

Communication 499: Advocacy and Social Change through Entertainment Culture and the Media

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Course Description:

This course examines the potentials and possibilities of social change and advocacy in contemporary media culture, with a focus on how diverse groups, such as governmental agencies, advocacy groups, celebrities and others make use of the media and the entertainment industry to promote social change. The first section takes a particular look at the nature of the relationship between social change, the media and consumer society. These readings are designed to foster debates and discussions regarding the current definitions of social change, of what the public *is*, what the relationship between advocacy groups/message and consumer society *is* and *should be*, and the role of media and entertainment in these debates.

With a greater awareness as to the tensions between politics of social change and the politics and economics of mass media and entertainment, the second section of the course looks at particular instances where a politics of social change manifests itself in particular media events producing what T.V. Reed refers to as “the political-cultural.” This part of the course will be shaped as we go, depending on the availability of “political-cultural workers” as guest speakers, and the interests of the students themselves.

Course Objectives:

- To assess the promises and problematics of media representations in entertainment culture.
- To consider the intersection of the popular and the political as it occurs through entertainment.
- To complete a critical project around the issue of entertainment culture and social change.

This class will adopt several methods of presentation including lectures, guest speakers, as well as extensive audio/visual supplements.

I expect **every** student to come to class prepared to discuss the readings for that week. Please come to class having completed the reading assignments and have questions/talking points ready when you arrive. This class is explicitly a consideration of the media’s potential for social change therefore, almost every week we will screen something in class. These screenings will not be available on reserve, so you are responsible for all materials shown in class.

Mandatory Readings:

T.V Reed. *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. This is available at the University Bookstore.

Additionally you are required to pick up a reader available at Magic Machine in University Village. There is significant material covered in lecture that is not in the reading and you cannot pass the course if you do not attend most of the lectures. Do not be alarmed by the size of the reader: My lectures and the sections led by the TAs will distill the main ideas and help you make concise study notes.

Course Requirements and Attendance:

1. Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussions. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class meeting -- tardies (whether coming to class late or leaving early) will be tracked along with absences. **Students who miss more than two lectures or two discussion sections will have their grades reduced and risk failing the course: there is a deduction of half a grade off the final grade for each unexcused absence.**
 - Attendance grade may also be affected by your promptness and level of attention during class lecture. *Filling a seat does not constitute participation.* I understand that some students are more overtly involved than others, however I expect all of you to find ways to contribute within the classroom by being supportive listeners, thoughtful speakers, and respectful peers.
2. Competing Media: While in class, you are expected to be fully present. This means in part that you must turn off your cell phone when class begins, iPods should not be used or examined during the class period, and if using a laptop, you should take pains to avoid extraneous web-surfing, doing other coursework, or otherwise allowing your computer to distract you (and potentially others) during class.

* NOTE: Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. You may use a computer in the classroom ONLY for taking notes. If you abuse this privilege computers may be banned from the classroom altogether.

Paper Requirements:

There will be two short paper assignments, one due mid-semester and the other at the end of the semester.

Paper 1: The first assignment is divided into two separate write-ups. For this assignment you are expected to write a one-page prospectus (details will follow) AND a literature review (4-6 pages). The literature review will function as the theoretical basis for your larger project.

Paper one is worth 10 % (5% for the prospectus and 10% for the literature review).

Paper 2: The second paper (10-12 pages) will present and discuss one particular angle of a case of media advocacy of your choosing. The final version of your final term paper will use MLA or APA citation style, and include a representative array of source citations.

Competencies and Evaluation:

Paper One	20% (5% for prospectus and 15% for literature review)
Final Paper	25%
Midterm	25%
Final	20%
In-class Participation	10%

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. **Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.**

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately.

All assignments are to be turned in when due. You will receive a grade reduction (ex: A to A-) for each day that the assignment is late (including Saturdays and Sundays).

After seven days, you will no longer be eligible to turn in the assignment and will receive a zero.

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

*All written assignments will be graded for clarity, quality of argument, quality of analysis, and quality of writing. All papers should be typed, use a *single* appropriate format for citations (MLA, APA, or Chicago is fine), and should be spell-checked. Serious errors in grammar, spelling, or citation may negatively affect your grade. Take advantage of the Writing Center if you need assistance copyediting your paper. Students should retain electronic copies of all written assignments and be prepared to provide them at the professor's request.

Annenberg School for Communication Academic Integrity Policy:

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed from the program.

ADA Compliance Statement:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Schedule of Readings:

Week One

January 16: Introduction to Course

Week Two

January 23: The Media as a Space for Political Action

Readings:

Jurgen Habermas. "The Public Sphere." From *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*. Edited by Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson.

Jeff Jones. "Rethinking Civic Engagement in the Age of Popular Culture." From *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Todd Gitlin. "The Media in The Unmaking of the New Left." From *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

T. V. Reed. "Introduction," and Chapter Ten. From *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Week Three

January 30: The Political Economy and Cultural Diversity

Readings:

Tyler Cowan. "The Arts in a Market Economy." from *In Praise of Commercial Culture*. Harvard, 1998.

Michael Parenti. "Preemptions, Profits and Censors." From *Make-Believe Media: The Politics of Entertainment*. St. Martin's, 1992.

Nestor Garcia Canclini. "Introduction." From *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Week Four

February 6: Media Visibility and the Politics of Representation

Readings:

Larry Gross. "The Mediated Society." From *Up From Invisibility*. Columbia University Press, 2002.

