

**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION**

**JOUR 381
ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS AND MEDIA IN TODAY'S SOCIETY
FALL 2006**

INSTRUCTOR: Mary Murphy

DAY/TIME: Monday, 6:30-9:50 p.m.

CLASSROOM: ASC 204

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course will serve as an introduction to the business of entertainment and its relationship to the media that cover it and the society that consumes it. Students will learn what the film, television and music producing companies do, who owns and runs them, what products they make, and how the print, electronic and Internet media participate in the process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will attend all class sessions and complete all class assignments except by previous agreement with the instructor. Students will complete outside reading, research and writing assignments prior to class sessions and by stated deadlines. Class sessions run Monday evenings from 6:30 to 9:50 pm. Class will be held in ASC 204 and will always start on time.

COURSE GOALS:

Students will leave this course understanding who runs the entertainment industry, how it functions, and how the press plays a role in what succeeds and what fails. Students will gain a critical appreciation for the complex and often compromised relationship between the industry and the reporters who cover it, and an improved ability to think critically about the entertainment – and entertainment reporting – they consume.

GRADING:

Grades for this course will be based on performance and participation, and determined by in-class quizzes, completion of reading and writing assignments, contributions to in-class discussions, a mid-term examination and a final examination.

- 10% Class Participation
- 20% Reading/Writing assignments
- 20% Quizzes
- 25% Mid-term Examination
- 25% Final Examination

No make-up exams will be offered except by prior arrangement. Extra-credit assignments, indicated by this syllabus, will be available for students who want to improve their marks.

TEXTBOOK: There is no textbook for this course. Students will be asked to read a substantial number of hand-outs, and will be quizzed on their contents. Students will also be urged to read from a number of outside sources, including but not limited to *Daily Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Los Angeles Times "Calendar"* and *"Business"* sections, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and will be given weekly news quizzes on events in the entertainment world.

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: "Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to the school's policy."

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The office is located in Student Union Room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

WEEK ONE: AUGUST 27

Television, and the impact of television: For decades, with the exception of the talk shows, awards shows and Barbara Walters' post-Oscar TV specials, television didn't spend much time on Hollywood. Then came "Entertainment Tonight," and "Movietime" – which later turned into "E!" – and "Access Hollywood." Soon every TV station in the nation was employing an "entertainment reporter." Because TV demands pictures, and because Hollywood controls access to the pictures, do the studios control TV coverage?

SCREENING: VHS sampling of entertainment coverage on ET and The Insider

GUEST SPEAKER: LINDA BELL BLUE, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT AND THE INSIDER; BRAD BESSEY, CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT AND DJ PETRORO, SR. PRODUCER, THE INSIDER.

EXTRA CREDIT: Screen "Network," and write a 400-word essay on how TV news has changed since this 1976 satire.

WEEK TWO: SEPT 10

Who owns Hollywood? The entertainment industry was traditionally a maverick industry, operating outside the corridors of American power, separate from the traditional corporate machinery. Then Coca-Cola purchased Columbia Pictures, Ted Turner bought MGM, and everything changed. Now movie companies own TV companies and record companies and cable companies, and also own – or are owned by – media companies, Internet companies or TV networks. The companies making movies and the companies reviewing movies answer to the same corporate overlords. Media conglomeration may mean a shift in media standards – viz. the Clearchannel Communications imbroglio. We look at how cross-ownership affects the entertainment we consume, and the press that helps us consume it.

NEWS QUIZ

SCREENING: Documentary, "Outfoxed;" running time 118: VHS from TV Guide Network

GUEST SPEAKERS: ALEX BEN BLOCK, AUTHOR, "OUT-FOXED"; CLAUDIA ELLER, REPORTER, LOS ANGELES TIMES; MATT SINGERMAN, PRESIDENT TV GUIDE NETWORK

READING: "Out-Foxed" The Inside Story of America's Fourth Television Network" By Alex Ben Block; Los Angeles Times, Monday July 23, "A Dynasty in Dysfunction" by Michael Hittzik and Claudia Eller; Los Angeles Times, "Father Daughter Bond Shattered" by Claudia Eller, Business Section, Los Angeles Times, Monday, July 30, 2007.

