

## CMST 134: Cultural Studies of Mass Media

Fall 2012 – Online

**Instructor:** Whitney Anspach

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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### Required Readings

Berger, A.A. (2005). *Making Sense of Media: Key texts in media and cultural studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Additional readings will be available as PDFs on the Canvas site.

*Note:* The assigned readings are critical to your understanding and appreciation of course concepts. I have tried to select a textbook that will provide concrete examples of issues related to our course learning goals. The reading will provide valuable background for issues we will address further in online lectures and assignments.

### Recommended Reading

Barker, C. (2004). *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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### Course Description

This course introduces students to the terms, analytical techniques, and interpretive strategies commonly employed in cultural studies. Emphasis is on cultural studies approaches to exploring how mass mediated artifacts are produced, shaped, distributed, consumed, and responded to in diverse ways. Through discussion, research, and writing, class members investigate these varied dimensions of culture; learn to understand them in their broader social, aesthetic, ethical, and political contexts; and thereby prepare for more advanced coursework in Cultural Studies of Media.

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### Learning Outcomes for This Course

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following.

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key theories and concepts in the Cultural Studies of Media field.
2. Be able to apply these key theories and concepts in critical analyses of contemporary mass mediated messages.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the analytical approaches used by cultural studies scholars to examine mass mediated messages and how these approaches differ from social scientific approaches.
4. Demonstrate an ability to write and synthesize readings, lectures and discussions, and provide critical analysis of arguments using appropriate evidence and methods of citation.

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## Course Format and Expectations

### Format:

You will be engaged in activities and discussions designed to aid your understanding of the concepts explored in this class. Computer use is required to access the courses materials on BB Canvas. Please note that this area of study contains complex theories and difficult jargon. I will do my best to assist you, **but a college reading level and college writing level in English is needed to succeed in this course.**

### Expectations:

Your active participation in the learning process is expected and valued. We will address a variety of topics, many involving controversies that touch upon our personal values and beliefs. I encourage you to share your thoughts, concerns, and opinions in class—we will have a stimulating learning environment and a richer learning experience if we can discuss a wide range of perspectives. At the same time, the issues we will address can be highly emotional ones and we won't always agree with one another. It is vital that everyone feels safe to air her or his ideas and opinions. Please be sensitive and respectful to other viewpoints when making comments and contributing to discussion.

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## Learning Assessment

In order to earn a passing grade in this course you will need to submit **all** of the assignments listed below and take all exams. Submission of all assignments and exams constitutes a necessary, but insufficient condition for passing the course. I do not offer incompletes for this course. **Note: if you earn a zero for plagiarizing an assignment, you will earn a zero for that portion of the course, and this will be reported to the Dean.**

### Assignments

First Week Assignments	= 50
Applied Assignments (1 x 50; 3 X 100 points)	=350
Exams (2 X 75 points)	=150
Final Paper	=150
Discussion Posts (7) & Responses (21)	=300
<b>Total:</b>	<b>=1000</b>

### Grading Scale:

94-100 = A	73-75 = C
90-93 = A-	70-72 = C-
86-89 = B+	66-69 = D+
83-85 = B	60-65 = D
80-82 = B-	0-59 = F
76-79 = C+	

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## Assignment Descriptions

*(More detail will be provided for each of these assignments on Canvas.)*

### Applied Assignments (1 X 50; 3 X 100 points):

You will be using Canvas to submit your apply critical analyses of mass mediated messages.

**NOTE:** Your applied assignment submissions must be attached as a **MS Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, PDF, HTML, RTF or plain text file**. Each of the four assignments will be related to the material discussed that week in the assigned reading and lecture slides.

### Assignment Format: *(See course website for examples of past submissions)*

The format of these applied assignments is in large part up to you. Your submission could be formatted as:

- An approximately 2-3 page typed essay, 12pt Times New Roman (or similar) font, 1 inch margins, double spaced
- A short PowerPoint presentation
- A short video file (approximately 2-3 minutes)
- A short audio file (approximately 2-3 minutes)
- As a longish comic strip
- Or any combination of the above options
- Other – just check with me before submission

### Discussion Posts and Responses (300 Points):

#### Discussion Responses

The majority of your class participation grade will come from my evaluation of your *Discussion Posts & Responses*. You are required to post at least three (3) substantive and well written responses to your peers' discussion posts **each time a post is due**. Please see the course calendar for discussion post response deadlines.

*For example, if you post twelve responses for the first round of discussion posts and zero responses after that you will only earn credit for **three** responses.*

Given that there are 7 required discussion posts, you will need to submit a minimum total of 21 substantive and well written responses by the end of the quarter.

