

Module 38: Sociology of the Media

Stage	3						
Semester	1						
Module Title	Sociology of the Media						
Module Number/Reference	37						
Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)	Mandatory						
Module NFQ level (only if applicable)	8						
Pre-requisite Module Titles	None						
Co-requisite Module Titles	None						
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No						
Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (Hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent work	
36		12		24		48	120
Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)							
	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total is always 100%		
Percentage contribution	40%			60%	100%		

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Critique and analyse the media from a sociological and a critical political-economy perspective.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the structure of the media institution, while applying an advanced understanding of the interrelationship of media with governmental, political and economic forces in society.
3. Bring sociological research on the media, to a research topic which they initiate, evaluate the research and draw reasonable conclusions from same.

4. Pursue further study and research in media/communications and/or related humanities based disciplines.
5. Competently identify and apply the knowledge, concepts and perspectives gained, to their work in media related employment.

Module Objectives

The media, its organisations, and practices, are the major source of information and culture in or about our society and the world today. Learners must be able to not only operate within, but also to examine objectively, this immensely powerful institution. The purpose of the course is to provide an understanding of the relationship of social processes to the media. In other words this course looks at society in terms of how it impacts on the media and, in turn, in terms of how the media impacts back on society. Learners should view society in the media and the media in society.

Module Aims

The course aims to instil in learners a knowledge and practical awareness of how and why media institutions, practices and culture developed in the way that it has in western society. Learners are taught to focus on, as well as from within, their industry in a critical and evaluative manner. The media is examined in broad economic, political, social, historical and cultural contexts, with the emphasis on examining the media as an institution, among many institutions in society. The media as an institution is examined in its interrelationship with society, politics and the economy

Module Curriculum

Indicative Syllabus

Media, Sociology and the Critical Political Economy Perspective: bringing a sociological perspective to the study of the relationship between media and society.

The Role of the Media in a Democracy: The Market, the State and the 'Public Sphere'. The Classic Liberal Theory of a Free press: its historical development and efficacy in today's 'market place'.

Media In The Public Interest: Inquiring into the ideal characteristics one would expect to find in a media which operated within a democratic political system and genuinely reflected the public interest.

What is Agenda-Setting?: Examining the development of research from the discovery of the 'agenda-setting function of the mass media' to contemporary evidence.

Who Sets The Agenda?: analyses the economic, political and cultural forces that determine what that agenda is and how it is formed.

Feminist Perspectives on Media Sociology: taking a feminist perspective to our understanding of media sociology and asks: can persistent sexism in society be partly explained by sexist media content?

Media Effects Research: Analysing the empirical evidence of the measurable effects that media consumption has on people's understanding of the world around them.

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

- A. Scheufele, Dietram, Matthew C. Nisbet & Ronald E. Ostman, 2005. "September 11 News Coverage, Public Opinion, and Support for Civil Liberties", in, *Mass Media & Society*, Vol 8 (3).
- Croteau, David, William Hoynes, & Stefanai Hoynes, 2012. *Media/Society: Industries, Images and Audiences* (4th Edition). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Curran, James & Michael Gurevitch, 2005. *Mass Media and Society* (4th Edition). London: Hodder Education.

- Iyengar, Shanto & James Curran, 2009. 'Media Systems, News Delivery and Citizens' Knowledge of Current Affairs' [blog essay]. Available at: http://publicsphere.ssrc.org/iyengar-curran-media-systems-news-delivery-and-citizens-knowledge-of-current-affairs/#foot_12 [21-10-09]
- Kull, Stephen, 2003, 'Misperceptions, The Media, And The Iraq War' (The American Public On International Issues: The PIPA/Knowledge Networks Poll). Maryland, USA: Program On International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) - A joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland
- McCombs, Maxwell and Donald Shaw, 1972. 'The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media', in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, pp 176-185.
- McCombs, Maxwell, 2005. 'A Look at Agenda-Setting: Past, Present, Future' in *Journalism Studies*, Volume 6, Number 4, 2005, pp. 543-557
- McCullagh, Ciaran, 2002. *Media Power: a Sociological Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Romer, Daniel, Patrick E. Jamieson & Kathleen H. Jamieson, 2006. "Are News Reports of Suicide Contagious? A Stringent Test in Six U.S. Cities", in *Journal of Communication*, 56, 253-270.
- Weaver, David, Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw (2004). 'Agenda Setting Research: Issues, Attributes and Influences', Chpt 10 in, Lynda Less Kaid (ed), *Handbook of Political Communications Research*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Secondary Reading

- Bernays, Edward, 2004 [1928]. *Propaganda / Edward Bernays: with an introduction by Mark Crispin Miller*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Ig Publishing,
- Bryant, Jennings and Mary Beth Oliver (eds), 2008. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research (Lea's Communication Series)*, 3rd edition. London: Routledge.
- Chomsky, Noam, 2002. *Media Control: the spectacular achievements of propaganda / Second Edition*. New York: Seven Stories.
- Curran, James, Shanto Iyengar, Anker Brink Lund & Inka Salovaara-Moring, 2009. 'Media System, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study', in *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 24, Issue 1.
- Doyle, Gillian, 2005. *Media Ownership: The Economics and Politics of Convergence and Concentration in the UK and European Media*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Edwards, David & David Cromwell (2006). *Guardians of Power: the Myth of the Liberal Media*. London: Pluto Press.
- Greenslade, Roy, 2003. *Press gang : How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda*. London: Macmillan.
- McChesney, Robert (2007). *Communications Revolution: Critical Junctures and the Future of Media*. New York: The New Press.
- McCombs, Maxwell, 2002. 'The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion', paper delivered at 'Mass Media Economics' conference, London. Available at: http://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/mccombs01.pdf [10-09-10]
- McCombs, Maxwell, 2004. *Setting the Agenda: the Mass Media and Public Opinion*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moe, Hallvard, 2008. 'Dissemination and Dialogue in the Public Sphere: a Case for Public Service Media Online', in *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 30(3), pp: 319–336.
- Murdoch, James, 2009. "The only reliable, durable, and perpetual guarantor of independence is profit", the MacTaggart lecture delivered at the 2009 MediaGuardian Edinburgh International Television Festival. Available at; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/video/2009/aug/29/james-murdoch-edinburgh-festival-mactaggart> [15-09-09].

Module Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to both engage the learners and to encourage their critical thinking in relation to the module. This is achieved through lecturers, case studies and practical examples which are designed to stimulating discussions and questions. In tutorials, the academic journals are accessed live in the classroom to locate material relevant to the subject matter of learners' chosen essay titles.

Learners are also supported with resources to offer structure and guidance. This includes lecture notes, reading materials as well as a detailed module curriculum which includes the learning outcomes, a class schedule, the necessary reading material and the assignment strategy. Participants also have access to Moodle, the College’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

Sample: This module is supported with structured web-based resources and applies the use of the programme Teaching Learning and Assessment methodologies. Specifically, the module is delivered using:

- Case Studies
- Formal Lectures
- Participative Lectures
- Workshops / Tutorials

Module Assessment Strategy

Learners are required to choose an essay from up to four titles and, using material from lectures as a foundation, conduct research through the relevant academic journals and construct an argument based on this self-directed research. Sample titles below:

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	40%	essay	Sample Essay questions Choose one of the following four essays: <u>1</u> : The ‘pictures’ in people’s minds are put there by media. Discuss. <u>2</u> : Who dictates the Media’s agenda? <u>3</u> : ‘Media matters!’ Discuss*. <u>4</u> : Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model is as relevant and useful now as it was when it was originally published in 1988. Discuss.
2	60%	Closed Book Examination	End of Module Examination