

# Enquire Teaching Timetable

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## Course Outcome

### COMM 2210 - News and Society

#### Learning Outcome

Students will be able to describe the nature and characteristics of news.  
Students will know about current affairs and can differentiate different types of news and their impacts.  
Students will be equipped with news analytical skills and can apply them to study major news phenomena competently.  
Students will be able to explore the role of news in society and discuss the relationship between news and society.  
Students will be trained as wise news consumers and critical citizens.

#### Course Syllabus

The course consists of several parts. The first part sets the stage by examining the relationship between news and society, the nature and characteristics of news, as well as inviting students to reflect on their news reading habits. The second part deals with various major types of news, including social news, political news, entertainment news, and international news. The third part is about some emerging news trends in society, including the rapid rise of free newspapers, online newspapers and the new social network media as news channels. The final part discusses institutional relationships among news, advertising, public relations, and other social sectors. The reflection on journalistic professionalism and media ethics serve to round up and highlight the role and responsibilities of news in society.

The following is an outline of this course:

#### Week 1 Introduction: News and Society

The course starts by introducing the role of journalism as a vital social institution and its unique function as the often-quoted "fourth estate" of the government. But in fact news serves to monitor the government and the society, and thus freedom of the press is important not only to the journalists but to the general public. Contribution of newswork to the proper maintenance of the public sphere and establishment of a civil society is emphasized.

*Key concepts: journalism as social institution, journalism as the fourth estate, press freedom, public sphere*

#### Week 2 What is News: Characteristics and Perspectives

News is a complex social phenomenon. It is so familiar to us but yet a simple and clear definition cannot be satisfactorily reached among academics and practitioners. Many agree that "immediacy", "importance" and "interest" are the three most important components. Others see news as some sort of deviant events. Some scholars regard news as vital social information while others think of it as a commercial product. Objectivity can be regarded as a noble ideal but some say it is a "strategic ritual". Scholars from the humanistic tradition would treat it primarily as a "speech act".

*Key concepts: definitions of news, the three "Is" of news, news as deviance, objectivity as strategic ritual, news net, humanistic perspectives of news*

#### Week 3 Cultivating Good News Reading Habits

News consumption patterns were stable in the past but are now showing great changes due to the coming of the Internet age. People tend to read less print newspapers and spend more time getting information online. This is especially true for the younger generations who practically grow up together with the Internet. How can we instill the value of news reading to the young people? How can they become smarter readers, no matter which news venues/channels they tune to? New technologies are a threat to existing media but they also open up new opportunities and possibilities. It is essential for our students to be news literate in order to become an informed and critical citizen.

*Key concepts: changing news use patterns, news consumer, critical citizenship, media education, technological impact*

#### Week 4 Social News: Taste Strata of Mass and Elite

News about the society can vary according to the orientations of news organizations and the tastes of the reading/viewing public. The elite class has different taste preference over news when compared with the mass public. Fierce competition and marketization have driven many news organizations to go down the road of tabloidization and McDonaldization. They tend to hype the news and respond more to market "wants" instead of social "needs".

*Key concepts: tabloidization, McDonaldization, market driven-journalism, hyping*

#### Week 5 Political News: Monitoring Those in Power

News is always intertwined with the government, politicians and those who have power in society. Various political forces want to control or influence the press in order to gain advantages. They feed and spin stories to the media, which on the other hand try to play the watchdog function and report news responsibly. News coverage in election settings will be examined to see how journalists and politicians interact with each other, and whether the public is properly informed.

*Key concepts: spin doctoring, watchdog function, social responsibility theory, media and election, stereotyping*

#### Week 6 Entertainment News: "Interesting", Not "Public Interest"

Some people love entertainment news. They are keen on the "interesting" acts of or self-directed promotion by certain celebrities and have little concern over "public interest". As a result, entertainment news tends to be trivial or muckraking. The paparazzi teams sent by news organizations could not care less about invasion of privacy or damaging celebrities' reputations. The blurring of boundaries (between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, public and private, etc.) is something we should be aware of when reading this type of news.

*Key concepts: trivialization, paparazzi, personal muckraking, blurring of boundaries, invasion of privacy*

#### Week 7 International News: Our Window on the World

The course will talk about international news as the world is getting more and more global and integrated. It is essentially our window to look at the world outside. Between nations, diplomacy is often done through news reporting, which significantly reflects national interests. The major international news agencies play an important role. Journalists usually try hard to "domesticate" foreign news to make it more attractive to local audience.

