

**Pace University, Department of Communication Studies  
Youth, Media, Democracy  
COM 297G Fall 2008, M 11:15-12:20/W 10:10-12:00**

Instructor: Emilie Zaslow

Email: ezaslow@pace.edu

Phone: (212) 346-1870

Office: 41 Park Row, Room 502

Office Hours: M 3:15-4:15, W 2:20-4:20, TH 2:30-4:30

**Course Description**

For decades scholars have feared that media will harm children and teens. From the Payne Fund Studies of the 1930s to current studies of violent video games, media researchers, psychologists, librarians, and other adults have expressed concern that media has negative effects on its youth audience. Such studies assume a passive absorption of media and overlook the many ways in which young people contribute to the making of meaning within media as well as to the making of media itself.

In this course we will explore – in the classroom and in service – how young people participate in the media environment. To contextualize issues in these areas, we will consider the role of community service in democracy, historical and current debates about youth and media in the U.S., and the ways in which young people actually use, value, and find meaning in multiple media in contemporary contexts. Finally, through readings, discussions, and screenings, we will analyze how young people use media as tools through which they can document their lives, concerns, and desires; produce social change; and put democracy into action.

The voices, concerns, and interests of young, inner city youth are rarely heard. In this Civic Engagement and Public Value Course, students will not only learn about the role of the youth as artist/media producer, but will work with young urban producers to help them think through their media use and guide them as they engage in the process of using their voices as tools for change and using media as tools of expression.

**Learning Objectives**

- This course will foster intellectual depth, breadth, integration, and application through its introduction to various discourses about youth and media from those that fear the role of media in the production of youth identities and behaviors to those who celebrate youth's involvement with the consumption and production of media. Students will be asked to apply their knowledge of theories and of the actual practice they are involved with as part of their civic engagement to develop their own position on the relationship between youth and media.

- This course will foster effective citizenship because students will be working directly with at students in New York City who are themselves exploring the role of art and media production in the democratic process. This course will integrate service and learning. Students will spend two to three hours a week outside of class working with students.
- This course will foster the recognition of different value systems as well explore the various perspectives on youth, media, and consumption. As we explore various media forms and texts that young people actually use, value, and find meaning in, we will identify the various values systems within which young people locate their identities.
- This course will foster aesthetic response as students will be engaged with high school participants in the production of documentary and/or fictional videos. These videos are works of art and will be evaluated as such by all participants.

### **Assessing Learning Outcomes**

- Students will develop a more complex understanding of the relationship between youth, media and media education and be able to articulate this understanding in written work and group discussion.
- Students will develop skills as responsible community participants and mentors through service and learning.
- Students will develop an ability to think reciprocally about the process of service learning: they will apply knowledge of youth and media in community setting and apply knowledge of community in theorizing youth and media.
- Students will learn how art/media production is central to civic engagement and participatory democracy and can serve to balance power in a media environment dominated with corporate interests.

### **Texts**

Levine, Peter. *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*  
 Buckingham, David. *The Making of Citizens*  
 FisherKeller, JoEllen. *Growing Up with Television*

### **Demonstration of Learning and Method of Evaluation**

#### **1. Attendance and Participation**

**15%**

(1) Regular and prompt attendance. You are expected to attend all class sessions (arriving on time and staying for the entire class) and all community service commitments. Missing more than three classes and/or a record of lateness will negatively affect your grade. Arrival in class after the first half-hour constitutes an absence. (2) Regular and meaningful participation. You are expected to participate actively in this course. In order to do so, you should prepare yourself by reading assignments and thinking about the material before class. Participation is not limited to having answers; lively and interesting conversations are often sparked by questions rather than answers. You can participate in a number of meaningful ways including: listening, building on what others say, asking questions, sharing

experiences that confirm or contradict what you read, and working collaboratively with others.

## **2. Response Papers**

**25%**

For each of the four themes, you will write a 3-5 page response paper reflecting on a series of readings. The first response should cover 9/3-9/15, the second response should cover 9/17-10/1, the third response should cover 10/6-10/8 and the fourth response should cover 10/15-10/24.

Your response papers need not reference every course reading but you should demonstrate that you have an understanding of how the articles, chapters, and books inform, support and/or contradict each other. You should reference at least three of the readings in each paper (unless there are fewer readings, as in the case of the third response) but the more you reference the clearer it will be that you have done the reading and are able to think critically about it. You may also refer to your community service placement. You should not, however, list each article and react to it. Rather, you are writing a paper. Be sure to have a clearly stated, well-supported thesis.

If you are having trouble finding a theme, answering these questions may help you find a subject and subsequently a thesis:

- What interested me the most?
- What image or phrase stands out?
- What patterns are there in the readings?
- Do any of the authors disagree with one another?
- What do I agree with? Disagree with? Why?

## **3. Midterm Exam**

**15%**

The midterm will be a take home essay exam.

## **4. Journal**

**15%**

Students will be asked to keep a journal of their experiences at their community service placement. Students may be asked to read their journal entries aloud.

## **5. Presentation**

**15%**

Each student will present individually or in group on their community service placement. Guidelines will be provided and schedule TBD.

## **6. Final Paper /Project**

**15%**

The final paper or project will be an individual or group paper or project that reflects on the course material as well as the service learning. Guidelines and options will be provided.

