

CMN 275:  
**Media, Money and Power**  
*Fall 2010*

3:30-4:50PM Tuesdays-Thursday

114 Smith Hall

Four Credit Hours

Prof. Robert W. McChesney

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TA: Brian Dolber  
Graders: George Boone  
Jessie Quintero Johnson

CMN 275: Media, Money and Power, is an introduction to the political economy of the media, with particular emphasis on 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 democratic and capitalist society. The course will examine the role of profit maximization, advertising, public relations, corporate concentration, and government policies and regulation upon journalism, entertainment, culture, and participatory democracy. The class will also examine issues such as the Internet, globalization, and public broadcasting.

At its heart, this class will examine the relationship of media to democratic self-governance, and the implications of institutional structures for the manner in which the media system operates; it is the connection of media to governance and power that is the *raison d'être* for this course.

Although SPCM 275 assumes no prior knowledge of the area, the course is intended for students with a genuine interest in the topic. Without such an interest this course may be difficult, tortuous, boring and painful. With such an interest, it can be a memorable experience, one you will carry with you for a long time to come. Four books are assigned for the class. They are (hopefully) available at University Bookstore. ***If the bookstore does not have the book, you are expected to locate it online, or elsewhere. The ball is in your court.*** The books are, in order of assignment:

1. Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle* (New York: Nation Books, 2009).
2. Robert W. McChesney & John Nichols, *The Death and Life of American Journalism* (Nation Books, 2010).
3. Susan Douglas, *Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism's Work is Done* (New York: Times Books, 2010).
4. Matthew Hindman, *The Myth of Digital Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Students are expected to attend the lectures. Students will also take three multiple choice/short answer exams, one on Thursday, September 23; the second on Thursday, October 28, and the third during the final exam slot on Thursday, December 16. The first two exams will not be cumulative. The final exam is cumulative, but the emphasis will be on the final five weeks of the class.

Note well: Students are required to take the final exam at the scheduled time. If you have a holiday that takes you out of town on or before the afternoon of Thursday December 16, **DROP THE CLASS IMMEDIATELY.**

Class will begin immediately at 3:30. Please arrive on time. If you arrive late, please be quiet. If you feel a compulsion to chat during the class, please leave the room. Research demonstrates student do better when they do not use personal computers during class, so you are advised to take that into consideration.

Lectures in the course generally will cover mostly different material from the assigned readings. The lectures are the heart and soul of the class; the readings are meant to develop ideas suggested in the lectures or to provide background. The readings are intended to be provocative, not to be authoritative texts that the students regard as the unquestioned truth. The readings will sometimes assume the reader knows more than you may actually know. If you see a name or term you are not familiar with, go online and look it up. In all likelihood, it is something an educated person should be familiar with.

It is imperative that students do *both* the readings and attend lectures to complete the course successfully. Because the course does not have discussion sections students have a particular responsibility to master the ideas in the readings. If students have questions about or problems with the assigned readings, they should attend the scheduled office hours with the TA, Brian Dolber, to discuss the matter.

Students have two writing assignments. Each must be five-pages long. One will be due in class on October 12; the second will be due the penultimate day of class on December 2. The topics for the papers will be provided roughly two weeks before the papers are due, and will be discussed in class. Late papers will be marked down a full grade for every day late. *Satisfactory papers must be submitted, even if very late, in order to pass the course.*

Student grades will be based on the following system:

First exam.....	22 percent
Second exam.....	22 percent
Two writing assignments....	24 percent (12 percent each)
Final exam.....	32 percent

## COURSE OUTLINE

The course entails nine units:

Communication & Civilization  
Capitalism, Advertising and the Media  
Democracy and Public Relations  
Creation of the Media  
Journalism  
Commercial Media Marketplace  
Technology & Internet  
Globalization  
Media Politics Today

NOTE: THE ASSIGNED READINGS FOR EACH WEEK ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE TUESDAY'S CLASS, EXCEPT FOR WEEK ONE

**Week 1 (A24, A26):** Introduction – UNIT ONE-- Communication & Civilization (readings: Hedges, pp. 1-30)

**Week 2 (A31, S2):** UNIT ONE--Communication & Civilization; UNIT TWO--Capitalism, Advertising and the Media (readings: Hedges, pp. 30-53, 89-125)

**Week 3 (S7, S9):** UNIT TWO--Capitalism, Advertising and the Media (readings: Hedges, pp. 125-193)

**Week 4 (S14, S16):** UNIT TWO--Capitalism, Advertising and the Media; UNIT THREE-- Democracy and Public Relations (readings: McChesney & Nichols, preface, pp. 1-56)

**Week 5 (S21, S23):** UNIT THREE-- Democracy and Public Relations (readings: McChesney & Nichols, pp. 57-108)

*First exam in class on Thursday September 23. Bring no. 2 pencil.*

**Week 6 (S28, S30):** UNIT FOUR-- Creation of the Media (readings: McChesney & Nichols, pp. 109-166)

*First writing assignment given out at class on Tuesday, September 28.*

**Week 7 (O5, O7):** UNIT FOUR-- Creation of the Media; UNIT FIVE—Journalism (readings: McChesney & Nichols, pp. 167-229)

**Week 8 (O12, O14):** UNIT FIVE—Journalism (readings: Douglas, pp. 1-53)

*First writing assignment due at the beginning of class, Tuesday, October 12.*

**Week 9 (O19, O21):** UNIT SIX--Commercial Media Marketplace (readings: Douglas, pp. 54-125)

**Week 10 (O26, O28):** UNIT SIX--Commercial Media Marketplace (readings: Douglas, pp. 126-187)

*Second exam (NOT cumulative) in class on Thursday October 28. Bring no. 2 pencil.*

**Week 11 (N2, N4):** UNIT SEVEN--Technology and Internet (readings: Douglas, pp. 188-241)

**Week 12 (N9, N11):** UNIT SEVEN--Technology and Internet (readings: Douglas, pp. 242-306)

**Week 13 (N16, N18):** UNIT EIGHT--Globalization (readings: Hindman, pp. 1-57)

*Second writing assignment given out in class on Tuesday November 16.*

Week 14 (No Class: Thanksgiving):

Week 15 (N30, D2): UNIT NINE--Media Politics (readings: Hindman, pp. 58-101)

*Second writing assignment due at the beginning of class, Thursday, December 2.*

Week 16 (D7): UNIT NINE--Media Politics (readings: Hindman, pp. 102-142)

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 16, 1:30-4:30 PM. Bring No. 2 pencil