*Key concepts: media and national interest, public policy, media diplomacy, domestication of news*

#### Week 8 Free Newspapers: The New Model That Works

Traditionally, TV is free but newspaper is paid. But in the past few decades, paid TV channels have quickly emerged as well as free newspapers. Print newspapers rely on both advertising and subscription or single copy sales. This business model is upset by the free newspapers which rely

solely on advertising. People find that being free is irresistible, and they are less concerned about the quantity and quality of news as long as it is free of charge. What are the implications for the future of journalism? Would it popularize newspaper reading or downgrade the quality of journalism, or both? How do free dailies, paid dailies and online dailies interact? These are evolving issues worthy of closer examination.

*Key concepts: distribution-driven journalism, free vs. paid, Metro Daily formula, work-habitation patterns, interactions among different types of newspapers*

### Week 9 Online Newspapers: News in the Internet Age

Going online is a relatively new phenomenon for the press starting in the mid-1990s. It began as a low-cost spin-off that carried big promises both in terms of revenue and readership. The actual result favors the latter but not the former, and the journalism industry is still seeking a workable business model for online newspapers. But online dailies do revolutionize news delivery and its content because of its electronic and digital format. A new marketplace is forged but its potential has not been fully realized. Whether online newspapers would eventually replace the print versions remains an intriguing question for both the academics and the practitioners.

*Key concepts: electronic marketplace, information marketplace, opinion marketplace, virtual media space, media format*

### Week 10 Social Network Media as News Channels

In the past decade, new social network media have become so popular that they also begin to act as news source and serve as a platform for news dissemination. What are their relationships with traditional news organizations? How do they affect the nature, delivery and quality of news? Scholars differentiate the role of traditional journalists as "gatekeeping" from the new role of online journalists as "gatewatching". Is citizen journalism in the Internet age a blessing or a curse? Would there be generational differences? All these questions will be explored in the course.

*Key concepts: alternative media, Facebook, Twitter, blogging, citizen journalism, gatekeeping, gatewatching*

### Week 11 News and Advertising: Any Strings Attached with the Money?

News and advertising seem to be inseparable worldwide. Journalists work together with advertising and marketing people to bring both news and product information to the readers/audiences. But the journalistic side and the market side of a news organization have different and even opposing ideals and goals. They are in constant battle but have to rely on the other for survival. How can news be immune from unwanted advertising influence? Why is public broadcasting possible but not public print journalism?

*Key concepts: journalistic theory vs. market theory, theory of low involvement, types of advertising, commercialization, sponsorship*

### Week 12 News and Public Relations: How to Influence the Press

Journalists and public relations people constitute another pair of actors in constant tension and cooperation. Journalists need news sources and public relations practitioners provide news and information to news organizations. But public relations people are often accused of staging pseudo-events in order to gain publicity and propaganda. They try to influence the press and get coverage. In recent years, many journalists leave the profession and join the public relations field as they know how news work and how to gain press coverage. It is an interesting topic and has major implications for the content and quality of news reporting.

*Key concepts: pseudo-events, staging, manufacturing consent, propaganda model*

### Week 13 Rethinking News: Professionalism, Ethics, and Alternatives

This week is a wrap-up of the course by focusing on media professionalism and ethics. How can journalists do their job properly under all sorts of constraints? Can they adhere to a high standard of media ethics? Can news reflect different perspectives and interests in the society? Is the noble ideal of public journalism a viable alternative? How can news better serve our society and the general public? It is hoped that students will be able to reflect on these questions through the readings and the various assignments in this course.

*Key concepts: journalistic professionalism, media ethics, multi-perspectival news, public journalism*

### Assessment Type

	Assessment Type	Current Percent
1	Discussion	0
2	Homework or assignment	0
3	Project	0
4	Short answer test or exam	0

### Feedback for Evaluation

1. Course and Teaching Evaluation Survey
2. Internal Course Review

### Required Readings

Required readings:

#### Week 1 Introduction: News and Society

Werner, W., & Nixon, K. (1990). Introduction. In *The media and public issues: A guide for teaching critical mindedness* (pp. 1-8). Ontario: Althouse Press.

Adam, G. S. (2010). Studying journalism: A civic and literary education. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 627-636). London: Routledge.