Dwight A. McBride. "It's a White Man's World: Race in the Gay Marketplace of Desire." From *Why I hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

Jeremy W. Peters. "Still Advertising to Gays, Ford Under Boycott Again." *The New York Times*. March 15, 2006.

Jeremy W. Peters. "An Image Popular in Films Raises Some Eyebrows in Ads." *The New York Times*, August 1, 2006.

Paul A. Argenti and Janis Forman. "Corporate Advertising: Why and How Companies use it." From *The Power of Corporate Communication*. McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Screening: *Advertising*

Week Five

February 13: History of Culture, Consumerism and Advocacy

Readings:

Robert L. Heath. "Consumerism: Advocacy in the Interest of the Consumers." From *Corporate Advocacy*. Quorum Books, 1997.

Paul A. Argenti and Janis Forman. "Why Bother with Corporate Communication?" From *The Power of Corporate Communication*. McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Miquel Korzeniewicz. "Commodity Chains and Marketing Strategies: Nike and the Global Athletic Footwear Industry." From *The Globalization Reader*. Edited by Frank Lechner and John Boli. Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Robert Goldman and Stepehn Papson. *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998, Chapters 1, 8.

Screening: *Nike Culture*.

Week Six

February 20:

Consumerism and Resistance

Reading:

Rob Walker. "The Brand Underground." *The New York Times*, July 30, 2006.

Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter. "Introduction," and "The birth of counterculture." From *The Rebel Sell: How the Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*. Capstone, 2005.

T.V. Reed. "Will the Revolution Be Cybercast? New Media, the Battle of Seattle, and Global Justice." From *The Art of Protest. Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Screening: *This is what democracy looks like*.

Week Seven

February 27: Production and Consumption:

Readings:

Nestor Garcia Canclini. "Consumption is Good for Thinking." From *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Reading Packet: Edutainment and Health Communication

Case Study: edutainment/health info "Friends" and condom use

Week Eight

March 5: Environmentalism and Corporate Politics

Readings:

David Henderson. "The case against 'corporate social responsibility'." From *The Globalization Reader*. Edited by Frank Lechner and John Boli. Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson. "The Corporate Politics of Sign Values." From *Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising*. New York: Guilford, 1996.

T.V. Reed. "Environmental Justice Ecocriticism: Race, Class, Gender and Literary Ecologies." From *The Art of Protest, Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Jeff Goodell. "Capital Pollution Solution?" *The New York Times*, July 30, 2006.

Case Study: *An Inconvenient Truth Campaign*

Week Nine

March 12: Celebrity Advocacy

Readings:

Daniel Boorstin. "From Hero to Celebrity: The Human Pseudo-event." From *The Image: A guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. Vintage, 1961.

Jeff Jones. "The Comedian-Talk Show host as Political Commentator: Dennis Miller, Bill Maher, and Jon Stewart." From *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

T.V. Reed. "We are [not] the World: Famine, Apartheid, and the Politics of Rock Music." From *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

G. Thomas Goodnight. "The Passion of Christ Meets Fahrenheit 9/11: A Study in Celebrity Advocacy." In *American Behavioral Scientist*. 2005; 49: 410-435.

Case Study: Political Celebrities

Week Ten

March 19: SPRING BREAK!

Week Eleven

March 26: Feminist Activism: Negotiating Spaces

Reading:

Sarah Banet-Weiser. "Girls Rule!: Gender, Feminism, and Nickelodeon." In *Critical Studies in Media Communication Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2004, pp.119-139*.

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards. *Grassroots: A field guide for Feminist Activism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (Handout)

Catherine Driscoll. "Girl Culture, Revenge and Global Capitalism: Cybergirls, Riot Grrrls and Spice Girls." In *Australian Feminist Studies* 14.29 (1999): 173-93.

T.V. Reed. "The poetical is the Political: Feminist poetry and the Poetics of Women's Rights." From *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Case Study: Dove campaign – Pink

Week Twelve

April 2: Journalism and Social Change: the Case of Immigration Reform

Reading:

Barbie Zelizer, *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy*. Sage Publications, 2004.

Clint Wilson II, Felix Gutierrez, Lena Chao, eds. "Advocacy: Pressuring the Media to Change," and "Alternatives: Colorful Firsts in Class Communication." From *Racism, Sexism, and the Media: The rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America*. Sage Publications, 2003.

Case Study: Minute Men

Week Thirteen

April 9: Political Campaigning and Social Change

Readings:

Jeff Jones. "From Insiders to Outsiders: The Advent of New Political Television." In *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Hollihan, T.A. (In press). Si, se puede! An engaged look at the Villaraigosa mayoral campaign. P. Riley, Ed., Proceedings of the NCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation.

Case study: MoveOn.org and Howard Dean

Week Fourteen

April 16: Corporate Philanthropy and the Globalization Movement

Readings:

Paul A. Argenti and Janis Forman. "Managing Outreach to the Community." From *The Power of Corporate Communication*. McGraw-Hill, 2002.

William Finnegan. "Affinity Groups and the Movement Against Corporate Globalization." From *The Social Movements Reader*. Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Michael Wolf. "Mogul Kombat: the Struggle for A World Domination." From *The Entertainment Economy: How Mega-Media Forces are Transforming our Lives*. Times Books, 1999.

Week Fifteen

April 23:

Imagining New Possibilities: TBD

Week Sixteen

Final Paper Due

April 30: Last Day of Class

Final Examination:

Friday May 9, 2:00 – 4:00