#### What constitutes a substantive response?

A substantive response is one that refers to a specific portion of the original discussion post and attempts to spark discussion about that portion. An example of an unsatisfactory post is: "I really like what you wrote about Madonna. Good job!" This post is unsatisfactory because it doesn't attempt to spark a discussion about what the person wrote about Madonna. A better/satisfactory response post would be:

*Your comments about Madonna's video in relation to what we read in the chapter by bell hooks really struck home for me. When reading your post I couldn't help but wonder if one could argue that Beyonce's (insert song name and maybe a link to the video on youtube) video could also be an example of this phenomenon. What do you think?*

This post is far superior to the first sample because it explains what the reader found so compelling about the original discussion post and, in doing so, attempted to further discussion on this topic.

### Discussion Posts

There are seven (7) required discussion posts this quarter. You will be provided with a topic and/or debatable claim to discuss for each of these required posts.

**Exemplary discussion posts** should include the following:

- A clearly stated thesis statement (or key argument)
- Evidence from relevant course materials (e.g., lecture content or the course texts) to support your argument.
- Accurate application of relevant course content
- Few (if any) writing errors
- Links/URLs to any *non-course related* materials referenced within your posting

### **First Week Assignments (50 points):**

You will also earn points toward your total class participation grade by completing the required First Week Quiz, the technology plan assignment, sending a message to me via Canvas, and participating in the first discussion post titled "10 Things about You". The quiz contains multiple choice and true/false questions about the course website and course assignments. For details about the first discussion post, please see the discussion board. The technology plan assignment details are available on our class site.

### **Exams (2 X 75 Points):**

We will have two multiple choice exams that are intended to test your knowledge of course concepts. You will all receive an exam review/study guide at least one week prior to the first day the exam will be available. Please see the quiz or calendar pages on our course website for exam availability dates.

### **Final Paper (150 Points):**

You will conduct a comprehensive reflection on the different approaches to media studies we will be covering this quarter. Details about this assignment will be posted on the course website.

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## **General Policies**

### **Late Assignments:**

For purposes of equity and fairness for all students, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete all written assignments. Deadlines for all assignments will be announced on the course website calendar and are listed in the syllabus.

### **Please note:**

You are responsible for ensuring that any assignment submitted as an attachment is capable of being opened (i.e., not a corrupted file). **I will evaluate any corrupted files as being an incomplete assignment – in other words, you will earn a zero for that assignment.**

In the event that you do not turn in your assignment on the day/time it is due, you will be assessed the following academic penalty: **late assignments will receive a one point grade reduction for every day – including weekends - they are late (e.g., B+ to C+)\*.**

### **Statement on Academic Integrity:**

You should know that plagiarism is a serious violation of your contract as a student and will be treated severely. It is important for you to understand that plagiarism is *any* representation of another person's words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, in either oral or written form. Obviously, this means that you may not copy another person's papers. Students caught cheating on an exam or assignment will not receive any credit for that portion of the class and will be reported to the Dean of Student Programs.

If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism, please check out this handy [game](#)/guide.

### **Special Needs:**

If you need course modifications /adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). The Disability Resource Center is located in B132 and can be reached at 425-564-2498. Please meet with me if you have any questions.

### **IMPORTANT LINKS**

**Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC:** All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam>

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services site - <http://ac.bcc.ctc.edu/LabsInfo/ComputerLabs.aspx>

**Public Safety:** The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department's well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is [425.564.2400](tel:425.564.2400). The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

**Academic Calendar:** The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

- Enrollment Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/>. On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
- College Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/1011.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

## Tentative Course Schedule

**Note: Please check the course calendar on Canvas for specific assignment due dates and reading assignments.**

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	18-23 Sept	Introductions to Course & Classmates	Introduction Post Course Introduction Quiz Technology Plan Mail Me
2	24-30 Sept	Origins of Cultural Studies	Discussion Post #1 Applied #1: Media Use Log
3	1-7 Oct	Semiotics Part I	Discussion Post #2
4	8-14 Oct	Semiotics Part II	Applied #2: Semiotics Assignment
5	15-21 Oct	Power of Laughter	Discussion Post #3 Exam #1
6	22-28 Oct	Living by and with Metaphors	Discussion Post #4 Applied #3: Metaphors Assignment
7	29 Oct – 4 Nov	(Re)presentation I	Discussion Post #5 Applied #4: Male Gaze Assignment
8	5-11 Nov	(Re)presentation II	Discussion Post #6
9	12-18 Nov	Active Audience? Part I	Discussion Post #7
10	19-25 Nov	Active Audience? Part II	Exam #2
11	26 Nov - 4 Dec	Course Wrap-Up	<i>Optional: Final Paper Draft</i>
12	7 Dec	<b>Final Paper Due by 11:59 PM NO LATE PROJECTS ACCEPTED!!!</b>	