

CMN 496:
Political Economy of Communication
Fall 2010

12:30-1:50PM Tuesdays-Thursday

431 Armory

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CMN 496 is an introduction to the political economy of the media, with particular emphasis on the United States. The class will read and examine six recent books addressing critical research in communication and politics, loosely determined.

The following 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. Charles P. Pierce, *Idiot America* (Doubleday, 2009).
2. Robert W. McChesney & John Nichols, *The Death and Life of American Journalism* (Nation Books, 2010).
3. Dave Zirin, *Bad Sports* (Scribner, 2010).
4. Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows* (W.W. Norton, 2010).
5. Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules* (Metropolitan Books, 2010).
6. Juliet B. Schor, *Plenitude* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010).

There will be a 25 question quiz every Tuesday throughout the semester to see how well the students have done the assigned readings. The best 10 of these 12 quizzes will count toward the final grade.

Every second Tuesday, when a book has been completed, students will write a one page discussion question for the class, based on the book. The discussion question will be followed by two paragraphs explaining why the student believes it to be a valuable discussion question; the entire assignment should run no longer than a single page. The best 5 of these 6 discussion questions will count toward the final grade.

The final session for the six books will be a student-led seminar addressing the discussion questions. Students will be assigned to guide these sessions; every student will share leadership for at least one discussion section.

There will be a take-home final exam for the students, to be based upon the six assigned books. Students will have one week exactly to take the exam. It cannot be any longer than 5,000 words.

Student grades will be based on the following system:

Best 10 quizzes.....	40 percent
Best 5 discussion questions.....	15 percent
Final take-home exam.....	20 percent
Participation in student-led seminars....	15 percent
Overall participation.....	10 percent

Please note the importance of class participation. This is an oral-based class in a department that emphasizes speech. If you do not participate in discussions, it will adversely affect your final grade.

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

Week 1 (A24, A26): Introduction.... No class on Thursday

Week 2 (A31, S2): readings: Pierce, pp. 1-162. *Quiz on Tuesday*

Week 3 (S7, S9): readings: finish Pierce. *Quiz on Tuesday; Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 4 (S14, S16): readings: McChesney & Nichols, introduction, ch. 1 and ch. 2. *Quiz on Tuesday*

Week 5 (S21, S23): finish McChesney & Nichols. *Quiz on Tuesday; Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 6 (S28, S30): readings: Zirin, to p. 107. *Quiz on Tuesday*

Week 7 (O5, O7): readings: finish Zirin. *Quiz on Tuesday; Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 8 (O12, O14): readings: Carr, to p. 114. *Quiz on Tuesday; Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 9 (O19, O21): readings: finish Carr. *Quiz on Tuesday. Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 10 (O26, O28): readings: Bacevich, to p. 127. *Quiz on Tuesday.*

Week 11 (N2, N4): readings: finish Bacevich. *Quiz on Tuesday. Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 12 (N9, N11): readings: Schor, to p. 97. *Quiz on Tuesday*

Week 13 (N16, N18): readings: finish Schor. *Quiz on Tuesday; Discussion Questions Due on Tuesday; Student-led seminar on Thursday*

Week 14 (No Class: Thanksgiving):

Week 15 (N30, D2): final exam take-home question given in class on Tuesday November 30; no class on Thursday

Week 16 (D7): final exam essay due in class on Tuesday December 7