Media Violence
CR 410/510-2000704

Instructor:  Amanda Byron
E-mail:  abyron@pdx.edu
Phone:  503/725-9170
Office:  NH223  Office hours by arrangement
Website:  http://web.pdx.edu/~abyron

Course Description
This course will explore the impact and influence that media has on cultural norms and ideals, with particular attention to the many ways that media promotes and reinforces patterns of violence and oppression. This course will introduce the concept of media literacy, inviting participants to discuss and deconstruct popular media message in film, video, television, radio, music, print and on the Internet. Course content will also present research on the correlation between media consumption and early brain development, and the connection to changes in expected and accepted social norms. Students will have the opportunity to creatively conceptualize non-oppressive media, and the class will explore means to advocate for social responsibility within the media industry. Students will become more educated consumers of their media diet, and more powerful activists for appropriate media education and direction.

Course Requirements
Students must attend entire duration of class, arriving on time and participating fully in discussion and activities. Assigned reading must be completed prior to class and assignments must be completed by the deadlines stated within the syllabus.

Grading
25%  Attendance during on-ground portion of class
25%  Daily Assignments
25%  On-line participation
25%  Final Paper

Daily Assignments
There will be discussion postings due on the WebCT course site every day, during the on-ground week and the on-line week. Instructions will be posted on the course-site. There will also be additional assignments given each day of the on-line week.

Final Paper
The final paper should be on a specific area of media violence discussed in this course, and explored in detail in one of the suggested readings (see attached list). CR students will also need to explicitly tie their topic into conflict resolution theory. In addition to citing a primary reading choice, draw in at least 4 additional resources (which can include required reading). Papers should use APA citation style consistently, and will be evaluated on the quality of writing as well as the content. Final papers are due by 5pm on Friday, September 14th.

First week will meet on campus (On-Ground) and will utilize the WebCT course site
Monday 8/27

*Introduction to Media Violence*

Reading Assignment:
- 7 Sections on Media Violence at
- 8 sections of Beginner’s Guide at
  [http://www.freepress.net/guide/](http://www.freepress.net/guide/)

Writing Assignment:
Post an introduction to yourself on the WebCT course site, and describe your relationship with the media. Feel free to integrate new ideas from the readings as you describe your relationship.

Tuesday 8/28

*Identity Construction*

Reading Assignment:
- 6 Sections (plus subsections) on Media Stereotyping at

Writing Assignment:
Post a reflection about how you have noticed the media shaping identity, either in your own life or in the lives of those around you.

Wednesday 8/29

*Enmification and Media*

Reading Assignment:
- 7 Sections on Online Hate at
- [http://www.drzur.com/enmity.html](http://www.drzur.com/enmity.html)

Writing Assignment:
Post a reflection on the reading, and comment about how you have noticed media fuel hate in news reporting. Describe any strategies you have observed.

Thursday 8/30

*Video Games and Killing*

Reading Assignment:
- On Killing, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman or
  [http://www.killology.com/article_agress&viol.htm](http://www.killology.com/article_agress&viol.htm)

Writing Assignment:
Post your opinions about whether video games contribute to real world violence (and why). Integrate your thoughts on the reading in your comments.

Friday 8/31

*Censorship and the First Amendment*

Reading Assignment:
- Propaganda: Introduction and Common Techniques at
http://www.propagandacritic.com/articles/index.html
and
7 Sections on Information Privacy at
http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/privacy/index.cfm

Writing Assignment:
Post your thoughts on what the dividing line between censorship and free speech is, and your arguments for why.

Second Week will meet entirely On-Line

Tuesday 9/4
Children and Media
Reading Assignment:
http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/

Writing Assignments:
1. Post a reflection about how you were influenced by the media as a child, and how it affected your understanding of yourself and your relationship to the world.
2. Interview a friend or family with the above question and post your findings, and comment on similarities/differences.
3. Comment on at least one other person’s post.

Wednesday 9/5
Consumerism
Reading Assignment: Watch Merchants of Cool
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/

Writing Assignments:
1. Watch a Hollywood Blockbuster Film of your choosing. Take notes throughout the film to assess the following:
   a. What consumer products were placed in the film?
   b. Which people were presented as normative? What themes did you notice about the normative characters’ appearance, beliefs, and actions?
   c. What ideas/ideals were supported by the film?
   d. What ideas/ideals were challenged by the film?
2. Post a summary of your findings.
3. Comment on at least one other person’s post.

Thursday 9/6
Digital Democracy: How to support a democratic media
Reading Assignment:
http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1186
and
http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1185
also check out the following websites:
http://www.democraticmedia.org/
http://www.freepress.net/
Writing Assignments:
1. Post a reflection on the reading, sharing your own thoughts about what the value/disadvantage of a democratic media might be.
2. Interview 3 friends/family members about whether they feel that media should be democratic, post your findings.
3. Comment on at least one other person’s post.

Friday 9/7

New Media

Reading Assignment: Read entries about how media is changing culture and society
http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/we-media-2007/

Writing Assignments:
1. Post a reflection about the relationship between media and culture.
2. Comment on at least one other person’s post.
3. Post a course evaluation in the evaluation section of the course site. Please be constructive and descriptive in your comments, defining what worked and making concrete suggestions for improvements.

Excellent Web Resources

Media Education Foundation Resources http://www.mediaed.org/resources

Media Literacy Online Project Resources
http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/home/index.html

Suggested Reading List

Children and the Media


Consumerism

Fox, Roy (2000). Harvesting minds: How tv commercials control kids. Westport, CT:
Democratic Media and Censorship


Enmification and Propaganda


Identity Construction and Oppression


Video Game Violence
