four sections on media industry, media content, media user, and media, identity, and difference. In each section, students will read about theories and methods, and have the opportunity of conducting hands-on research on topics of their own choosing. In this way, students gain a theoretical and methodological foundation in media studies and identify subfields and materials they want to further engage in the future.

**REQUIRED READING:**

1. ***Media, Culture and Society: An Introduction*** (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by **Paul Hodkinson**

This book can be purchased/rent via UNH Bookstore or online

*\*We don't follow the numeric order of chapters when we use this book in class. So it's important that you check the syllabus regularly to make sure that you are reading the correct chapter. Assignments completed on the wrong chapter will receive a zero point.*

2. **TopHat** subscription (4-month subscription for \$30)

**Join Code for this class: TBA**

\* All other required readings could be downloaded from MyCourses/Canvas

**ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESMENT:**

**Grades Breakdown:**

There are 200 total points (or 100%) possible in this course.

Canvas Grade

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Class Attendance and Participation----- | 10% |
| Self-designed Exam Questions-----       | 28% |
| Case Study Group Presentations-----     | 24% |

TopHat Grade

Section Exams + In-class TopHat questions and discussions --- 38%

*Since your TopHat grade won't be synced to your Canvas gradebook until the end of the semester, here's a formula of how you could calculate your final grade:*

*Your TopHat "Avg Score" \* 38% = your TopHat Grade on Canvas.*

*e.g. if your "Avg Score" on TopHat is 79%, your TopHat Grade on Canvas will be 30.02%, or 60.04 points (out of 200 points). You could do the calculation yourself and plug the number (in this case, 60.04) into Canvas to estimate your final grade during the semester before your final grade is synced between TopHat and Canvas.*

**1. Class Participation (10%)**

Class participation is crucial to active and engaged learning. You can earn up to **20 points** by actively participating in classroom discussion and activities. You must complete required readings in advance to class meetings and be prepared to participate in discussions. The discussion can take the form of asking questions, offering examples, and comments.

If you miss more **than three class sections**, you automatically **forfeit half of your participation grade (5%)**, and if you **miss more than five sections**, you **lose all of your participation grade (10%)**. I will be using TopHat to take attendance at the beginning of each lecture.

**2. Self-Designed Class Exam Questions (28%)**

The class will be divided into two groups (A & B). Each group will be asked to create **two exam questions (4 points each)** every week based on the reading for one class section. **You have to tell me where your question comes from in the textbook by marking the page number(s)**. Developing high quality questions is a challenging task that requires thorough reading and serious engagement with the text. It is not something you will be able to do successfully after only skimming the text. Look for key ideas and avoid basing questions on trivia or minutiae - write the kinds of fair questions you would like to see on an exam. You can find some examples of appropriate questions in your textbook, *Media*,

*Culture and Society*, but make sure your questions are original (i.e. not a re-written version of those in the textbook). You will receive 1 extra credit point on the exam for each of your questions that makes it onto the exam.

**Test questions** should be in the format of one of the following three

- 1). true or false.**
- 2). multiple choice.**
- 3). matching.**

Your questions may address only the reading for the upcoming class OR how that reading relates to previous readings. To receive credit, **questions must be posted on myCourses by 11:59pm** the night before class.

### Sample Test Question

Sample True or False Question  
p. 120

True or False: According to Chapter 7, "The Construction of News", news can never constitute an unbiased mirror on the world.

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| <b>A</b> | True  |
| <b>B</b> | False |

Answer: True

Sample Multiple Choices Question  
p. 18

What did McLuhan believe was the end of oral, informal, face-to-face communication

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>A</b> | mass production of books and newspapers                           |
| <b>B</b> | the beginning of smartphones                                      |
| <b>C</b> | the peak of social media  |
| <b>D</b> | he still believes we live in an era of face-to-face communication |

Answer: A

### Sample Matching Question

p. 6-7

Match the models to the descriptions

Premise

1 The Transmission Model (Shannon and Weaver)



2 The Five-W Model (Lasswell)



Response

A Focusing on the effective or ineffective delivery of pre-existing message

B Goes further towards the development of a detailed understanding of media process but still consider the recipient passive

C explicitly emphasizes the role of broader culture and society

Answer: 1-A

2-B

Questions will be graded on a four-point scale. You will automatically get 1 point each for handing in two questions. Late questions will receive 0 point. To earn additional points, see the following rubric:

**2pt** – Meets minimum standards for questions, but not usable for exams. May be ambiguous, too broad to be meaningful or not tailored specifically to the reading. Submitted on-time. Page no. marked.

