



## **Business Context – Media and Society**

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**September 22-26, 2014**

### **A. Course Philosophy and Objective**

The objective of the course would be to apprise students about the economic, political and social impact of the mass media across the world and on Indian society in particular. The course will provide a broad global perspective on the working of the mass media while explaining specific local elements in developed and developing countries. The course would explain the commercial as well as the aesthetic considerations that influence the functioning of organizations engaged in mass communications. It would historically review the way in which information and communication technologies have evolved and impacted the mass media and how ethical issues relating to the media have changed over time.

The course would consider the market-oriented, commercial considerations that impact the mass media which are often perceived to be in contradiction with the role of the media in providing a public service. The course would introduce students to foundational works on the political economy of the media while highlighting patterns of interface between media organizations and society. Specifically, the course would look at the socially-constructed nature of news that challenges ideas and notions of news as being something “out there” which is “objective” or “value-free”. It would highlight the “power” of the media in ideological terms and the “corporatization” of the media.

The course would look at the ways in which the internet or the worldwide web has not merely become an important mass medium in itself but how it is exerting a profound influence on existing media by making these more personal and participative. The course would enable students to devise personal, organizational, industrial and business strategies using the internet. The course examines the practical and pragmatic implications for organizations and management professionals of the use of fast-changing technologies for mass communications.

The course is divided into eighteen (18) sessions, each lasting one hour (60 minutes) and includes student presentations, film screenings, interactive sessions and a written examination.

## **B. Lesson Plan**

### **Session 1:**

#### **An introduction to the course**

**What is communication? What is mass communication?**

### **Session 2:**

#### **The challenges of communicating across cultures**

#### **Readings:**

McLuhan, Marshall and Lapham, Lewis H. "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man", MIT Press, 1964

McLuhan and Fiore, Quentin, "The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects", Bantam Books, 1967

McLuhan and Powers, Bruce R., "The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century", Oxford University Press, USA, 1986

A Note on Effective Communication by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta

Schudson, M. (2003), The Sociology of News, New York: W. W. Norton.

Dan Berkowitz (1997), Social Meanings of News, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Session 3:**

#### **What is news?**

#### **Readings**

"Complete Reporter: Fundamentals of News Gathering, Writing and Editing" by Julian Harriss, Kelly Leiter and Stanley Johnson, Allyn and Bacon, USA, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1999

"News Writing: News and the News Industry" by George A. Howe, Houghton Mifflin, College Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1994

Fishman, M. (1980), Manufacturing the news, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Gans, H. J. (1979), Deciding what's news, New York: Pantheon Books.

### **Session 4:**

**Relative strengths and weaknesses of different mass media – print, radio, television, cinema and the internet**

**Session 5:**

**History of media technology: From the printing press to the I-pod**

**Readings**

“Making Sense of Media: An Introduction to Mass Communication” by George Rodman, Allyn & Bacon, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2000

**Session 6:**

**History of media ethics**

**Readings**

“Making Sense of Media: An Introduction to Mass Communication” by George Rodman, Allyn & Bacon, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2000

“Mass Communication Ethics: Decision Making in Postmodern Culture” by Larry Z. Leslie, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, USA, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), 2004

“Media Ethics: Truth, Fairness and Objectivity: Making and Breaking News” by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011 (Second enlarged edition)

**Session 7:**

**Comparing the media in developed and developing countries: the US and India  
What is unique about India’s experience with television**

**Screening of 30-minute documentary film: “Idiot Box or Window of Hope”** directed by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust in 2003.