WEEK THREE: SEPT. 17

What is the Hollywood press? Who covers the entertainment industry? Who stands between Hollywood and the public? What kind of job are they doing? And who owns the companies that cover Hollywood? Entertainment reporting has been one of journalism's fastest-growing segments. The last two decades have seen a mushrooming of print, broadcast and Internet outlets for stories about film, TV, music and celebrities. With growth have come media monopoly, cross-ownership, and resulting changes in journalistic standards. This session will cover the entertainment industry media landscape, with a look at the peculiar synergy between the entertainment companies and the news organizations that cover them, and the effect this has on the quality of the entertainment reporting they produce.

NEWS QUIZ

SCREENING: "The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture" short

GUEST SPEAKER: IAN BIRCH, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF TV GUIDE MAGAZINE, TV GUIDE ON-LINE AND TV GUIDE NETWORK. FORMER EDITORIAL DIRECTOR OF UK'S CELEBRITY MAGAZINES "HEAT" AND "CLOSER".

READING: "The Untold Story: How Corporate Takeovers Make the Media Less Curious," Nikki Finke, LA Weekly

WEEK FOUR: SEPTEMBER 24

In the trenches: The trade press and the daily papers. No other American industry receives as much media attention as the entertainment industry. American newspapers devote entire sections to film, TV and music, on a daily basis. Beat reporters for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times and a dozen other top dailies compete for stories with beat reporters from Daily Variety and The Hollywood Reporter – the industry's two venerable "trade" papers. Hometown papers far from Hollywood report box office numbers as if they were baseball box scores. This session will cover the bare-knuckles battles between the two trades, and between the trades and the dailies – and the impact this has on the news product delivered to the reading public.

NEWS QUIZ

EXTRA CREDIT: Read Lillian Ross' 1953 book Picture, about the making of the film "The Red Badge of Courage." Write a 400-word essay on the relationship between the reporter and the filmmakers.

GUEST SPEAKERS: STEPHEN GALLOWAY, SCREENWRITER, PRODUCER AND BUSINESS REPORTER FOR THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER; RAY RICHMOND, WRITER, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER.

WEEK FIVE: OCTOBER 1

The stars, the personalities and the media. Celebrity coverage, for better or worse, makes up the bulk of entertainment reporting, filling the pages and the pixels of "Entertainment Tonight" and "Entertainment Weekly" and everything in between. In this session we'll study examples of very good and very bad celebrity profiles, and try to figure out the difference between them.

NEWS QUIZ

SCREENING: *An episode of Nip/Tuck*

GUEST SPEAKER: RYAN MURPHY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND CREATOR OF THE F/X SERIES NIP/TUCK

READING: "Paul Barresi: The Bagman," Mark Ebner, New Times

EXTRA CREDIT: Watch director Vincente Minnelli's "The Bad and the Beautiful," and write a 400-word essay on how the movie industry has changed since the 1950s.

WEEK SIX: OCT 8

The publicists. Until twenty years ago, cringing Hollywood publicists spent their careers begging powerful editors to cover their clients. Now, cringing newspaper and magazine editors beg powerful publicists for access to their clients. A handful of powerhouse agencies now controls media access to the top stars, directors and producers, and in effect control the story of Hollywood. We study the unusually peculiar relationship between the press and the publicity machinery.

NEWS QUIZ

READING: Bosley Crowther on "Bonnie & Clyde," Kenneth Turan on "Titanic," Anthony Lane on "Star Wars Episode 3," Graham Greene on "Wee Willie Winkie"

GUEST SPEAKERS: MANFRED WESTPHAL, VICE-PRESIDENT, FREEMANTLE (AMERICAN IDOL), DEBRA THOMAS, VICE PRESIDENT ENTERTAINMENT, NBC, HEIDI SCHAEFFER, PMK-HBH.

