

Communication

Media and Society

(There are two sections of this course available)

Course & Class Num: COMM 1301H, 17248
Time & Location: TH 11:30 – 1:00, 202 COM
Instructor: Frederick Schiff

Course & Class Num: COMM 1301H, 17252
Time & Location: T 11:30 – 1:00, 202 COM
Instructor: Frederick Schiff

This class is organized as an undergraduate seminar that meets once a week. The mass media entertain and influence, but even more, once people leave high school or college, the media remain as the single most important institutions of adult education. We examine how the media invent reality and manufacture consent. We look at how the consumption of cultural products has displaced cultural activities-- how watching baseball has displaced playing baseball, for example. We focus on the global monopolies that dominate the eight "major" mass communication industries. The media affect individual consumers and entire institutions. The media generate higher profit margins than most manufacturing industries, and they hire 1.5 million professionals. If you're interested in a career as a reporter, author, magazine editor, sound recording artist, radio DJ, film director, TV producer, PR spin doctor, advertising executive or online media star, this class is designed for you. If you're just a consumer bombarded by mass-produced culture and information overload, this class offers you protective brain-ware.

Film Appreciation

(Petition for Honors credit)

Course & Class Num: COMM 2370, 17364
Time & Location: W 7:00 – 10:00, 106 AH
Instructor: William K. Hawes

This course serves as an introduction to the art, technology, economics, and social aspects of film. Several sequences from domestic and international films will be shown. During the semester, we will look at film and filmmaking from various points of view, such as content, production, business, and impact.

This class is mainly for students who are unfamiliar with film production and may be looking for a career in motion pictures. Grades are based mainly on several short quizzes, a final quiz, and a short essay.

Investigative Reporting

(Petition for Honors credit)

Course & Class Num: COMM 4313H, 33353
Time & Location: TTH 1:00 – 2:30, TBA
Instructor: Frederick Schiff

The class is investigative reporting. Our focus is on the enduring, unresolved issues in Houston, not on transient events. Our beat is the metro region, not the campus. We cover the points of view and sources that commercial news media underrepresent or exclude. We've built an award-winning convergent newsroom to produce stories on multiple media platforms. Your stories will be published online, broadcast on air and distributed by cable. Your work will be disseminated to an audience of more than 110,000 people. We're producing half-hour news shows for 100,000-watt KPFT radio and for cable access Channel 17. Each student will do three investigative news stories and be part of a news team to produce weekly shows. The prerequisites (COMM 2310, COMM 3311, and either COMM 3314 or COMM 3316) apply to journalism majors.

We are also offering the course for independent study credit (COMM 4398, 43669). The prerequisites for non-Communication majors are a portfolio of work and permission of the instructor. Besides reporters, the convergent newsroom needs a "production team" that would include nonlinear editors, copy editors, videographers, photographers, web designers, database researchers and digital provocateurs. We'd also like creative writers and artists to do political cartoons, satire, literary non-fiction, music productions or video documentaries. We agree with Indy Media: "Don't hate the media. Become the media." Major media corporations are setting up convergent newsrooms and integrated production facilities. We are bold enough to believe we can compete head-to-head on the Internet by producing investigative stories that the advertising-supported media won't touch. Our goal is for you to develop a multi-media tool kit of skills to get an entry-level job as a media professional. Check out <http://www.winc.tv>.