# Field of Study Course Proposal
Submitted September 16, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Field of Study</th>
<th>Social Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Number</td>
<td>RHCS 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Media, Culture, and Identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalog Description</td>
<td>This course introduces students to the basic theoretical frameworks and concepts in media studies. Through close analysis of a variety of texts including, but not limited to, films, music, television programs, magazines, and blogposts, students will explore the ways in which culture is produced and consumed. Case studies and other examples will provide entry points into thinking about how culture shapes and also is informed by individual and collective identities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Prerequisites</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Units</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical Estimated</td>
<td>16/class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Often and By Whom</td>
<td>This course will be offered 1-2 times per year by Nicole Maurantonio, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will The Course Be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffing Implications</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy Of Library,</td>
<td>Adequate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology, And Other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any Interdepartmental</td>
<td>This course is currently an elective for majors and minors in Rhetoric and Communication Studies. Given the interdisciplinary structuring of the course, it is also relevant to the fields of Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And Interschool Implications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Person</td>
<td>Mari Lee Mifsud, Department Chair, Rhetoric and Communication Studies</td>
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How This Course Fulfills the Purpose of the Field of Study

The course, Media, Culture, and Identity (RHCS 105), introduces students to the various social scientific and critical concepts underpinning studies of mass media. Within this course, students are required to consider the factors, economic, political, social, and cultural, contributing to the content produced by media industries as well as their empirical impact upon audiences. Students will engage with questions of individual and social human behavior across cultures through both analysis of mediated texts (i.e. television programs, films, websites) and an examination of studies testing the effects of these texts. Building upon this foundation, students will engage in the systematic theoretical and empirical examination of the relationships between culture and identity formation.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1) Understand the major concepts and approaches to the study of mass media;
2) Apply a variety of theoretical and empirical frameworks to better understand how media shape patterns of human behavior;
3) Critically examine empirical studies of mass media seeking to answer research questions regarding media’s impact upon individual and group behavior.

In keeping with the Social Analysis Learning Objectives, Media, Culture, and Identity will teach students to identify and describe major theories of social behavior, in particular the foundational theories and concepts exploring the relationships between mass media and social behavior (Objective 1). This course requires students to identify and critique empirical methods used to answer research questions dealing with individual and group behavior (Objectives 2 and 3).

This course is designed to meet these objectives through in-class discussion of required readings (both theoretical and empirical) as well as through written assignments. We will engage with such questions as: How do profit maximization strategies impact the content of the media we consume? How do popular music videos represent gender norms? What effect does media violence have upon aggression? Students will be able to examine these and other questions related to human behavior through assignments such as a 24 hour media fast and reflection paper and critical analyses of texts chosen by individual students. Through close analysis of texts and the application of theoretical frameworks (i.e. political economy, feminist, cultivation, framing, agenda-setting), we will engage in a systematic examination of the ways in which identities are constructed and social behavior is communicated.

Reading List


Syllabus
See attached

RHCS 105: Media, Culture, and Identity
Fall 2011
Puryear 201

Dr. Nicole Maurantonio
nmaurant@richmond.edu
402-I Weinstein Hall
804-289-8267
Office Hours: Mondays, 12 – 1:30 p.m.
By appointment

Online Hours: Tuesdays, 8 – 9:30 p.m.
Video chat – officehours.402i@gmail.com

Course Description
This course introduces students to the basic theoretical frameworks and concepts in media studies. Through close analysis of a variety of texts including, but not limited to, films, music, television programs, magazines, and blogposts, students will explore the ways in which culture is produced and consumed. Case studies and other examples will provide entry points into thinking about how culture shapes and also is informed by individual and collective identities.

Course Objectives
• To introduce students to a variety of conceptual themes and theoretical approaches to the study of mass media
• To examine the means by which various media are produced and consumed by audiences
• To examine the basic theoretical frameworks that underlie social scientific approaches to media
• To evaluate a variety of mass media texts using critical approaches

Required Readings

There is one required text for this course available at the University of Richmond Bookstore:


Additional readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site (BB).

Course Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the basis of a combination of in-class quizzes, exams, take home essays, and general class participation/attendance. Each of these assessments will be assigned the following weights:

- Two (2) In-Class Quizzes: 100 points (x2) = 200 points
- Midterm Exam: 150 points
- Final Exam: 250 points
- Three (3) Papers: 100 points (x3) = 300 points
- Class Participation and Attendance: 100 points

**Total:** 1000 points

Failure to complete any of the above assessments will result in an automatic F (failure) for this course.