WEEK SEVEN: Midterm examination. OCT 15

WEEK EIGHT: OCT. 22

Two thumbs up: The critics and the reviewers. The Hollywood entertainment industry creates the most heavily reviewed product in American business. Every TV station, every newspaper, and every magazine in the country now has its own critic or reviewer, passing judgment on every new movie, TV show and music CD. Some offer serious critique. Others use the new releases as an excuse to broadcast or publish pictures of the stars. Either way, the entertainment industry's bottom line requires their approval. In this session we'll learn how critics and reviewers differ, and how they do their jobs, and their relationship to the art and artists they critique.

NEWS QUIZ

GUEST SPEAKERS: KEN TURAN, LOS ANGELES TIMES FILM CRITIC, BRIAN LOWRY, TV CRITIC, DAILY VARIETY.

READING: "I Was A Virgin Junket Whore," Brian Howard, Philadelphia City Paper

WEEK NINE: OCT 29

The junkets and the junketeers: How Hollywood sells itself. Every weekend of their year, hundreds of film critics are flown to Los Angeles by the movie companies to stay in expensive hotels, eat lavish meals, watch new movies and interview their stars and directors. Several times a year, hundreds of TV critics come to Los Angeles to be similarly seduced by the networks and cable companies. The tacit understanding: The networks provide this service in exchange for anticipated good reviews. How ethical is this cozy relationship? How does this arrangement affect the consumer?

NEWS QUIZ

GUEST SPEAKER: TBD

SCREENING: Documentary, "Junket Whore," Debbie Melnyk

WEEK TEN: NOVEMBER 5

Tattle-tales: The gossip columnists, the bloggers and the tabloids. Much of what you know about the celebrities is generated by these journalists working at the fringe of the news business. If someone famous is having a baby, getting a divorce or going into rehab, the news was probably broken here. We look at the wildly competitive gossip business, and the increasingly blurry line between the tabloid press and the straight press.

NEWS QUIZ

SCREENING: Documentary, "Hedda Hopper's Hollywood"

READING: "Taming the Hydra-Headed Carnivorous Tabloid Beast," Annie Louise Bardach, Los Angeles

GUEST SPEAKER: FRANK SWERTLOW, PEOPLE MAGAZINE

EXTRA CREDIT: Screen the 1957 film "The Sweet Smell of Success," and write 400-word comparison between entertainment reporting then and now.

WEEK ELEVEN: NOV 12, What is Hollywood? The entertainment industry creates America's number one export product – bigger than aerospace, automobiles or agriculture – dominating the world with its movies, music, TV shows, computer games and Internet sites. Revenues run to the hundreds of billions of dollars. Companies are valued in the tens of billions of dollars. What are these companies? What do they sell, and how do they sell it? Who owns them? Who runs them? Where did these companies come from, and how did they get so big? This introductory session will cover the landscape of the entertainment industry, and the global reach of the products it creates.

SCREENING:

GUEST SPEAKER: TBD BEN SILVERMAN, PRESIDENT NBC

Documentary, "Hollywood: An Empire of Their Own," Neal Gabler.

READING: "This Is Going To Be Big," Tad Friend, The New Yorker.

WEEK TWELVE: NOV 19

Scandal, and scandal management. From Fatty Arbuckle, Charlie Chaplin and Robert Mitchum to Hugh Grant, Michael Jackson and Eddie Murphy, Hollywood's stars can't seem to stay out of trouble. The press rushes in, along with the police. The publicists have already arrived. Headlines and spin control follow. We analyze Hollywood's response to scandal, and measure the success of various spin campaigns.

NEWS QUIZ

GUEST SPEAKER: STEVE WITMORE, LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, MEDIA SPOKESPERSON; MARY ANN NORBOM, WEST COAST BUREAU CHIEF, OK MAGAZINE.

