

**SOCIOLOGY 2L03E**  
**Sociology of Media Institutions - TENTATIVE**

**Fall 2020**

Lectures: Thursdays 3:30 – 5:20pm

Lecture Hall Location: Online

Office Hours: by appointment via mail, phone or Zoom

**TAs:** TBD

**Instructor: Dr. Rhona Shaw**

Ext:

Office:

Email: [shawrm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:shawrm@mcmaster.ca)

**Course Description**

This course offers students a critical examination of sociological perspectives on the media and popular culture. We will exam the role of the economic and political in shaping media institutions and cultural products, and will pay particular attention to the relationship between audiences, media representation and social inequality. Some of the topics that will be addressed will include: media ownership and concentration, media regulation, the 'ideological' nature of the media and media content, audiences and media use.

**Course Learning Objectives**

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see, <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>). First, theoretical perspectives of the structure and organization of the media are multiple and diverse in their conceptualizations and truth claims. Acquiring knowledge of these diverse approaches will expand students' depth and breadth of knowledge of this field of inquiry. Second, there is no single method (sociological and otherwise) that has been accepted as the final or best approach to explaining the complexities of the media and its institutions in Canada. As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate all competing theoretical and empirical approaches. In so doing, students will gain an awareness of the problematics and limits of knowledge regarding our understanding of what is regarded as a media institution. Finally, this course will encourage students to discuss theoretical and practical issues in class. Grading for this course is outlined below. In each case, the student's communication skills will be challenged as well as enhanced.

**Important Note:** Introductory Sociology (1A06, 1C03 or 1Z03) is a prerequisite for this class, or by permission of the instructor.

**Required Readings**

Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Milan, S. (2012). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*Additional required readings may be assigned, and will be made available on Avenue to Learn.*

**Course Evaluation:**

**1. Assignment #1 – The Movie is Not Yet Rated – analysis and summary. Details to be posted on AVE. (20%).**

**Assignment due Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm on AVE, in Assignments folder.**

**2. Mid-term Examination – in class Thursday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, during regular class time. (30%)**

Will consist of Multiple Choice, True & False questions.

**3. Assignment #2 - Paper on a media topic of your choice. Details to be posted on AVE (20%).**

**Assignment due Tuesday December 8<sup>th</sup>, by 11:59pm on AVE in Assignments folder.**

#### **4. Final Examination - Scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (30%)**

Will consist of Multiple Choice, True & False questions.

#### **Additional Information on Assignments**

Assignments must be uploaded to AVE by the assigned deadline on the course schedule. All pages must be numbered and have 1" margins on all sides. All text should be either single or double-spaced (depending on the assignment) in an easy-to-read 12-point font. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be reflected in the mark for the assignment. More details to follow in lecture and in the assignment instructions.

#### **Late Assignments and Absences**

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf>) is a self-reporting tool for undergraduate students to report absences that last up to 5 days. This form allows students to request accommodation for any missed academic work. This tool cannot be used during any 3 final examination period. You may submit a maximum of one Academic Work Missed request per term. ***It is your responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.*** If you are absent more than 5 classes, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a non-medical reason, you must visit the office of the Associate Dean of your Faculty. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. Any disruption this causes to turning in assignments on time, completing exams, and so forth, must be addressed directly with me as soon as possible. ***For late assignments without approved excuses, you must make arrangements directly with me to submit the assignment.*** Assignments will be marked down 5 percentage points for each day it is late, including weekend days and holidays. ***I will NOT accept late assignments that are 3 or more days late. You will be awarded a mark of 0 for assignments submitted after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.***

#### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

#### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. **All lectures will be delivered using Echo 360, and can be accessed via Avenue to Learn.** Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

#### **University Policies**

##### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must

originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### Review of Marks

We will be diligent in marking all assignments fairly and accurately. Nonetheless, occasionally students disagree with the marks they receive. When this occurs, we will be happy to review the mark of any assignment or exam. ***Please note that when a mark is reviewed, the new mark may be lower than the original.***

### Email – use [shawrm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:shawrm@mcmaster.ca) only

Please consider email equivalent to any other form of written communication. Students who write to their professors and teaching assistants are expected to follow rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In addition, please include a proper greeting, such as "**Dear Dr. Shaw,**" and a closing that includes your full name and ***the course you are taking.*** Emails failing to meet these standards may be returned unanswered. ***Email containing questions that can be answered by referring to this syllabus or to Avenue to Learn may not be answered.*** I do check the separate Avenue to Learn email, but only intermittently, so please do not contact me that way. ***All email communication must come from your mcmaster.ca email account.***

### Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Week No.	TOPICS & READINGS
<p><b>Week 1</b> Tues Sept 8<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Thurs Sept 10<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Introduction – Overview of course</b> <i>It is important that you view this introductory lecture prior to accessing subsequent lectures. One weekly lecture will be posted Thursdays by 3pm. It will include Tuesdays and Thursdays lecture materials.</i></p> <p><b>Introduction to Media Studies – Media and the Social World</b> (i) Chapter 1</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> Thurs Sept 17<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Economics of the Media Industry</b> (i) Chapter 2</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> Thurs Sept 24<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Media Content &amp; Theories of the Media</b> (i) Marxist Media Theory (ii) Chapter 7 The Mass Media – pgs. 3 – 11 Sociological Perspectives of the Media</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Thurs Oct 1<sup>st</sup></p>	<p><b>Interpreting &amp; Decoding Texts</b> (i) Encoding and Decoding</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Thurs Oct 8<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Active Audiences &amp; the Construction of Meaning</b> (i) Chapter 8</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Thurs Oct 15<sup>th</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READING WEEK NO LECTURES</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> Thurs Oct 22<sup>nd</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDTERM EXAM ONLINE DURING REGULARLY SCHEDULED CLASS TIME</b></p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> Thurs Oct 29<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>View Documentary “This Movie is Not Yet Rated”</b> <b>See assignment instructions posted on AVE</b></p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> Thurs Nov 5<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Media Representation &amp; Social Inequality – Race &amp; Ethnicity</b> (i) Chapter 6</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> Thurs Nov 12<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Media Representation &amp; Social Inequality – Gender &amp; Sexuality</b> (i) Gender and Sexuality in Sport Media</p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> Thurs Nov 19<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Advertising &amp; Media Effects</b> (i) pgs. 61-70 <b>Report on “This Movie is Not Yet Rated” due by 11:59pm</b></p>
<p><b>Week 12</b> Thurs Nov 26<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Media Fandom &amp; Audience Subcultures</b> (i) Fan or fore? Fan fiction, authorship and the fight for control.</p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> Thurs Dec 3<sup>rd</sup></p>	<p><b>New Media</b> Chapter 9</p>
<p><b>Week 14</b> Tues Dec 8<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Media &amp; Globalization</b> (i) Chapter 10 <b>Assignment #2 due by 11:59 pm on AVE</b></p>