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, contribute to the class note-taking wiki, and participate in class discussions 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 must contribute their notes to the class wiki and turn in a review and critical assessment of each assigned reading (3 to 4 pages each reading).

**Literature review:** Students will work on an original literature review in which they identify, summarize, and synthesize at least 5 recent academic journal articles (plus at least one book or article reviewed in class) that apply the theories and ideas of authors
discussed in our seminar. Students will submit an original review (12–16 pages) + bibliography. The review must conform to the research guidelines and style established in the APA stylebook.

**Required books and journal articles:**


De Uriarte, M. (2010). Urbanizing the propaganda model. Filtered sources, worthy and unworthy victims in gentrification. (Unpublished manuscript.)


**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](http://Library.csun.edu/Guides/ResearchStrategies/CitationStyleGuides)

**Course outline (subject to change):**

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>8/26</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>Library training</td>
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Library: Oviatt Library, Lab. B. Katherine Dabbour. 7:00 pm

Week 3  
9/9  
Critical views on the role of intellectuals and educators
Reading:  
Said: *Representations of the intellectual*;  
Freire: *The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom*  
Martínez: *The Beast*, Foreword by Francisco Goldman

Week 4  
9/16  
Social control in the newsroom 1
Reading:  
Breed: *Social control in the newsroom*;  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 1–2

Week 5  
9/23  
Social control in the newsroom 2
Reading:  
Gans: *Deciding what’s news*, Parts 2 and 3.  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 3–4

Week 6  
9/30  
The political economy of the mass media
Reading:  
Herman and Chomsky: *Manufacturing consent*, Chapters 1–3  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 5–6

Week 7  
10/7  
The political economy of the mass media
Reading:  
Herman and Chomsky: *Manufacturing consent*, Chapters 4–7;  
De Uriarte: *Urbanizing the propaganda model*  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 7–8

Week 8  
10/14  
Social media: Participation, power, political economy
Reading:  
Fuchs: *Social media*, Chapters 1–5  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 9–10

Week 9  
10/21  
Social media: privacy, public sphere, collaboration
Reading:  
Fuchs: *Social media*, Chapters 6–11  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 11–12

Week 10  
10/28  
Publics, counterpublics, and the public sphere
Reading:  
Milioni: “Probing the online counterpublic sphere.”  
Martínez, *The Beast*, chapters 13–14

Week 11  
11/4  
Challenging the heteronormative framework
Reading:  

Week 12  
11/11  
Journalism innovation and participation, 1
Reading:  
Lewis: *Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation*. Chapters 1–3.

Week 13  
11/18  
Journalism innovation and participation, 2

Week 14 11/25  **Journalism innovation and participation, 3**
Reading: Lewis: *Journalism innovation and the ethic of participation*. Chapters 7–8; Ostertag & Tuchman: When innovation meets legacy.

Week 15 12/2  **Review session**
Discussion of final papers.

Week 16 12/9  **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.