WEEK THIRTEEN: NOV. 26

The alternative media. A phalanx of brave or brainless reporters operates at the edge of Hollywood, chasing its stories and nipping at its heels. Some report corporate scandal and insider moves. Others specialize in casting and hiring news. All of them function outside the traditional Hollywood structure, and many of them are hated by traditional Hollywood's press and publicists. We find out who they are and what they're doing.

NEWS QUIZ

READING: Various selections from alternative columnists

GUEST SPEAKER: TBD

EXTRA CREDIT: Find a celebrity news item as reported by two different news organizations; write a 400-word essay comparing the two.

WEEK FOURTEEN: DEC. 3

The glossies. Hollywood gets the cover treatment from publications as Vanity Fair and Car & Driver. Why? Celebrities sell. Every week, every month, new titles arrive bearing the burnished images of America's brightest stars. Inside, the profiles run from hatchet-jobs to hagiography – mostly the latter. Why do monthly magazines need celebrities, and what compromises do they make to get them?

NEWS QUIZ

GUEST SPEAKERS: TBD

READING: "Frank Sinatra Has A Cold," Gay Talese, Esquire

WEEK FIFTEEN: Final examination. DEC 10

Mary Murphy

Mary Murphy is a consultant to TV Guide and The TV Guide Network. She is a regular contributor to USA Weekend Magazine. Murphy is the Entertainment Editor of MyTime.Com, a website for boomers that launches in January 2008. She will do a daily video-blog about Hollywood called Murphy's Minutes.

Murphy began her career as a reporter for The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and then moved to The Los Angeles Times where she covered Hollywood and politics for eight years. She was hired away from The Times to become a correspondent for New York/New West Magazine. In 1980 she became the West Coast Roving Editor for Esquire Magazine.

She has covered the Hollywood industry and has written extensively about politics, sports and films. Murphy has interviewed Presidents Bill Clinton and President George Bush. She has covered the last three Presidential campaigns and interviewed candidates including John Kerry, Al Gore and Bob Dole.

Murphy writes extensively about all the top TV series and the stars. She has also written about most major Hollywood celebrities including Tom Cruise, Pierce Bronson, Barbra Streisand, Anthony Hopkins, Robert Redford, Harrison Ford, Steven Spielberg, Nicole Kidman, Courtney Cox, Matthew Perry, Martin Sheen, Charlie Sheen, Vanessa Williams, Cybil Shepherd and Clint Eastwood.

Murphy is the co-author of the book "Blood Cold", an investigation of the Robert Blake murder scandal. She has also written major investigative pieces for TV Guide, Esquire and New York.

Murphy is her own built-in Public Relations machine. She was a correspondent for Entertainment Tonight for two years and since then has appeared frequently on that show. She appears regularly on television on such shows as CNN's Show Biz Tonight, Fox News, The E Channel, Extra, Inside Edition and MS-NBC as a Hollywood authority or to promote her own breaking news stories. She has also appeared on The Today Show, The CBS Morning News and The Oprah Winfrey Show. She is a consultant to The TV Guide Network and appears regularly on many of the shows on the channel. Because of her extensive experience and ability to get the big interviews and break headline-making news, she is one of the best-regarded entertainment reporters in Hollywood.

In the past year Murphy has given speeches about journalism in New York, London and such far-flung places as Bali, Indonesia and Ireland. She has traveled extensively for TV Guide to make speeches to advertisers around the United States.

In addition to Murphy's outstanding career in entertainment, she is a loyal supporter of The Midnight Mission's life-saving programs and services. She was instrumental in helping to raise millions of dollars to build the Mission's current facility and chaired the communications and cultivations committee for the capital development program, Building a Home for Hope. Mary's excitement and passion for the people of Skid Row inspired Wallis Annenberg to make a major contribution to the Mission, naming its library in the new building in Mary's honor. Mary has devoted much of her lifetime to serving, counseling and mentoring people in need. This year Murphy was honored for her work with the homeless at a dinner at the Beverly Hills Hotel hosted by the Midnight Mission.