## **Written work**

All submitted work must be typed, double spaced, and paginated. Multiple pages should be stapled. The student's name, date, and essay title should appear on the first page, and pages should be numbered. Written work must be submitted on paper – not electronically. Electronic submissions will only be accepted under outstanding circumstances with advanced approval from instructor.

**Free writing help is available through the Writing Center in Birnbaum Library, 2nd Floor. Phone: (212) 346-1085 or online through the university website.**

## **Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be marked down one grade point for every late day. (Example: a paper due on Monday, and turned in on Wednesday, could not receive a grade higher than B+.) Please remember that absences are not an acceptable excuse for not having done the required work. In case of extenuating circumstances that will prevent you from meeting a deadline, you should discuss the matter with me **before** the due date of the assignment.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students must accept the responsibility to be honest and to respect ethical standards in meeting their academic assignments and requirements. Integrity in the academic life requires that students demonstrate intellectual and academic achievement independent of all assistance except that authorized by the instructor. The use of an outside source, including electronics sources, in any paper, report or submission for academic credit without the appropriate acknowledgement is plagiarism. It is unethical to present as one's own work the ideas, words or representations of another without the proper indication of the source. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to give credit for any quotation, idea or data borrowed from an outside source. Students who fail to meet the responsibility for academic integrity subject themselves to sanctions ranging from a reduction in grade or failure in the assignment or course in which the offense occurred to suspension or dismissal from the University.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Pace University believes that it is important for students receive appropriate accommodation for any disability. To receive accommodation for any disability, students must contact the campus Counseling Center (Pace Plaza, 212-346-1526; Westchester, 914-773-3710). The Coordinator of Disability Services will:

- Evaluate the student's medical/learning/psychological documentation
- If further documentation is necessary, refer the student for appropriate tests
- Make recommendations for a plan of accommodation
- Prepare letters for the student arranging for the recommended accommodations.

*The professor is not authorized to provide any accommodation prior to your arranging for it through the Counseling Center.*

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following is a "working schedule" as education is a dynamic process. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes announced in class or through email. If you miss class, please contact a classmate to learn of any changes to the schedule.

Readings and other assignments are due on the date listed.

- September 3 (W)      **Introductions and Overview**
- September 8 (M)      **Community Service & Democracy**  
Barber, "Service, Citizenship & Democracy: Civic Duty as an Entailment of Civil Right"
- September 10 (W)      Levine, Chapters 1 & 2
- September 15 (M)      Soep, "Youth Media Citizenship: Beyond Youth Voice"
- September 17 (W)      **Youth & Media**  
Anderson, "Violent Video Games Increase Aggression and Violence"  
McIntyre, "APA Congressional Testimony on Media Violence and Children"
- September 22(M)      Jenkins, "Professor Jenkins Goes to Washington"  
Freedman, "Television Violence and Aggression: Setting the Record Straight"
- September 24 (W)      Giroux, "Are Disney movies good for your kids?"
- September 29 (M)      Fisherkeller, *Growing Up With Television*
- October 1 (W)      Fisherkeller, *Growing Up With Television*
- October 6 (M)      **Youth, Media, & Democracy: Youth in the Democratic Process**  
Cloonan & Street, "Rock the Vote: Popular Culture and Politics"  
Smith, "Rock the Vote 2.0"
- \*\*Response #2 Due \*\*
- October 8 (W)      Watch Presidential Debate on October 7<sup>th</sup>
- \*Groups to present lesson: "Next" and "Body Image"

- October 13 (M) Koppleman, "Beyond Rock The Vote"  
 Koppleman, "Survey: Youth vote nearly doubled for 2008 primaries and caucuses "  
 Hurley, "The Power of Peer Pressure"  
[http://www.youthmediareporter.org/2005/03/the\\_power\\_of\\_peer\\_pressure.html](http://www.youthmediareporter.org/2005/03/the_power_of_peer_pressure.html)  
[www.youthradio.org/election2008](http://www.youthradio.org/election2008)
- \*Groups to present lesson: "Pop Icons" and "Representation of College"
- October 15 (W) Levine, Chapters 5 and 10  
 \*Groups to present lesson: "Superheros" and "Problem Solving on TV"
- October 20 (M) Kearney, "Brought to You by Girl Power"
- October 22 (W) Chang, "This Ain't No Party"
- October 27 (M) View: *CultureJam: Hijacking Commercial Culture*  
 \*Response #3 due\*
- News, Democracy and Media**
- October 29 (W) Croteau and Hoynes, "How Business Strategy Shapes News Content"
- November 3 (M) Buckingham, *The Making of Citizens*, Ch. 1-3
- November 5 (W) Buckingham, *The Making of Citizens*, Ch. 4-6  
 PSA In A DAY Workshop w/ YC
- November 10 (M) Discussion of Community Service  
 \*Journals due\* (first of 2 times)
- November 12 (W) Buckingham, *The Making of Citizens*, Ch. 7-8
- November 17 (M) Streitmatter, Excerpt from *Voice of Revolution*
- November 19 (W) Presentations on Community Service
- November 24 (M) Presentations on Community Service  
 \*\*Response #4 Due\*\*
- November 26 (W) **Thanksgiving**
- December 1 (M) Catch-Up

December 3 (W)

Wrap-Up & Discussion

**\*\*Final Paper/Project & Journals Due \*\***