#### Week 2 What is News: Characteristics and Perspectives

Jamieson, K. H. (2006). What is news? *The interplay of influence: News, advertising, politics, and the Internet* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 40-83). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

蘇鑰機 (2011)。[什麼是新聞?]。《傳播研究與實踐》，第1卷，第1期，頁1-24。

#### Week 3 Cultivating Good News Reading Habits

Madianou, M. (2010). Living with news: Ethnographies of news consumption. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 428-438). London: Routledge.

Mendes, K., Carter, C., & Davies, M. M. (2010). Young citizens and the news. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 450-459). London: Routledge.

#### Week 4 Social News: Taste Strata of Mass and Elite

蘇鑰機 (2003)。[市場導向下的新聞傳媒]。李少南編，《香港傳媒新世紀》(頁99-124)。香港：中文大學出版社。

Rowe, D. (2010). Tabloidization of news. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 350-361). London: Routledge.

#### Week 5 Political News: Monitoring Those in Power

Jamieson, K. H. (2006). News and advertising in the political campaign. In *The interplay of influence: News, advertising, politics, and the Internet* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 317-353). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

Seib, P. (2010). News and foreign policy: Defining influence, balancing power. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 496-506). London: Routledge.

#### Week 6 Entertainment News: The "Interesting" Aspect of News

Postman, N. (1985). The age of show business. In *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business* (pp. 83-98). New York: Viking Penguin Inc.

Baym, G. (2010). Real news/fake news: Beyond the news/entertainment divide. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 374-383). London: Routledge.

#### Week 7 International News: Our Window on the World

Galtung, J., & Vincent, R. C. (1992). The structure of foreign news. In *Global glasnost: Towards a new world information order?* (pp. 49-53). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Lee, C. C., Chan, J. M., Pan, Z., & So, C. Y. K. (2000). National prisms of a global "media event". In J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass media and society* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 295-309). London: Arnold.

#### Week 8 Free Newspapers: The New Model That Works

Bakker, P. (2002). Reinventing newspapers: Readers and markets of free dailies. In R. G. Picard (Ed.), *Media firms: Structures, operations, and performance* (pp. 77-86). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

So, C. Y. K., & Lee, A. Y. L. (2007). *Distribution-driven journalism: The business model of free newspapers*. Paper presented at the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), May 24-28, 2007.

#### Week 9 Online Newspapers: News in the Internet Age

Boczkowski, P. J. (2002). The development and use of online newspapers: What research tells us and what we might want to know. In L. A. Lievrouw & S. Livingstone (Eds.), *Handbook of new media: Social shaping and consequences of ICTs* (pp. 270-286). London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lee, A. Y. L., & So, C. Y. K. (2002). Dissolving boundaries: The electronic newspaper as an agent of redefining social practices. In J. M. Chan & B. T. McIntyre (Eds.), *In search of boundaries: Communication, nation-states and cultural identities* (pp. 72-94). Westport, CT: Ablex.

#### Week 10 Social Network Media as News Channels

Turner, G. (2010). Redefining journalism: Citizens, blogs and the rise of opinion. In *Ordinary people and the media: The demotic turn* (pp. 77-97). LA: Sage.

Glaser, M. (2010). Citizen journalism: Widening world views, extending democracy. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 578-590). London: Routledge.

#### Week 11 News and Advertising: Any Strings Attached with the Money?

Jamieson, K. H. (2006). How Corporate Power Influences What We See. In *The interplay of influence: News, advertising, politics, and the Internet* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 156-170). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

McManus, J. H. (1994). Does serving the market conflict with serving the public? So what?: Market journalism's effect on society. In *Market-driven journalism: Let the citizen beware?* (pp. 85-91, 183-198). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

#### Week 12 News and Public Relations: How to Influence the Media

Jamieson, K. H. (2006). Influencing the news media. In *The interplay of influence: News, advertising, politics, and the Internet* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 119-155). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

Franklin, B., Lewis, J., & Williams, A. (2010). Journalism, news sources and public relations. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 202-212). London: Routledge.

#### Week 13 Rethinking News: Professionalism, Ethics, and Alternatives

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2001). What is journalism for? In *The elements of journalism: What newspeople should know and the public should expect* (pp. 15-35). New York: Crown Publishers.

Croteau, D., & Hoynes, W. (2001). Media, markets, and the public sphere. *The business of media: Corporate media and the public interest* (pp. 13-38). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

#### Recommended Readings

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