

INTRODUCTION to MASS COMMUNICATION

American University - Central Asia, Fall 2010

Elina Karakulova, M.A.

Cell: 0555 62 21 95

Email: karakulova_e@mail.auca.kg

Additional email: elina.karakulova@gmail.com

Course description

In this course, we will study various mass media, learn how they work, analyze how media interact with various segments of society and how they influence politics, economics and culture.

Course objectives

- know the general differences between various media and their characteristics
- be able to describe the role of mass media in society
- develop independently opinion about some mass media phenomena
- be able to discuss actively the crucial historical and contemporary issues of mass media
- to understand how and why the media are changing, locally, nationally, and internationally;
- to enhance media literacy;
- to understand the theories, processes, and ethical standards within mass communication fields.

Organization

We will cover course material in lectures and seminars. It is expected that you do your readings prior to the lecture to be able to actively participate in class discussions.

Two types of quizzes will be held each week. One will test your ability to keep up with major national and international news. Another will check your knowledge about key concepts covered during lectures and in your textbook.

Class media discussion is the very important element of our course. There will be a list of topics given randomly for each couple of students (chosen randomly as well). Your aim is to prepare a debate – think about some interesting questions, cases and examples, divide the group into two groups (“pros” and “contras”), prepare rules for discussion, and moderate it in a proper way. Your input into the discussion will be graded. A deadline depends on the topic you got.

The final exam is scheduled for Monday, December 13.

Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. The instructor will immediately notify students of such changes by email or in class, explaining the nature of each change.

Integrity

Honesty is crucial. Anyone plagiarizing, cheating on quizzes or during the exam will risk dismissal from the course.

Absences

Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions. Any absence requires notification and a valid explanation. You will not be allowed to retake quizzes if you miss a class for no reason.

Readings

Textbook: Baran Stanley (2002): Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture. 2th Ed.

Selected articles from Introduction to Mass Communications reader

Assigned articles, online resources, handouts

Recommended reading:

Stay tuned with local, regional and international news. Here are some recommended websites:

www.news.bbc.co.uk

www.nytimes.com

www.eurasianet.org

www.rferl.org

www.ferghana.ru

www.stan.tv

www.24.kg

www.centrasia.ru

www.iwpr.net

Grading

A = 91-100%

B = 82-90.99%

C = 71-81.99%

D = 62-70.99%

F = Below 62%

High competence

Competence

Minimum competence

Limited or incomplete competence

Inadequate competence for credit

Table of points and assignments

Assignment	Maximum points
News quizzes (12)	60
Readings quizzes (12)	180
Class media discussion (preparation and guidance)	50
Class attendance and participation	90
Final Exam	120
Total	500

Class schedule

	Dates	Topics
Week 1	Aug 23	Introductions, syllabus discussion Defining communication and mass communication, mass media and culture, current trends in the field, “modern” communication technologies, media literacy

Week 2	Sept 30	The Internet and its users, trends and convergence in the Internet
Week 3	Sept 6	Books, history and development of the publishing industry and the book itself as a medium, cultural value of books and the implications of censorship
Week 4	Sept 13	Newspapers, organizational and economic nature of the contemporary newspaper industry in shaping the content of newspapers
Week 5	Sept 20	Short history of magazines, magazine advertising
Week 6	Sept 27	Media and politics
Week 7	Oct 4	Radio and sound recordings, new and emerging radio and recording technologies and their potential impact
Week 8	Oct 11	The scope and nature of the television industry
Week 9	Oct 18-22	FALL BREAK
Week 10	Oct 25	No classes*
Week 11	Nov 1	Defining public relations
Week 12	Nov 8	Advertising, contemporary criticisms and defenses of advertising
Week 13	Nov 15	Movies, cultural value of films and the implications of the blockbuster mentality
Week 14	Nov 22	Mass communications research and effects
Week 15	Nov 29	The culture of journalism: values, ethics, and democracy
Week 16	Dec 6	Revision of the course, exam preparation
	Dec 13	Final exam

* It is possible that the instructor will be on a business trip. Please, keep being informed at the department.