



Intro to Mass Communication

(VIA AMERICAN STAND-UP COMEDY, 1990-PRESENT)

CMN 102 is one the three core courses required of all College of Communication students. This course offers students a broad overview of the mass media (print, film, video, recorded music, radio, television and the internet) with a particular focus on how these media impact our everyday lives. Students will develop critical frameworks for understanding how power operates across the media spheres of production, circulation, representation and reception. Attention is placed on how the social categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age and nationality inform each of these media spheres. The course also considers how recent developments in digital technologies, media convergence and globalization have transformed our media culture. **Since CMN 102 is a broad examination of mass media and media theories, it allows students and instructors to examine various texts and themes, e.g., sports, the supernatural, travel. This term, our**

selected topic is recent stand-up comics and their participation in mass media. Specifically, we will watch, listen to, analyze, and construct argumentative projects about the output of stand-up comedians working in the industry from 1990-present. NOTE: If this theme does not interest you, it might be wise to seek out another section of CMN 102.

Required Texts

- *Media and Culture: Mass Communication in a Digital Age*, 10th ed.
- A few supplemental readings on D2L.
- ALL SCREENINGS ARE ALSO CONSIDERED REQUIRED TEXTS.

Learning Objectives

After completing CMN 102, students should be able to: 1) identify key moments in the historical development of the mass media; 2) describe the relationship between our culture, technological development, and mass media; 3) criticize media texts in relation to representation, form, and production; 4) analyze the power of mass media to make meaning; and 5) discuss their own media use in relation to the history of the mass media.

Course Expectations

CMN 102 has been designed with the following set of assumptions in mind. If you fit the profile below and are willing to make the commitment, you should find the course challenging but manageable. If not, you might think carefully about how you will work this course along with its expectations and requirements into your existing schedule:

DR. KELLI MARSHALL

14 E. JACKSON #1117, MW 9-10AM

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courses.kellimarshall.net/intro-mass-comm



Attend class. While attendance is not taken in CMN 102, we will have several in-class assignments. Should you choose to use our class time to hang out with friends, make a dentist appointment, or grab a sandwich at Jimmy John's, that is your decision. You are responsible, however, for understanding the material covered during your absence, and your work will be graded under the assumption that you have mastered that material.

Be on time. Students whose personal schedules prevent on-time arrivals and departures are encouraged to find a more appropriately scheduled course. Not only are being tardy and leaving early disruptive behaviors, but they will be taken into consideration if borderline grades are a concern (see below). **If you are tardy, enter quietly, and NEVER walk across the front of the classroom or your classmates.**

Refrain from the use of laptops, tablets, and cell phones unless instructed otherwise. Studies have shown that students who employ laptops during lectures

- are more distracted than those who do not;
- earn lower grades than those who do not—in some cases, nearly 11% lower;
- hinder the learning process for nearby peers;
- primarily take notes in "stenographic mode" (i.e., typing stuff word-for-word), which differs from note-taking by hand, an action that requires one to listen, think, and prioritize important themes.

Again, unless an assignment calls for it, please store all electronic devices. Students with documented reasons for employing a laptop/iPad in class should see me ASAP.

Be courteous. Disruption—which includes engaging in conversation while others are talking or during screenings, texting, ringing cell phones, browsing non class-related websites, entering late, wandering about during lectures—is NOT allowed. The DePaul University Code of Student Conduct prohibits "disrupting the peace and impeding classes [...] through actions or words."

Be prepared; you will be expected to discuss your thoughts about the course material. Most professors and academic staff agree with this general rule of thumb for prepping an undergraduate class: spend 2 hours/week of outside class time for every 1 credit hour in which you are enrolled. Assignments for CMN 102 have been calculated with this rule in mind.

Ask questions. If students do not understand something, they should ask questions. If students withhold queries because they are afraid of appearing ignorant, they will have a hard time excelling in college; remember that professors are here to answer students' questions.

Use email etiquette. Unless you specify otherwise, I will send all emails to the account you have registered with DePaul. Here's good form for student-teacher emailing:

- Before emailing, see if the ANSWER'S ON THE SYLLABUS!!!
- Include course/issue in subject line (CMN 102: Homework).
- Choose an appropriate greeting (Hi, Dr. Marshall...).
- Avoid apologies for missing class.
- Always proofread what you write.
- Don't send unexpected attachments.



