

SYLLABUS FORM  
WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Valhalla, NY 10595

COURSE # **COMM 101**

1. NAME OF COURSE **Understanding Mass Media**

2. DATE OF LAST REVISION

Fall   2002    
Spring       

3. NAME OF REVISOR Prof. William C. Winters

4. NUMBER OF CREDITS  
3

5. NUMBER OF CONTACT HOURS PER WEEK  
3

6. APPROXIMATE FREQUENCY OF OFFERING THIS COURSE

Every semester

7. PREREQUISITES OR ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS

none required

8. COREQUISITES

non required

9. PLACE OF THIS COURSE IN CURRICULUM:   X   Required for Curriculum

       Required for College Core        Elective

       Part of Required/Recommended Sequence with (Number of Course) \_\_\_\_\_

10. IS THIS COURSE DESIGNED FOR TRANSFER?   X   Yes        No

11. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

List the course's **learning objectives** and describe how each objective/outcome will be measured.

<b>Objective</b> - Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:	This outcome will be <b>measured</b> by one or more of the following:
Be more aware and better understand the role of mass media in society through the text, class discussions, and video and audio tapes.	Exams, quizzes, written homework assignments, and general class discussion.
Better observe and analyze the media, through text, discussions, and taped examples.	Exams, quizzes, written homework assignments, and general class discussion.
To compare, evaluate, select, and interpret mass media (through the written assignments).	Written assignments
To speak (class discussion) and write (assignments) while examining mass communication.	Speaking will be judged during class discussions. Writing will be measured through (at least 7) written assignments.
Approache & select the various mass media, be discriminatory in choosing media, and gain insight into both the form and content of media messages.	Exams, quizzes, written homework assignments, and general class discussion.


12. GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES: Check each of the following Westchester Community College General Education goals that are addressed in this course:

- A.  Gaining knowledge of the natural and technological world
- B.  Gaining understanding of the individual and human society and its institutions
- C.  Gaining an appreciation of human culture and creative expression in their various manifestations
- D.  Developing the ability to analyze a situation critically, synthesize, create and articulate an argument or point of view
- E.  Developing a sense of personal values and ethics, as well as openness to differing perspectives and assumptions
- F.  Gaining the ability to gather and integrate information, and communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and information technology
- G.  Utilizing the methods of inquiry of the various disciplines to promote intellectual growth;
- H.  Gaining an historical perspective
- I.  Gaining a global perspective
- J.  Striving for an emotionally and physically healthy lifestyle, and the pursuit of self-insight

Describe how the course achieves each **general education objective** . Describe how each objective will be **measured**

General Education Objectives Indicate objective by letter.	How the Course achieves this objective.	This objective will be <b>measured</b> by one or more of the following:
A	Through the text and class discussion	Exams, quizzes, written assignments, & class discussion.
B	Through the text and class discussion	Exams, quizzes, written assignments, & class discussion.
D, F, G	Through the text and class discussion	Exams, quizzes, written assignments, & class discussion.
H	Through the text (this text emphasizes the history of media) and class discussion	Through the text (this text emphasizes the history of media) and class discussion
I	Through the text (this text emphasizes globalization of media) and class discussion	Through the text (this text emphasizes the history of media) and class discussion

### 13. COURSE GRADE

Based on the above measures, how will the final course grade be calculated?

#### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

1. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS. ***ALL STUDENTS MUST SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS 1 – 6.*** You will pick 2 more assignments from the remaining ones on the list (for a total of 7). To remove a low grade, resubmit the paper or choose an additional paper. I count the 7 highest grades. ***Any assignment handed in late will be penalized by 20 points. Absence is not an excuse for late assignments.*** 50% of total grade. Extra assignments may be done to erase a low assignment grade.
2. EXAMS. 3 regular 1 hour exams and one 2 hour final. 50% of final grade. Exams are usually "Scantron" type and consist of 80 - 100 questions from the text and MINIMUM supplemental materials discussed during class. ***A missed exam will be penalized by 20 points. You must take the retest before you come back to attend regular class.*** You may qualify for an exemption from the final only if your average in all categories (quizzes, exams, and assignments) is 90 or higher and you have 6 or less hours of absence. You must also attend all classes the last 2 weeks.
3. ATTENDANCE. Conforms to present college policy: no more than 6 hours of cuts are recommended. Any more than 6 hours will result in grade reduction (usually 2 points per absence over 6). ***Over 6 hours of cuts will result in disqualification for an exemption from the final.***