Quizzes (200 points)

Students will take two (2) in-class quizzes at the times noted on the course schedule. The quizzes will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. The second quiz will not be cumulative. Rather, it will cover everything from the midterm to the class before the quiz.

Exams (400 points)

Students will take two (2) exams over the course of the semester. The midterm will be taken in class on Wednesday, October 5. The final exam will be taken during finals week at the assigned time for this course. The final exam WILL be cumulative. Both the midterm and the final exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Short Papers (300 points)
Students will write three (3) papers over the course of the semester. These papers, which will be approximately 4-5 typed pages in length, will be due at times noted by the course schedule.

**Class Participation and Attendance (100 points)**

Class participation grades will be determined on the basis of: 1) the quality of a student’s engagement in class; 2) attendance; 3) the quality of a student’s discussion questions.

1) **Student Engagement:** “Quality” participation will be assessed according to: 1) a student’s respectful engagement with the class (i.e. not disparaging or belittling others’ comments, not speaking while others are talking, etc.); 2) thoughtful comments and questions.

“Quality” participation also entails showing undivided attention. To that end, **no cell phones, iphones, blackberries, etc. will be permitted in class**. If you are caught using one of these devices during class time, you will be asked to leave and will receive a grade of 0 for class participation that day, equivalent to one (1) absence.

Similarly, while laptops may be used during class, they are to be used for the purposes of note-taking only. If you are caught checking your facebook page, gchatting, reading celebrity gossip, sports, etc. you will be asked to leave and will receive a grade of 0 in class participation for the day, equivalent to one (1) absence.

2) **Attendance:** Students are expected to be in class on time. Lateness will not be tolerated. We begin promptly at the time we have been scheduled. However, merely showing up for class does not guarantee “A” participation (see above).

Students are permitted one (1) absence over the course of the semester. Additional absences will result in a class participation grade penalty of 10 points/day, unless valid documentation is provided within one week of the absence. More than three absences will constitute grounds for failing this course.

If you are absent on a given day, it is your responsibility to catch up on any work you miss. I do not post my slides to BB and will not email them to individual students. I will also not explain missed work via email. I am more than happy to answer questions regarding course materials, however, it is your responsibility to be in touch with me.

3) **Discussion Questions:** In groups of two (2), students will be responsible for preparing approximately 5-7 questions intended to guide discussion for the day. These questions should be posted to the course BB site by 8 p.m. the night before the reading(s) is/are assigned. Students will sign up for the reading(s) for which they are responsible during the first weeks of class. Days available for discussion questions are noted with an asterisk (*).

**Grade Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>940 – 1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900 – 939</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>870 – 899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830 – 869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800 – 829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>770 – 799</td>
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Grades will be posted on Blackboard after all assignments/exams have been returned in class so that students may keep up on course progress. I am happy to speak with you at any point in the semester to discuss your progress in the course. I am available during office hours (see pg. 1) as well as by appointment.

**Grade Complaints**

Should you wish to challenge a grade, I ask that you submit your grade complaint in writing within one week of receiving your grade. Grade complaints will not be honored after this time.

**Academic Honesty**

This course adheres to the University’s policy regarding academic integrity. Academic dishonesty will **not** be tolerated. Students are required to pledge the following statement on all assignments, quizzes, and exams submitted for this course, acknowledging their commitment to the University’s Honor Code:

"I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work."

**Late Work**

All assignments are due at the time indicated unless otherwise discussed in class. I do not give extensions on course assignments, unless there is a legitimate excuse including, but not limited to, a religious holiday, family crisis, documented illness, or a University-sanctioned event. Otherwise, assignments **submitted within 24 hours of the deadline will lose a full letter grade**. (i.e. A to B). A half a letter grade will be deducted each additional day an assignment is late (B to B-).

**Extra Credit**

As a general rule, I do **not** provide extra credit opportunities nor do I allow students to rewrite assignments/retake quizzes or exams. Please do not ask.

**Students with Disabilities and Special Challenges**

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability or a special challenge that requires some modification of seating or other class requirements so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please see me after class or during office hours.

**University Resources**

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to contact me. There are also other campus resources to support you:
Academic Skills Center (http://asc.richmond.edu or 289-8626) helps students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses; hone their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; work on specific subject areas and encourage campus and community involvement.

Counseling and Psychological Services (289-8119) assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention and related services.