Grading

Grades will be given on a 10-point scale, with pluses/minuses: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59-below.

Sloppy, illegible, improperly formatted, disorganized, and un-proofread work will earn NO MORE THAN HALF-CREDIT. Any concerns about grades should be discussed in person—not over email, Twitter, Facebook, etc. **NOTE: At the end of the term, borderline grades may be bumped up** if the student has attended class, arrived on time, and actively participated in discussion. Finally, other than the final exam, all work will be returned to you, so there is no need to inquire about your grades or course average throughout the term.

Assignments

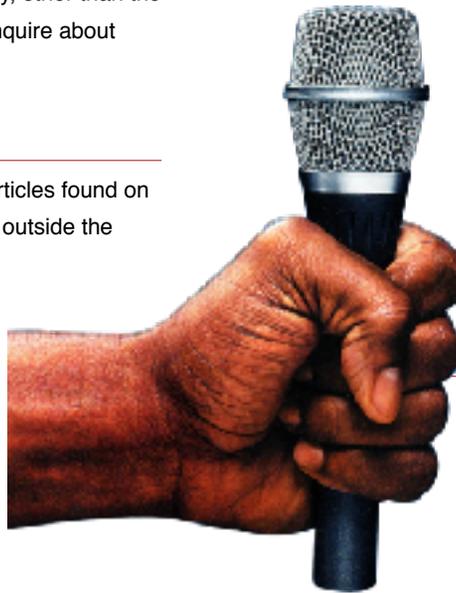
Readings and Screenings: Readings are from the textbook and articles found on D2L. Students will screen (and listen to) several media texts in and outside the classroom. In- and out-of-class screenings are designated clearly on the class calendar.

Session Starters (SS) (35%): Each Monday (with the exception of Week 1), students will respond to questions based on our screenings and readings. These exercises serve three purposes: to ensure students are understanding and keeping up with the material, to gauge students' critical approach to media literacy, and to guide our subsequent class discussion. While the use of our textbook is not allowed, **students ARE encouraged to use their written or printed notes to complete these in-class assignments.** You'll find study questions for these assignments on our course site. Worth 10 points each, *Session Starters may NOT be made-up, submitted late, or emailed; the lowest grade will be dropped.*

Multimedia Project (35%): Students will complete a multimedia project on the star image of an American stand-up comic working in the industry from 1990-present,

analyzing his/her participation(s) in at least seven forms of mass media. *Students must select their comedian by the end of Week 2.* While visual, this project does include several written components. A full description, breakdown of percentage points, and list of deadlines will be posted online and discussed in class around Week 3. *Due online by 11:00 PM, Friday, May 5.*

Exam (30%): Exam material comes from the lectures, readings, and screenings. For the exams, students may create a "tip sheet," or notes limited to 1 sheet of paper, front/back. The "tip sheet" must be turned in with the exam. *Make-up exams* will only be given to students with documented emergencies I am made aware of before the exam is handed out (e.g., bereavement, scheduled medical procedure, court hearing). Letters from parents or significant others are not acceptable. If a student misses an exam and does not have the required information, he/she will earn a zero on the exam. Exams will be kept on file until summer quarter 2017. *Exam: Wednesday, Jun. 7, 8:30-10:45am.*



University/Department Policies

Requirement Fulfillment for Self, Society and the

Modern World: This class fulfills the Self, Society and the Modern World Liberal Studies requirement for graduation. Courses in the Self, Society and the Modern World domain focus on the mutual impact of society and culture on individuals and of individuals on society and culture. Particular attention is given to human relationships and behavior as they are influenced by social, economic and political institutions, spatial and geographical factors, and the events and social and cultural forces of modernity.

Course Evaluations: This course will be available for you to review during the ninth and tenth week of the quarter. Close to that time, you will receive a notification to this effect via email. As you may already know, as instructors, we

appreciate learning what we are doing well in the classroom and where we can continue to improve. Your feedback makes a difference.

Policy Statement on Academic Dishonesty: Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>). Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct.

Religious Holidays: Students who believe they have a need for religious accommodation during any course, clerkship or other required educational activity shall notify the faculty member as soon as possible after an impending conflict becomes apparent—preferably prior to or at the beginning of the course. Absences excused for religious holidays or observances do not relieve a student from responsibility for curriculum content during an absence.

Office of Accessibility: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the: PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370.

Class Calendar

All assignments are listed by the date on which they are due.