#### 14. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS **used in this course**

Methods include class lecture and discussion, demonstrations, chalk board, overhead transparencies, handouts, slides, and video/audio tapes. A variety of learning opportunities will be provided through required readings, frequent writing assignments, informal lecture, and class discussion.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL LEARNING OPTIONS

It is suggested that students join appropriate student organizations like the Viking News, WARY-FM, or the Video Club. You may also want to consider an internship (for credit) at any mass media organization. See Prof. Winters for details.

#### 15. TOPIC OUTLINE

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#### **[PROJECTS 1 – 6 ARE REQUIRED – THEY MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL STUDENTS]**

##### Chapter 1 The Mass Media -- An Overview

Project 1: try to avoid all contact with the 7 mass media for one 24 hour period. Report on (a) the media contacts you could not avoid and why, (b) those you avoided but missed, (c) substitute activities you used to fill non-media time, (d) **conclusions** about the role of mass media in your daily life. Separate your report into these 4 parts and **label each part**.

##### Chapter 2 Books: First of the mass media

##### Chapter 3 Magazines

Project 2a: describe and analyze the content of 1 issue of a special interest magazine (do not discuss ads). **Do not rewrite** the articles in the magazine -- simply briefly summarize what they are about. Pretend I have never seen this magazine and describe it to me (size, cost, color or black/ with your report. OR

Project 2b: Compare the content of Time and Newsweek for same week. OR

Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3)

##### Chapter 4 Newspapers

Project 3: compare the form and content of 2 news articles on the same event as presented by different newspapers. Include the articles.

Project 4: Examine a complete issue of USA TODAY and note the use of graphs, charts, and other such materials (count them!). Describe the effectiveness of these graphics in communicating information.

##### Chapter 5 Records

Project 5a: Analyze one non-music recording (Book-on-Tape, Self-help, Comedy, Environmental, etc.). Be sure to include title, company, length, quality, year, etc. Describe quality and effectiveness of the recording. Include an evaluation or an opinion. OR

Project 5b: read several issues of Rolling Stone, Pulse, Vibe, The Source, or other appropriate magazine(s), and write a report about contemporary issues and/or personalities in the recording/music industry. Include sources and quotes.

##### Chapter 6 Movies

Project 6: do 1 of the following:

- a. Compare a film adaptation of a book you have read
- b. Discuss motion picture **ratings** (not "reviews") (G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17) in relation to 2 (**two**) films you have seen. Discuss whether the ratings were appropriate.

## Exam 2 (Chapters 4, 5, 6)

### Chapter 7 Radio

Project 7a: Listen to a talk radio station for one hour. Suggestions include WABC 770, WOR 710, WLIB 1190, WFAN 660. Make a list of everything broadcast including newscasts, traffic reports, commercials, telephone calls (from listeners or guests), etc. Summarize your reactions. OR

Project 7b: Compare the local news broadcast by a radio station with the accounts published in a local newspaper covering the same principal news events (taping the radio news story is necessary). What are the significant differences in coverage? In what distinctive ways does each medium serve its audience? Include the tape and the printed article(s).

### Chapter 8 Television

Project 8a: Analyze one of the following:

1. a one-hour TV talk show
2. 1 or 2 children's programs (not cartoons)
3. a half-hour "tabloid" news program. In this case "analyze" means to break the show

into segments and summarize what was done in each segment (do not attempt to repeat all the conversation or action!). Include all commercials, promos, "teases" etc. List each commercial in each break. Take notice of segment lengths. OR

Project 8b: Compare the content of 2 TV news programs (videotaping one or both would be helpful to you) on different stations or networks on the same day (and time).

