

## Course Information

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Course Information	Course details	Class schedule
<b>Last updated</b>	2024/05/27	
<b>Course description</b>	<p>We are increasingly getting our information from and experiencing life via the media. Our continuous media exposure and use influences the way we think about the world and about ourselves. This course is designed to help students develop media literacy by developing knowledge about and skills to better navigate the media-saturated world. The course aims to help students make sense of their media experiences, and to develop and broaden their perspectives on the media and the real world. Students will apply their growing knowledge and skills of media literacy to explain, analyze, and interpret the content, the industry itself, and the effects of various media, such as news, entertainment, and advertisement on society.</p> <p>The course is designed to help students to be able to:</p>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe key concepts and theories regarding media literacy.</li> <li>• Build knowledge about the content, industry, and effects of media.</li> <li>• Analyze media content and products, such as news, entertainment, and advertisement, based on theoretical frameworks of media literacy.</li> <li>• Interpret the meanings of media messages to build multiple perspectives to understand the media and the real world.</li> <li>• Evaluate the quality of media performance based on normative expectations about the media for society.</li> <li>• Develop critical thinking skills as media audience and citizens.</li> </ul>	
<b>AILA Elements</b>	<p>Media are the excellent objects of interdisciplinary study. Media content and messages are shaped by multilevel social forces and through complex social processes. To fully understand how media are constructed, students are required to employ and integrate concepts, theories, and methods from multiple disciplines including cultural studies, sociology, political economy, political science, and rhetoric. Students will learn how they can analyze, interpret and evaluated media content and products using the interdisciplinary approaches. This class will help students to grow intellectually and personally as it encourages students to relate their own experience with media and make sense of the social world represented and constructed through media.</p>	
<b>AILA Activities &amp; Projects</b>	<p>One of the aims of this class is to help you think critically about the information circulating in the news media. An important step toward this goal is to be able to evaluate the sources, claims, and evidence presented in support of them, appreciating the perspective within which they are located--that is, examining the merits of arguments.</p> <p>Identify a controversial issue in the news. This will take some thinking and reading to find something suitable. Recent U.S. topics include accusations concerning the president Biden's new immigration policy, disputes over a breakup of big tech companies, etc. You can choose a Japanese issue, such as revision of Japanese Constitution or cancellation of the Olympic Games or international issue such as territorial disputes between Japan and China. On the larger issues (e.g., "healthcare"), you will want to narrow it down to a particular aspect of the issue, where you can find a controversy involving competing sides and claims. Not all issues have only two sides, of course, but within your issue pick two of the major sides (e.g., pro-constitutional revision vs. anti-constitutional revision) for analysis. (In our political system, these often get classified as the left and right, or the ruling party or opposition party positions.)</p> <p>From major, professional news outlets, select two news articles (straight news) and two opinion articles (columns) pertaining to your issue. The opinion pieces should have identified writers (no editorial). Ideally, the two columns should represent two competing sides and claims (e.g., pro-constitution revision vs. anti-constitution revision), respectively. However, if you cannot find columns with opposing sides, you can choose any columns focusing on the issue you analyze. They may be found on the op-ed pages in case of U.S newspapers. Based on these articles you will address the following points.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you define the basic issue in dispute? What is the controversy over? Briefly describe the two competing points of views or positions regarding the issue at hand.</li> </ol>	

2. From the two news articles (straight news), list the first three human sources quoted (either directly in quotes or paraphrased) in each article. Give their names, titles and affiliation.
3. Overall, judging from the two news articles (straight news), does the news coverage appear to be “claim and counter-claim,” (“he said, she said”) of two competing positions without much effort to help understand the matter? What is missing in the articles (Q of the story)? In other words, in your opinion what would be additional information concerning the issue, or additional experts and other voices that would help people understand the issue better.
4. Now, from your two opinion articles, identify one key claim and summarize it, respectively. (use a pen or marker to clearly highlight these claims in your article copies attached)
5. In each opinion article, who is the writer and what qualifications or special expertise does s/he have for making the claims? How might the author’s background cause you to either be skeptical or more likely to believe the claims? In other words, is the writer independent, authoritative and informative enough to making the claim (“I”-“A”-“I” elements in IMVAIN principle)? You need some extra research about the writer to answer these questions.
6. What is the writer’s motivation in making the claim in each article? (e.g., to advance a political position, to provide scientific background or analysis, etc.). From what perspective is the author speaking (examples: firsthand observer, journalistic fact-finding/verification, legal, ethical, scientific, historical, etc.).
7. What is the evidence presented by the writer to support the claim(s) in each article? Is the evidence adequate? If the writer rely on ethical or legal principles, are they adequate? Is the principle applied in her/his claims well-grounded? Are there any logical fallacies we have learned in the class?
8. After reading and comparing the four articles, which viewpoint do you support? Or do you have the third opinion of yours? Justify your judgment.
9. What did you learn (about journalism and media issues) from having done this assignment?
10. Provide a full citation (in any typical reference style) at the end of your assignment for the news articles and opinion pieces: Date, page, title, and author. Attach (copy and paste) copies of the two opinion articles to the back of your assignment.

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. / Blur: How to know what’s true in the age of information overload. / Bloomsbury / 978-1608193011  
 Lazere, D. / Thinking clearly about politics and media. / Routledge / 978-1612052748

**Textbook(s)**  
 Author/Title/Publisher/ISBN

**Reference / Other study materials / Author:, Title:, Publisher:, ISBN:**

Not Applicable

**Assessment**

A. Class attendance  
 You should stay through the whole class session to get a full credit. Those who are late or leave early get no or partial credit. Four unexcused absences are allowed. Absences may be excused when due to unavoidable situations substantiated with documentation. Acceptable situations include a serious incapacitating illness or a death in your family. Job-related activities are not excused. From the fifth absence, one point will be deducted for each absence from class participation score. If you miss more than ten sessions, you will get an automatic F.

B. Class participation (15%)  
 Participation points will be awarded based on the quantity and quality of contributions in class. Participation includes class discussion and various types of in and out of class activities.

D. Exams (45%)  
 Midterm (25%) and final exam (20%) will be given over class readings and lecture materials.

E. Writing assignments (40%)  
 • Writing assignment 1 (20%): Media image and story analysis  
 • Writing assignment 2 (20%): News analysis

**Expected academic background** Not Applicable

**URL of other information** Not Applicable

**Attachments** Not Applicable

**Policies & remarks** Not Applicable

**Notes**

**Field Trips, expenses other than textbooks, and so on.** Not Applicable

**AIU Academic Dishonesty Policy (Undergraduate)**

In accordance with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) may result in the failure of the course.

An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination, or assignment in lieu of the final examination, may result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Records for relevant action.

**AIU Academic Dishonesty Policy**

**AIU Academic Dishonesty Policy (Graduate)**

Acts of Academic Dishonesty: In accordance with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) will result in the failure of the course at a minimum.

An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination or assignment in lieu of the final examination will result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs for relevant action.

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