MAR 27 – INTRO AND STAND-UP COMEDIANS ON TV, 1950-1990
 READING: None; bask in the glory of your ONLY assignment-free day.
 SCREENING (in-class): "The Groundbreakers" from PBS's *Make 'Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America* (2009).

MAR 29 – MASS COMMUNICATION: A CRITICAL APPROACH
 READING: Chapter 1 (3-16; 29-33 only) and "Stand-Up Comedians on Television" (D2L; large file, be patient).

Part I: Media Industries

APR 3 – THE CONSTRUCTION OF (COMEDIC) STARS
 READING: "Introduction" of *Heavenly Bodies* (D2L). Prep for SS 1 (study questions on course site).

APR 5 – BOOKS AND THE POWER OF PRINT
 READING: Chapter 10 and excerpt from Aziz Anzari's *Modern Romance: An Investigation* (D2L). **Email Dr. Marshall your choice of stand-up comic.**
 SCREENING (in-class): excerpts of Aziz Anzari's interview at BookCon (2015).

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APR 10 – NEWSPAPERS AND MODERN JOURNALISM
 READING: Chapter 8. Prep for SS 2.
 SCREENING (in-class): *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* "Journalism."

APR 12 – MAGAZINES IN THE AGE OF SPECIALIZATION
 READING: Chapter 9 and "Dave Speaks" in *Time* magazine (D2L).
 SCREENING (out-of-class): *Chappelle's Show* "Clayton Bigsby" (1.1) and "The Niggar Family" (2.2). Videos embedded on course site (not D2L).

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APR 17 – RADIO AND SOUND RECORDING
 READING: Chapter 4 (113-122; 136-45 only) and Chapter 5 (149-65; 169-78 only). Prep for SS 3.
 SCREENING (out-of-class): excerpt from *WTF with Marc Maron* (2009-).

APR 19 – COMEDIC VOICES IN FILM
 SCREENING (in-class): *Down to Earth* (Chris and Paul Weitz, 2001; 87m) or *Big Fan* (Robert D. Siegel, 2009; 89m).

APR 24 – CINEMA AND THE IMPACT OF IMAGES

READING: Chapter 7 and "It's Just a Movie" (D2L). Prep for SS 4.

APR 26 – TV, CABLE, AND SPECIALIZATION IN VISUAL CULTURE

READING: Chapter 6.

SCREENING (in-class): "Oh Louie"/"Tickets," *Louie* (2.11).

MAY 1 – THE INTERNET AND MEDIA CONVERGENCE

READING: Chapter 2. Prep for SS 5.

SCREENING (in-class): *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee* (2012-present).

MAY 3 – MULTIMEDIA MIDTERM PROJECT

No class. **Project due online by 11 PM, Friday May 5.** Email Dr. Marshall the link.

Part II: Media Expressions

MAY 8 – ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIAL CULTURE

READING: Chapter 11. Prep for SS 6.

MAY 10 – PERFORMING PUBLIC RELATIONS

SCREENING (in-class): *The Muslims Are Coming!* (Negin Farsad and Dean Obeidallah, 2013; 85m).

MAY 15 – PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FRAMING THE MESSAGE

READING: Chapter 12. Prep for SS 7.

MAY 17 – LEGAL CONTROL AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

READING: Chapter 16 and "Do Not Relinquish the Right to Criticize: *Politically Incorrect* with Bill Maher" (D2L).



Part III: Media Messages and Audiences

MAY 22 – REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL CLASS IN MASS MEDIA

READING: "Cultural Analysis" (D2L). Prep for SS 8.

SCREENING (in-class): excerpts from Jim Gaffigan's *Beyond the Pale* (2006) and *Mr. Universe* (2012).

MAY 24 – GENDER AND SEX

READING: "Feminist Analysis" (on D2L).

SCREENING (in-class): sketches from *Inside Amy Schumer* (2013–).

MAY 29 – EROTIC ANALYSIS

READING: "Erotic Analysis" (on D2L). Prep for SS 9.

MAY 31 – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

JUN 7 – FINAL EXAM

8:30-10:45am. Same room. Don't forget your "Tip Sheet."

EXPERTS HAVE USED A VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE MEDIA WORK AND WHAT INFLUENCE THEY HAVE ON OUR LIVES—IN OTHER WORDS, TO STRENGTHEN OUR MEDIA LITERACY.