

950 Culture Industries

Professor Michael Curtin
Seminar: Tues. 3:30-6:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Th 2:00-4:00 & by appt.

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The term “culture industries” is used in the title of this course to signify a focus on the role that media play in the social construction of modern societies. While the Hollywood community has always preferred the term “entertainment industry” (as in, “it’s just entertainment”) and others have invoked the term “media industry” (suggesting perhaps a neutral/technical orientation), we will be exploring the ways modern culture is produced and distributed by commercial institutions that aim to produce profits and (intentionally or not) to shape the values, attitudes, expectations, and fantasies of the societies where they operate. Our aim then is to explore the specific logics of the culture industries and their impact on modern societies. A secondary goal is to critically reflect upon the methods and analytical frameworks that scholars have employed in their studies of these institutions. And a third objective is to give students the opportunity to begin a research project on one particular aspect of the culture industries.

Required texts are available at Rainbow Bookstore, 426 W. Gilman

- 1) Sept. 2 Introduction
- 2) Sept. 9 Ritzer, The McDonaldization of Society
- 3) Sept. 16 Miller, et.al., Global Hollywood; **Bibliographic exercise due**
- 4) Sept. 23 Wasko, Understanding Disney
- 5) Sept. 30 Gitlin, Inside Primetime
- 6) Oct. 7 Shattuc, Talking Cure
- 7) Oct. 14 Moran, Copycat TV; **Proposal due**
- 8) Oct. 21 Negus, Music Genres and Corporate Cultures
- 9) Oct. 28 Scott, The Cultural Economy of Cities
- 10) Nov. 4 Price, Media and Sovereignty
- 11) Nov. 11 New media industries (reading packet)
- 12) Nov. 18 New Media industries (reading packet)
- 13) Nov. 25 Thanksgiving week
- 14) Dec. 2 Student presentations
- 15) Dec. 9 Student presentations; **Final papers due**

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Besides readings and class participation, this course offers students the opportunity to begin work on paper that analyzes an aspect or trend within the culture industries or a particular company or sector of the culture industries.

Basis for final course grade:

Class participation: 10%

Bibliographic exercise: 10%

Paper Proposal: 20%

Paper presentation: 20%

Final Paper: 40%

Please inform me within the first three weeks of class if you have a disability and need accommodation to take part in or to complete the required work for this course. For more information, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 905 University, 263-2741, TTY 263-6393.

Bibliographic exercise (due Sept. 16):

Part 1: Write a brief (2-3 sentence) description of a topic that you would like to research this semester.

Part 2: List five significant sources that will help you begin this research.

Part 3: Apropos our seminar sessions on new media later in the semester, we need to do a collective search for prospective readings. You may choose from two options: 1) conduct a search of scholarly journals and locate two articles that you would recommend for our reading list or 2) review one of the following books and select a chapter or two to add to our list of prospects. With either option, offer a brief written explanation of your recommendation.

Chandler, *Inventing the Electronic Century* 0743215672

Casidy, *Dot.con* 0060008814

Robert X Cringely, *Accidental Empires* 0887308554

Wallace & Erickson, *Hard Drive: Bill Gates & the Making of the Microsoft Empire* 0887306292

Kaplan, *Silicon Boys* 0688179061

Bronson, *Nudist on the Late Shift* 0767906039