J382 Media Sociology, Spring 2011

Course: #07715  Wednesday 12 to 3:00, CMA  A6.168

Instructor: Stephen D. Reese

Faculty website: http://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/reese/

Office hours: CMA 4.312, Monday 2:00 to 4:30 and by appointment

The course title is general, but broadly speaking we are concerned with how media logics develops that convey, shape, and define public life, and how that logic is tied to social structures: political, economic, and cultural. The logic of journalism is the most directly relevant to the political communication process and receives the most attention, but the current issues for research that concern us include conceptualizations of media production, measuring media logics (framing), globalization, and the closely related issues of the new media (cyberspace). The broad course domain is also characterized by the subfield ICA Encyclopedia of Communication heading: “Media Production & Content.” The goals of the class include the following:

• To introduce research on media content and influences on it, otherwise known as media sociology

• To identify different theoretical frameworks helpful in explaining media content

• Stimulate your own theoretical thinking through group activity, an original paper and class discussion

• To find ways to make sense of and apply these conceptual frameworks to present discussions of professional issues, including media bias and press performance

School of Journalism academic ethics policy: http://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/reese/PROD75_027372.html

Texts


Note that my colleague, Pam Shoemaker, is teaching a similar seminar at Syracuse this semester, and we may share some drafts on Blackboard of upcoming revision chapters and hold a joint video-conference as schedules and technology permit.

**Reading packet** (available in pdf format on Blackboard; otherwise, in copy packet where marked by “**”).


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Schedule

Abbreviations: MON=Making Online News; SMN=Social Meaning of News text; MM=Mediating the message supplement; otherwise see reading packet and Blackboard PdFs.

Date        Topic

Getting Ready: some oldies but goodies

Jan. 19      Introductions, getting ideas, critiquing ideas, ethically

Gitlin (1978)
Mills (1959)
School ethics statement
http://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/reese/courses/academic_ethics.pdf
Be prepared to discuss questions and suggested additions to ethics policy
The basics: The Hierarchy of Influences

Jan. 26  Framework of study

MM 1,2,3,4
MM Revised Chapter 1 (check BB)
SMN Schudson 1
SMN Ettema 3
Reese, S. (2001)
Reese & Ballinger (2001)

Feb. 2  Individual level

Reese (2008) Encyclopedia overview
SMN Zelizer 2
MM 5
MM Revised (check BB)
SMN White 5

Feb. 9  Routines

MM 6
SMN Tuchman 13
SMN Molotch & Lester 14
SMN Fishman 15
Shoemaker, Voss & Reese (2008)

Feb. 16  Organizational

MM 7
SMN Breed 9
SMN Bantz 10
SMN Bantz 18
Becker & Vlad (2008)
Lee & Chan (2009)

Feb. 23  Extra media and ethnography issues

MM 8
Reese (2009) Gans paper
Cottle (2007)
MON Paterson Chapter 1
MON Lagervist, Chapter 8
March 2  
     Ideological
     MM 9
     MM Revised (check BB)
     SMN Reese 27
     SMN Lule 25
     Reese (2004)
     Reese & Lewis (2009)
     Lewis & Reese (2009)

**Current issues: shifting views of people, structures, sites**

March 9  
     New institutionalism and field theory
     Benson (2004)
     Ryfe (2006)
     Ryfe & Blach-Orsten (2011)
     Sparrow (2006)
     Benson (2006)

March 16  
     Spring break, no class

March 23  
     Geography of media sociology: Comparative and globalization issues
     Reese (2008)
     Berglez (2008)
     Fahy & Corcoran (2009)
     Reese working paper (Check BB)

March 30  
     Media convergence issues
     Anderson (2010)
     Reese et al. (2007)
     Klinenberg (2005)
     Howard (2002)
     Deuze (2008a)
     Deuze (2008b)

**Doing media sociology**

April 6  
     Online news ethnography
     Selections from MON, TBA
April 13 consult as needed on papers

April 20 Review of recent literature (class member led)

(paper drafts due)

April 27 Review of recent literature (class member led)

May 4 paper presentations

Note: I presume that the articles you select from the “recent literature” will be central and relevant to your paper. Be sure to send them to me electronically for posting on Blackboard by April 15th.

Grading

The bulk of your performance will be based on your ability to contribute to and finish an original research project, suitable for conference presentation and/or publication. Depending on class interests there may be a collaborative project that you can connect your work to. This obviously will depend on your ability to learn the relevant literature, synthesize those aspects relevant to your research, pose appropriate research questions and hypotheses, identify appropriate methods and materials for analysis, and writing up the results. Regular attendance is assumed, of course. The following tasks will be scheduled:

Discussion leading (15%): prepare handout for class based on class readings for a given day that helps identify key issues in theory and method and help lead discussion on those readings.

Research critique presented in class (20%): Identify key recent research article relevant to project for critique and presentation in class (2 page write-up, with one page handout). Discuss its relevance, theory, method, strengths and weaknesses, assumptions, etc. These articles will presumably be helpful in updating our class readings and adding to the class bibliography. Be sure to provide full citation, hard copy and pdf file if possible to the instructor by Monday of the week in question to distribute to the class.

Preliminary research proposal (15%): Prepare 5 to 7 page double-spaced paper that identifies a key media sociology issue, reviews relevant literature, suggests appropriate data and ways to access them, and suggest analytic approaches for coding, categorization, etc. Include your bibliography. I may ask that these be prepared and discussed in class, which I’ll describe in greater detail later.

Final paper (50%): Refine literature review, questions, analysis, and discussion for final research article based on project. Paper will have the usual sections and
follow the norms of a research presentation in the field, suitable for submission to ICA or related conference. This may be collaborative with approval by the instructor. Further details and guidelines to be reviewed in class.

To be satisfactory, you must show evidence of having connected your chosen issue or study to some of the conceptual areas covered in class and having examined recent work in your area by citing recent articles (2004 to present) in scholarly journals (JQ, Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Political Communication, Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, Media Culture & Society, Journal of Communication, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Public Opinion Quarterly, Communication Research, etc.).