Speech Center (http://speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409) assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work: http://writing.richmond.edu

Boatwright Library Research Librarians assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with question about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians at
**Course Schedule:**
*Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in class.*

**Week 1: Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, August 22</th>
<th>Introduction to Media, Culture, and Identity</th>
<th>Syllabus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 24</td>
<td>Chapter 1, “Media in Context,” p. 3-33</td>
<td>Handout Media Fast Assignment</td>
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**Week 2: Narratives of Media History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, August 29</th>
<th>Chapter 2, “Narratives of Media History,” p. 34-55</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 31</td>
<td>Chapter 2, “From Modernity to Postmodernity,” pp. 55-64</td>
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**Week 3: Media Industries and Economics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, September 5</th>
<th>Chapter 4, “Media and Money,” p. 99-132</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 7</td>
<td>In class screening: <em>Merchants of Cool</em></td>
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<td>Malcolm Gladwell, “The Coolhunt” (BB)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Week 4: Ideology and Hegemony**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, September 12</th>
<th>Chapter 7, “Ideology,” p. 193-216</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 14</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>James Lull, “Hegemony,” p. 33-36 (BB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Week 5: Decoding Texts, Symbols, and Narratives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, September 19</th>
<th>Chapter 5, “Meaning,” p. 135-14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 21</td>
<td>Media Fast Reflection Due (Paper 1)</td>
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**Week 6: Constructing the Audience**
Monday, September 26*
P.

(2) Lisa M. Cuklanz and Sujata Moorti, “Television’s ‘New Feminism’: Prime-Time Representations of Women and Victimization,” p. 115-126 (BB)

Handout Paper 2 Assignment

Wednesday, September 28*
and

(2) Karen Lee Ashcraft and Lisa A. Flores, “‘Slaves with White Collars’: Persistent Performances of Masculinity in Crisis,” p. 402-422 (BB)

Week 7: Constructing the Audience

Monday, October 3*
P.


Midterm Review

Wednesday, October 5

Midterm Exam

Week 8: Constructing the Audience

Monday, October 10

Fall Break – NO CLASS

Wednesday, October 12*

(1) Jennifer Esposito, “What Does Race Have to Do with *Ugly Betty*? An Analysis of Privilege and Postracial (?) Representation on a Television Sitcom,” p. 95-100 (BB)
(2) Tricia Rose, “There Are Bitches and Hoes,” p. 321-325 (BB)
(3) Eliza Sellen, “Missy ‘Misdemeanor’
Female

Elliott: Rapping on the Frontiers of Identity,” p. 319-328 (BB)

Week 9: Constructing the Audience

Monday, October 17

In class screening: Further Off the Straight and Narrow

Wednesday, October 19*

(2) Steven Cohan, “Queer Eye for the Straight Guise: Camp, Postfeminism, and the Fab Five’s Makeovers of Masculinity,” p. 389-401 (BB)

Week 10: Reception Studies & Fan Cultures

Monday, October 24

(1) Chapter 9, “Consuming the Media,” p. 253-262
(2) Stuart Hall, “Encoding Decoding,” p. 507-517 (BB)

Wednesday, October 26*

(1) Chapter 9, “Consuming the Media,” p. 262-292
(3) Lisa Nakamura, “‘Don’t Hate the Player, Hate the Game’: The Racialization of Labor in World of Warcraft,” p. 563-569 (BB)

Paper 2 Due

Week 11: Media and Behavior

Monday, October 31*

Discussion of This Film Is Not Yet Rated
Karen Boyle, “That’s So Fun’: Selling Pornography for Men to Women in The Girls Next Door,” p. 293-300 (BB)

Wednesday, November 2

Quiz 2
Chapter 10, “Media and Behavior,” p. 293-315
**Week 12: Media and Behavior**

Monday, November 7
Chapter 10, “Media and Behavior,” p. 315-335
*Handout Paper 3 Assignment*

Wednesday, November 9
Chapter 11, “Media and Politics,” p. 339-357

**Week 13: Decision-Making and the Public Sphere**

Monday, November 14*
Discussion of *Bowling for Columbine*

Wednesday, November 16
Chapter 11, “Media and Politics,” p. 357-377

**Week 14: Politics and the Public Sphere**

Monday, November 21
Chapter 12, “The Media, the Public, and Normative Theories,” p. 378-395

Wednesday, November 23
Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS

**Week 15: Globalization**

Monday, November 28
Chapter 13, “Media Globalization,” p. 421-455

Wednesday, November 30
**Paper 3 Due**
Last Day of Class
Final Exam Review

**Final Exam** will be taken during finals week at the time scheduled by the registrar.