“The global media: The new missionaries of corporate capitalism. Cassell: NY, ” Herman, E.S. & McChesney, R. W. (1997)

**Session 8:**

**The political economy of the media: Ownership patterns, convergence and consolidation**

A series of articles in the section “Who owns the media” published in thehoo.org written by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta over 2012

“Politics After Television: Religious Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public” by Arvind Rajgopal , 2001, Cambridge University Press

“Television news and democratic change in India” in “Media, Culture & Society”, 2011, Sage

**Session 9:**  
**Reconciling ethics and commerce**

**Screening of 30-minute documentary film: “Grabbing Eyeballs: What’s Unethical About Television News in India”** directed by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust in 2007

**Sessions 10, 11 and 12:**  
**Student presentations on:**

- (a) Resolving ethical and commercial considerations in media organizations
- (b) Reality television programmes: Should there be curbs on content?
- (c) Edward Snowden and Julian Assange: Terrorists or freedom fighters?
- (d) The need for public broadcasters and how to make them financially viable

The class would be divided into groups of five students in a random manner. A representative of each group would draw lots to determine (1) the topic of the presentation, and (2) the chronological order in which the presentations are made.

**Sessions 13 and 14:**  
**Organizational practices in media industries**  
**Why media products and services are different from other products and services**

**Linking culture and strategy: the cases of BBC and CNN**

**Readings**

“The Entrepreneurial M-Form: Strategic Integration in Global Media Firms” by Thomas R. Eisenmann and Joseph L Bower, “Organizational Science”, May/June 2000

“Balancing Act: Learning from Organizing Practices in Cultural Industries” by Joseph Lampel, Theresa Lant and Jamal Shamsie, “Organizational Science”, May/June 2000

“Exploring the Link Between Culture and Strategy in Media Organizations: the cases of the BBC and CNN” by Lucy King, Journal of Mass Communication, Vol. 2, No. II, 2000

Gandy, O. H. (1982), Beyond agenda setting: Information subsidies and public policy, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Lessig, Lawrence, “Free Culture”, Penguin Press, New York, 2004

Bagdikian, Ben H., “The Media Monopoly”, Beacon Press (Uckfield), 2000

Campbell, Richard, “Media Culture”, Bedford/St. Martin (Boston), 2002

Rodman, George, “Making Sense of the Media”, Allyn and Bacon (Boston), 2001

**Session 15:**

**Coexistence of old and new media technologies**

**Case study of video-on-demand in Hong Kong**

**Readings**

“The Institutional Conditions for Technological Change: Fiber to the Home” by Robert Loube, “Journal of Economic Issues”, December 1991

“New Technologies, New Markets: The Launch of Hong Kong Telecom’s Video-on-Demand” by Peter Lovelock, Centre for Asian Business Cases, 1998

“Journalism must go back to the trenches, rediscover the basics” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Inter-American Press Association, reprinted in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of “Outlook”

**Session 16:**

**Media convergence: How the internet is influencing the ‘old’ media**

**The future of the worldwide web: personal and participatory media**

**Can newspapers survive? (Including a film show)**

**Readings**

“Convergence Processes, Value Constellations and Integration Strategies in the Multimedia Business” by Bernd W. Wirtz, Journal of Media Management, Vol 1, No 1, 1999

A series of eight (8) articles published in *The Economist*, April 20, 2006 by Andreas Kluth entitled: 1. Among the audience; 2. It’s the links, stupid; 3. Compose yourself; 4. The Wiki principle; 5. Heard on the Street; 6. Wonders of the Metaverse; 7. The gazillion-dollar question; 8. What sort of revolution?”

*The Economist*, July 9-15, 2011, “Back to the coffee house: A 14-page special report on the future of news”

**Session 17:**

**Freedom of expression in the age of the internet**

**Legal issues concerning the media: censorship, copyright and plagiarism**

Screening of “Freedom Song” a 52-minute documentary film that examines issues relating to freedom of expression in contemporary India, produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust of India in 2012 and directed by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Subi Chaturvedi, followed by a discussion.

**Session 18:**

**Final examination: Writing an essay**

The students would be expected to write an essay on one out of two particular topics that would be given to them just before the examination. The students would be allowed to consult printed material and use their laptops connected to the internet during the examination, that is, it would be a "open book" examination, However, they would be expected to write the essay by hand.

**C. Evaluation**

Course participants will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Presentation (50 per cent weight)
  2. Essay (50 per cent weight)
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