**3pt** - Fully meets the standard for usable questions. Clearly written and addresses important issues specific to the reading. May be too broad to be effective or may need additional work to improve clarity. Submitted on-time. Page no. marked.

**4pt** - Meets the standard for outstanding questions. Demonstrates a deep engagement with the reading. Clearly addresses key topics, raises interesting, specific, and nuanced questions. Submitted on-time. Page no. marked.

### 3. Case Study Group Presentation (24%)

You will form **10 case study groups** (3-5 members per group) at the beginning of the semester. Each Group will be assigned to work on **Two** out of the four **15 minutes case study presentations** throughout the semester. Each presentation will carry **24 points (12%)**.

These case study presentations are designed to test your understanding of the theories, concepts, and research methodologies taught in this class, and more importantly your ability to apply these to unpack and reflect on real world media artifacts, content,

industries, and events etc., to carry out independent empirical research, and to present your findings effectively.

This course is divided into four major sections on media industry, media content, media user, and media, identity & difference. So you will receive one case study prompt for each section. Guidelines for case study presentations will be given two weeks before the date of presentation. They will be open-ended prompts with plenty of room for improvisation. We will set aside one class session for the team members to meet to prepare for the presentations independently outside of the classroom (you could also use the classroom). I am usually available (via email or zoom) if you have any questions about the presentation.

In addition to the oral presentation, **you will also be responsible for composing as a group and post on MyCourses a summary of your case study (roughly 1000 words).** The summary post will be due at **11:59pm the night prior to your presentations.** It is important that each member of the group takes equal responsibility during both the preparation and writing/oral presentation process.

#### **4. Section Exams and in-Class Questions via TopHat (38%)**

You will complete four section exams, one exam at the end of each section throughout the semester. **The exams are designed to test your familiarity and understanding of class content, including the videos/movies screened and examples given in class.** At the end of each section, you will have 30 mins in class to complete the exam. They will take the format of 1) true or false, 2) multiple choice, 3) matching questions. **A large portion of the questions will be selected from the pool of self-designed questions that you submitted. Again, you will be awarded 1 extra credit point for each question selected to be included in the section exams.** That is, some of the exam questions will be previewed and discussed during class.

#### **Video Instruction on how to take a test using Top Hat:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCRnhQiHsG4>

#### **COURSE REGULATIONS:**

##### **Late Assignments:**

Late papers will receive a reduced half a letter grade (e.g. B+ becomes B-) or 5% of the total grade for each day beyond the deadline. Papers late by a week or more will receive a failing grade. Please discuss any extenuating circumstances with the instructor before the due date. In the case of an emergency, it is the student's responsibility to provide official documentation and to schedule an alternative deadline as soon as possible.

##### **Attendance & Classroom Etiquette:**

Attendance if required unless you have a documented excuse. Note that if you miss a quiz, there are no make-ups. Please be aware that since Student Health does not provide notes, classes missed as a result of a student health appointment will be considered unexcused.

Promptness is expected for all class sessions. You must stay until class is dismissed unless you have a special circumstance and see me. But if you are experiencing special circumstances that are affecting your attendance or participation in a more systematic way, you must see me to discuss this (proactively is better).

If you will need accommodation for a religious or cultural holiday/observance, that student is encouraged to make that request as early in the semester as possible.

### **Mobile Phone & Laptop Policy:**

Use of laptops for purposes unrelated to class activities is strictly forbidden. Phones should be silenced and placed out of view during class. No exceptions unless you have a true emergency, and you notify me before we start class. (I do not need to know the substance of the emergency, just that you are experiencing an unusual circumstance.)

### **E-Mail Communication:**

I welcome your e-mail correspondence, but you likely will only receive a prompt response from me during regular business hours: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Before emailing me, **always check to see if your question is answered on this syllabus. Please check MyCourses for the most recent version of the syllabus.** You can expect that I will respond to your emails promptly (within 24-48 hours, more likely to be 48 on weekends).

If you have a longer question that would be best addressed in a conversation, please visit my office hours (email me in advance to let me know that you will be coming) or make an appointment to talk. I'm always happy to meet with students, and more involved questions are often best addressed face to face; email is useful only for quick, uncomplicated matters. If you have questions about course concepts, or if you wish to discuss a personal matter, consider office hours first: face-to-face communication is much better for nuance or complexity. I will not discuss grades or test scores via e-mail due to their sensitive nature.

Please make friends with your fellow students--they're often your best first point of contact if you miss a class. I can't summarize classes either in person or via email so please be sure to have a few friends you can borrow notes from if you happen to miss a class. It's also recommended that you form study groups to discuss readings and paper topics; students often learn a great deal from each other. You should also check MyCourses regularly; I will occasionally post reminders or clarifications there.

