

Comm 264: Economic Structure of Communication

Fall 2002

2:30-4:50PM Tuesday

310 David Kinley Hall

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:15; Thursday 2-2:45.

NOTE: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SYLLABUS, SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

Comm 264, Economic Structure of Communication, is an introduction to the political economy of the media in the United States. The purpose of the class is to acquaint students with a core understanding of how the media system operates, and with what effects, in a capitalist society. The course will examine the role of advertising, public relations, corporate concentration, and government regulation upon journalism, entertainment, culture, and participatory democracy. The class will also examine issues such as the Internet, globalization, and public broadcasting.

Students are expected to attend the weekly seminar and participate in discussions. **Students will also be expected to submit (via email) weekly responses during six of the 11 weeks in which there are required readings.** These responses should be 500-750 words long and they should critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the assigned readings. Classroom discussion and other readings may be brought into the responses, but the responses must make clear that the student has read the assigned readings that week and reflected upon those readings. Students may select which six weeks they choose to submit responses, but they must submit six. Email them to dbscott@uiuc.edu. The responses are due by NOON on the Tuesday of the assigned class. Students who do not turn in *all* of the six discussion questions as required will have their final grade lowered significantly.

Students will also take two short answer exams, one in the 8th week and the other in the final exam period. The exams will not be cumulative.

Student grades will be based on the following: first exam, 40 percent; second exam, 40 percent; class participation/discussion questions, 20 percent.

Students are expected to acquire the following six books:

1. Ben Bagdikian, THE MEDIA MONOPOLY, sixth edition (Beacon Press, 2000).

2. Charles Lindblom, *THE MARKET SYSTEM* (Yale University Press, 2001).
3. David Bollier, *SILENT THEFT* (Routledge, 2002).
4. Leonard Downie & Robert G. Kaiser, *THE NEWS ABOUT THE NEWS* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).
5. Lawrence Lessig, *THE FUTURE OF IDEAS* (Random House, 2001).
6. C. Edwin Baker, *Media, Markets, and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

The books have been ordered from the University Bookstore. If the books are not there, however, students are responsible for locating them through some other means.

In addition there will be handouts provided to students free of charge. These handouts will usually -- but not necessarily always -- be given out in class the week before they are assigned to be read. If, for any reason whatsoever, a student does not get the handouts when they were distributed in class, it is the student's responsibility to get them from another student in the class. Do not approach the professor at a later moment and ask for handouts.

Please note: This class lasts for 2 _ hours in the late afternoon. It is largely a lecture class. This puts spectacular demands on your ability to stay focused. It is imperative that you monitor your caffeine intake so you that you are at peak proficiency between 2:30 and 5PM on Tuesdays.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (September 3): INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNICATION?

Week 2 (September 10): CAPITALISM & ADVERTISING (Readings: Lindblom, first half.

Week 3 (September 17): DEMOCRACY & PUBLIC RELATIONS (Readings: Lindblom, second half.

Week 4 (September 24): CONCENTRATION/CONGLOMERATION (Readings: Bagdikian—first half)

Week 5 (October 1): JOURNALISM I: RISE OF PROFESSIONALISM (Readings: Bagdikian—second half, Downie & Kaiser—first third)

Week 6 (October 8): JOURNALISM II: THE PRESENT CRISIS (Readings: Downie & Kaiser—remainder)

Week 7 (October 15): FIRST MIGHTY EXAM

Week 8 (October 22): COMMERCIAL CULTURE (Readings: Bollier, first half)

Week 9 (October 29): READINGS WEEK (Finish Bollier)

Week 10 (November 5): POLICY I: MARKET FAILURE, PUBLIC BROADCASTING, BROADCAST REGULATION, EDUCATION (Readings: Baker selections, McChesney)

Week 11 (November 12): POLICY II: COPYRIGHT, FIRST AMENDMENT (Readings: McChesney, handouts)

Week 12 (November 19): GLOBALIZATION (Readings: Baker selections, McChesney)

Week 13 (December 3): INTERNET I: (Readings: Lessig, first half)

Week 14 (December 10): INTERNET II: (Readings: Lessig, second half)

SECOND MIGHTY EXAM: DURING SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM SLOT FOR CLASS

That's All Folks