## Exam 3 (Chapters 7, 8)

### Chapter 9 The Web

Project 9. Download several pages from a website that you think pertain to recent class discussions. Write a paragraph explaining how they relate to the topic.

### Chapter 12 Advertising

Project 10: do 1 of the following:

- a. analyze the form and content of ads in a special interest magazine as a reflection of its target audience. You may use the same magazine as in Project 6.
- b. analyze 4 print ads for the same kind of product.
- c. analyze your 4 most hated TV ads.

### Chapter 13 Media Research (*selected topics*)

### Chapter 18 Mass Media Law

Project 11: Discuss 4 examples of possible libel, invasion of privacy, bad taste, pornography, or threat to national security from any medium. All the examples do not have to be from the same medium. You do not have to discuss each of the above categories.

### Chapter 19 Ethics and the Mass Media (*selected pages if time permits*)

Project 12: Identify stereotyped portrayals in a TV program. State how you feel such a portrayal(s) affect viewers opinions about the race, nationality, age, gender, or other characteristics of the person(s) involved.

Exam 4 (Final). Consists of questions from Chapters 9, 12, 13, and 18. A review section from the first 8 chapters may be included.

#### 16. UNIQUE ASPECTS OF COURSE

This course uses listening, examples, writing, and testing to give a historical overview of the media; the media's effects on society and the world; and it questions the future of media and its global impact on civilization. No other course covers "the media" in such a broad manner.

#### APPENDIX I: REQUIRED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS REQUIRED BY THE STUDENT (Include Supplementary Readings)

##### TEXTBOOK

The Media of Mass Communication by John Vivian. Allyn & Bacon, 6th Edition, 2003 update.

##### SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS OR PROJECTS (none required)

There are scores of books in Prof. Winters office that relate to the mass media. You may use/borrow these for this class or any other. Also, there are many professional trade magazines for you to borrow on the rack in the back of the media classroom, AAB 222. No extra readings or projects are required for this course.

#### APPENDIX II: - CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

A survey of language, structure, and operation of mass media, with emphasis on newspaper, magazine, radio, and television. Study of major changes in print and electronic media and the effects of mass communications on individuals and societies.

#### APPENDIX 3

##### PROF. WINTERS SCHEDULE

Professor Winters office is in the Academic Arts Bldg. Room 222. Office hours for this semester are posted on the bulletin board outside my office (AAB 222). Phone 785-6449 with questions or messages. Home phone: 769-9433. You can E-mail me at [Bill.Winters@SUNYwcc.edu](mailto:Bill.Winters@SUNYwcc.edu)

#### APPENDIX 4

##### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Prof. Winters uses many of the hundreds of books in his library in his office as well as in our school library and his personal library at home. They are far too numerous to list here, but they are broken down by categories (radio, film, etc). See Prof. Winters for details. You may borrow most of these books for use in this class or any other class.

## APPENDIX 5

### GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments ***MUST be typed*** (computers are available in the Library. **LABEL** each assignment as Project #1, #2, etc. (conform to syllabus). **DOUBLE SPACE** and leave margin area for my comments.

All assignments must be on regular letter size typing paper. **DO NOT SUBMIT PAPER TORN OUT OF A SPIRAL NOTEBOOK.**

Quality is as important as quantity. About 400 words per assignment (1 1/2 double-spaced typewritten pages).

When writing about magazines (or stories from magazines or newspapers) **ALWAYS HAND IN THE MAGAZINE/NEWSPAPER** (they will be returned).

Please staple all pages together.

If you are including clippings, illustrations etc. in your report:

- a. cut off unneeded parts of the newspaper
- b. if necessary, cut and rearrange the clipping on your paper keeping it in an upright position (easy to read and refer to for both of us)

**IMPORTANT: Any assignment handed in late will be penalized by 20 points. ABSENCE FROM CLASS IS NOT AN EXCUSE FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS.** Late assignments will probably not be handed back with regular "on time" assignments (they may be delayed by several weeks). Bring late assignments to my office (AAB 222) and slip them under the door.