### **Disability Services:**

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended, 2008), each student with a disability has the right to request services from UNH to accommodate his/her/their disability. If you are a student with a documented disability or believe you may have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at **201 Smith Hall**. Accommodation letters are created by SAS with the student. Please follow-up with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of the identified accommodations in the letter. Faculty have an obligation to respond once they receive official notice of accommodations from SAS but are under no obligation to provide retroactive accommodations. We advise you not to provide accommodations to

students who are not registered with SAS. For more information refer to <https://www.unh.edu/studentaccessibility> or contact SAS at 603.862.2607, 711 (Relay NH) or [sas.office@unh.edu](mailto:sas.office@unh.edu).

### **Emotional or Mental Health Distress:**

Your academic success and overall mental health are very important. If, during the semester, you find you are experiencing emotional or mental health issues, please contact the University's (PACS) (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Smith Hall; 603-862-2090/TTY: 7-1-1) which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services. If urgent, students may call PACS M-F, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and schedule an Urgent Same-Day Appointment.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Using someone else's ideas or words without proper citation or submitting work that has been submitted in another course will result in a failing grade on the assignment and may result in a failing grade in the course and/or being reported to the college dean.

Please familiarize yourself with UNH's policies: <https://www.unh.edu/student-life/handbook/academic/academic-honesty>

Complete a plagiarism tutorial: <http://cola.unh.edu/plagiarism-tutorial-0>

A useful site about citation and avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Citations.html>

### **ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS DURING COVID:**

In alignment with our #unhtogether commitment to the ongoing health and safety of our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several changes in classroom expectations.

All students are required to wear masks in class and in any other indoor spaces where people will be close to one another for more than a few minutes, unless a medical exception is made through an accommodation process. It is your responsibility to obtain a mask before coming to class. For information on proper use of masks, acceptable mask types, and other PPE and social distancing guidelines visit (<https://www.unh.edu/coronavirus>). Students wishing to request a medical accommodation should contact the Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.unh.edu/studentaccessibility/>). Failure to comply with PPE or any other UNH COVID protocols is a violation of the [Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities](#). If you refuse to comply, you will be asked to leave class immediately and you may also be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students and your associate dean.

1. Your instructor may be wearing a face shield without a mask during instruction and only while maintaining at least a 6-foot distance from any student.

2. Each classroom entrance is equipped with hand sanitizer and surface wipes.
  - a. Use hand sanitizer as you deem appropriate.
  - b. Wipe down your personal space prior to class and throw the used wipes away on the way out of class or take them with you.
3. Contact tracing is an important part of containing any COVID spread. The following practices will facilitate effective contact tracing implementation should the need arise.
  - a. Students should sit in the same seat for each class period to minimize potential contacts.
  - b. We ask students to know the names of each of the people sitting closest to them, their nearest neighbors.
4. UNH has developed “Wildcat Pass,” a web and mobile app to help each of us keep track of the requirements for compliance with necessary testing, isolation, and quarantine rules that will help to keep our community healthy.
  - a. Log into your Wildcat Pass each day before coming to campus or leaving your residence hall.
  - b. Be prepared to show your mobile device or a computer printout of your daily Wildcat Pass if asked by a university representative.

***Changes to campus mode of operation and instructional modality.***

This class is beginning the semester operating in face-to-face operations with a mask requirement in place. If your health and safety require shifting to additional precautions such as social distancing, the modality and schedule of this course may change.

During a shift to online or hybrid class, students must learn how to access this course in all possible formats. a. Ensure that you have all necessary technology to participate in this course remotely. b. Consult with the instructor and/or with UNH IT for Students <https://www.unh.edu/it/students> with questions. Your classroom is equipped with technology that will provide remote access to class instruction. Because of the need to accommodate potential isolation and quarantine due to the COVID pandemic, lectures or other class meetings for this course may be recorded by the university using UNH media platforms. Such recordings may be available for educational use (including both for instruction and as a review tool) by students enrolled in the class, the course instructor(s), and other university officials who support course instruction. Your voice or image may be captured on the recordings, and by enrolling in this course you are consenting to such recording for these purposes. The University and Zoom have FERPA-compliant agreements in place to protect the security and privacy of UNH Zoom accounts. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action. Students are expected to adhere to the attendance policies specific to this course as outlined.

