

José Luis Benavides
Office: MZ 331 (818) 677-7242
Office hours: T 18:00–19:00, W 14:00–16:00

MCOM 620 Fall 2013
19:00–21:50 Tuesdays
email: jose.benavides@csun.edu

Seminar in Media Criticism

Description: *Analysis of books, journal articles and other reviews which deal with contemporary mass communication.* Particular emphasis is placed on helping students develop a critical perspective on the role of news media, media professionals, and mass communication research in our society.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- A. Students can identify and explain seminal works and key concepts in the field of mass communication with a focus on critical and cultural theories as applied to journalism.
- B. Students can appraise and evaluate the practices of mass communication in society with a focus on economic structures, cultural practices and international connections as applied to the practice of journalism.
- C. Students can create a plan for and conduct independent research about mass communication with an emphasis on journalism as either a research topic or through the reflective application of journalism.

Grading, class participation, assignments, and required books

Grading: Class participation (including attendance) and reading assignments: 20%; facilitation of class reading: 20%; critical review of reading: 20%; literature review: 40%

Class participation: Students are expected to attend class, read the assignments, and participate in class discussion based on the reading material.

Facilitation of class discussion and critical review: Students will be responsible for facilitating the discussion of one or two class readings. They are expected to help all students in the class understand key terms, stimulate class discussion, and raise critical questions about that particular reading. Facilitators will turn in a review and critical assessment of each assigned reading (4 to 5 pages).

Literature review: Students will work on an original literature review in which they identify, summarize, and synthesize at least 10 recent academic journal articles that apply the theories and ideas of authors discussed in our seminar. Students will submit an original review (15–20 pages). The review must conform to the research guidelines and style established in the APA stylebook.

Required books and journal articles:

- Aitamurto, T. (2011). The impact of crowdfunding on journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 5(4), 429-445. Retrieved from Communication and Mass Media Complete.
- Breed, W. (January 1, 1955). Social control in the newsroom: A functional analysis. *Social Forces*, 33(4), 326-335.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Uriarte, M. (2010). Urbanizing the propaganda model. Filtered sources, worthy and unworthy victims in gentrification. (Unpublished manuscript.)
- Freire, P. (1998). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 68(4), 480-498. Retrieved from PsycINFO database.
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Henry, S. (2102). *Anonymous in Their Own Names*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Lewis, S. C. (2010). *Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation: A case study of the Knight Foundation and its news challenge*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Austin, Tex: University of Texas.
- Milioni, D. (2009). Probing the online counterpublic sphere: the case of Indymedia Athens. *Media, Culture & Society*, 31(3), 409-431.
- Ostertag, S. F. & Tuchman, G. (2010). When innovation meets legacy. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(6), 909-931.
- Said, E. W. (1996). *Representations of the intellectual: The 1993 Reith lectures*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.

Mandatory stylebook: American Psychological Association (2009) *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA. (Note: 5th edition can be used.) Our library website has great resources about APA and other style guides. Please check their website:

<http://Library.csun.edu/Guides/ResearchStrategies/CitationStyleGuides>

Course outline (subject to change):

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| Week 1 | 8/27 | Introduction |
| Week 2 | 9/3 | Library training |
| Library: | Oviatt Library, Lab. B. Katherine Dabbour. 7:00 pm | |
| Week 3 | 9/10 | Critical views on the role of intellectuals and educators |

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| Reading: | Said: <i>Representations of the intellectual</i> ; Freire: The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom |
| Week 4 | 9/17 Social control in the newsroom 1 |
| Reading: | Breed: Social control in the newsroom; Gans: <i>Deciding what's news</i> , Part 1. |
| Week 5 | 9/24 Social control in the newsroom 2 |
| Reading: | Gans: <i>Deciding what's news</i> , Parts 2 and 3. |
| Week 6 | 10/1 The political economy of the mass media |
| Reading: | Herman and Chomsky: <i>Manufacturing consent</i> , Chapters 1–3 |
| Week 7 | 10/8 The political economy of the mass media |
| Reading: | Herman and Chomsky: <i>Manufacturing consent</i> , Chapters 4–7; De Uriarte: <i>Urbanizing the propaganda model</i> |
| Week 8 | 10/15 Networks: power, communication, and mind |
| Reading: | Castells: <i>Communication power</i> , Chapters 1–3 |
| Week 9 | 10/22 Networks: politics, social movements, and public space |
| Reading: | Castells: <i>Communication power</i> , Chapters 4–Conclusion |
| Week 10 | 10/29 Publics, counterpublics, and the public sphere |
| Reading: | Warner: <i>Publics and counterpublics</i> . Chapters 1–3. Milioni: “Probing the online counterpublic sphere.” |
| Week 11 | 11/5 Challenging the heteronormative framework of modern culture |
| Reading: | Warner: <i>Publics and counterpublics</i> . Chapters 4–6. |
| Week 12 | 11/12 Journalism innovation and participation, 1 |
| Reading: | Lewis: <i>Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation</i> . Chapters 1–3. |
| Week 13 | 11/19 Journalism innovation and participation, 2 |
| Reading: | Lewis: <i>Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation</i> . Chapters 4–6. Aitamurto: The impact of crowdfunding on journalism. |
| Week 14 | 11/26 Journalism innovation and participation, 3 |
| Reading: | Lewis: <i>Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation</i> . Chapters 7–8; Ostertag & Tuchman: When innovation meets legacy. |
| Week 15 | 12/3 Review session |
| | Discussion of final papers. |
| Week 16 | 12/10 Literature review due |

Policy on plagiarism:

The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University for possible further disciplinary action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 647–648 of the 2012–2014 CSUN catalog.

Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy and carries the penalty outlined above.

Cultural Diversity:

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial, and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled, and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.