Do not attend class if you have any symptoms of illness or if your daily Wildcat Pass does not show that you are cleared to participate in classes and other campus activities. Inform the instructor in advance, if possible, that you will be absent from a scheduled in-person class. It is ultimately your responsibility to keep up with all course expectations. When appropriate, accommodations will be made. If this class either begins with, or is forced by conditions to

adopt, a rotational attendance component, you must only attend in- person on your assigned day(s) and may not switch days with other students or make other modifications to faculty instructions for in-person attendance.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

*\* The following is a “working schedule.” While it is expected that we will stick fairly closely to this syllabus, class materials are subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep on top of any schedule changes, whether you are in class or not.*

|                       | <b>Reading Assignment</b>   | <b>Assignment Due</b>                                    |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| T 1/25                | Class Introduction  | Adopt class materials                                    |
| Th 2/1                | MCS Chapter 1: Introduction   | Self-designed Questions 1 Due 1/31 at 11:59 pm (Group A) |
| T 2/3                 | MCS Chapter 2: Media Technologies   | Self-designed Questions 2 Due 2/2 at 11:59 pm (Group B)  |
| <b>Media Industry</b> |   |  |
| Th 2/8                | MCS Chapter 3: Media Industry   | Self-designed Questions 3 Due 2/7 at 11:59 pm (Group A)  |
| T 2/10                | MCS Chapter 8: Public Service or Personal Entertainment? Controlling Media Orientation<br>Announcing Case Study Topic | Self-designed Questions 4 Due 2/9 at 11:59 pm (Group B)  |
| Th 2/15               | MCS Chapter 9: Advertising: Emergence, Expansion and Transformation   | Self-designed Questions 5 Due 2/14 at 11:59 pm (Group A) |
| T 2/17                | Case Study Team Meeting   |  |
| Th 2/22               | Media Industry Case Study Report  | Case Study Blog Due 2/21 at 11:59 pm                     |
| T 2/24                | <b>Exam 1</b>   |  |
| <b>Media Content</b>  |   |  |
| Th 3/1                | MCS Chapter 4: Media Content  | Self-designed Questions 6 Due 2/28 at 11:59 pm (Group B) |
| T 3/3                 | MCS Chapter 6: Media as Manipulation? Marxism and Ideology<br>Announcing Case Study Topic                             | Self-designed Questions 7 Due 3/2 at 11:59 pm (Group A)  |
| Th 3/8                | MCS Chapter 7: The Construction of News   | Self-designed Questions 8 Due 3/7 at 11:59 pm (Group B)  |
| T 3/10                | Case Study Team Meeting<br>Self-Study: Read Stokes chapter 5  |  |
| Th 3/22               | Media Content Case Study Report   | Case Study Two Blog Due 3/21 at 11:59 pm                 |
| T 3/24                | <b>Exam 2</b>   |  |

| <b>Media User</b>                       |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Th 3/29                                 | MCS Chapter 5: Media Users  | Self-designed Questions 9 Due 3/28 at 11:59 pm (Group A)                                 |
| T 3/31                                  | MCS Chapter 10: Media and the Public Sphere: Digitalization, Commercialization and Fragmentation<br>Announcing Case Study Topic | Self-designed Questions 10 Due 3/30 at 11:59 pm (Group B)                                |
| Th 4/5                                  | Stokes Chapter 6: Researching Audiences: Who Uses Media and Culture? How and Why? (reading downloadable from Canvas)            | Self-designed Questions 11 Due 4/4 at 11:59 pm (Group A)                                 |
| T 4/7                                   | Case Study Team Meeting   |  |
| Th 4/12                                 | Media User Case Study Report  | Case Study Blog Due 4/11 at 11:59 pm   |
| T 4/14                                  | <b>Exam 3</b>   |  |
| <b>Media, Identity &amp; Difference</b> |   |  |
| T 4/19                                  | MCS Chapter 11: Media, Community and Difference: From Mass Stigmatization to Grassroots Identity Groups                         | Self-designed Questions 12 Due 4/18 at 11:59 pm (Group B)                                |
| Th 4/21                                 | MCS Chapter 12: Media, Race and Ethnicity<br>Announcing Case Study Topic  | Self-designed Questions 13 Due 4/20 at 11:59 pm (Group A)<br>Case study group discussion |
| T 4/26                                  | MCS Chapter 13: Media, Gender and Sexuality   | Self-designed Questions 14 Due 4/25 at 11:59 pm (Group B)                                |
| Th 4/28                                 | Case Study Team Meeting   |  |
| T 5/3                                   | Media, Identity & Difference Case Study Report  | Case Study Blog Due 5/2 at 11:59 pm  |
| T 5/5                                   | <b>Exam 4</b>   |  |