

LIB 366 X SOC 366:  
American Society & Media  
Hybrid Course

**Instructor:** Dr. Wendy Burns-Ardolino  
**Class Meets:** Fall 2014  
M 4:30-5:45 & Online  
EC 510

**Email:** [burnsarw@gvsu.edu](mailto:burnsarw@gvsu.edu)  
**Office Hours:** M 3-4pm EC 610a  
W 2-4pm LOH 324 or  
\*Online Office Hours via Collaborate

**This course is part of GVSU's General Education Program.**

The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

The program is designed to increase your knowledge and skills in the following areas:

**Skills Goals:**

1. **Collaboration** is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives.
2. **Problem solving** is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals.
3. **Integration** is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations.

Ensuring that undergraduate students receive a broad general education has been a primary goal of colleges and universities since their inception. In this era of increasing specialization and growing demand for professional expertise, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the value of general learning.

GVSU maintains that a complete education involves more than preparation for a particular career. A career occurs in the context of a life, and a sound general education helps one "make a life" as well as "make a living." The university is committed to assuring that all undergraduate students, regardless of academic major, receive a broad education rooted in the arts and sciences.

Teaching in the liberal tradition is at the heart of Grand Valley's identity, and this focus is critical in our General Education Program. Liberal education transcends the acquisition of information; it goes beyond the factual to ask important evaluative and philosophical questions. Liberal learning holds the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge up to inquiry, question, and discussion. It helps a person recognize the assumptions under which he or she operates and encourages the examination and questioning of those assumptions. Liberal learning begins in the General Education Program and continues through the more specialized studies comprising each student's major and minor areas of study.

*Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.*

**Catalog Description:**

Interdisciplinary approach to how mediated mass culture produces meaning in contemporary American society. This includes the roles that mass media play in shaping values, ideology, and human interaction through examination of the political economy and socio-cultural organization of the mass media, media content, and the ways audiences interact with media.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role that media plays in the social construction of reality.
2. Identify and apply theories of interpretation, active audiences, and media effects in order to address the social construction of reality and social problems underpinning these mass mediated constructions.
3. Demonstrate and produce an interdisciplinary understanding of underlying values and ideologies of information culture.
4. Demonstrate collaborative problem solving through team project and presentation that examines the complexity of media constructions of social reality.

This is an upper-division discussion-based course. Students have a responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. This means reading, thinking and writing about the material prior to class time. Be prepared for the work to be personally and academically challenging. You are expected to read, listen, and watch thoughtfully, attentively, and respectfully, and to ground your discussion in the texts and a critical integration of knowledge and experience.

**During the course we will examine and explore:**

The role mediated images play in the social construction of reality as they relate to socio-cultural stratification including theoretical approaches to mass media such as: Adorno & Horkheimer's theory of the culture industry, Stuart Hall's preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings, electronic storyteller, Laura Mulvey's to-be-looked-at-ness, Herman Gray's race and representation, and other critical approaches to mass mediated images/representations.

Methods for studying mediated mass culture such as: content analysis, narrative analysis, auteur studies, genre studies, audience reception studies, focus groups, and online fan-based research.

**Required Texts:**

Storey, John. *Ed. Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Essex, U.K: Pearson, 2009.  
Fink, Sherry. *Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital*. NY: Crown, 2013.

All texts are available through the University Bookstore. In addition, there may be selected readings on Blackboard.

**Online Learning in General:**

You should expect to spend as much time in study and preparation, or perhaps more, as a classroom-based course since you are managing your own learning using the information and resources located in Blackboard. This requires that you be self-disciplined, motivated, and have some skills using a networked computer and a Web browser. The content and rigor of an online course offered by GVSU is equivalent to the on-campus, in-class version of the same course. Please review the below link to learn what to expect in an Online Course.

**What to expect in an Online Course:** <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/what-can-i-expect-from-an-online-or-hybrid-course--7.htm>

If this is your first time taking a **hybrid** or **online** course at GVSU, you **must** go through the GVSU Online Learning Orientation. This tutorial will help to prepare you for what is involved in being an on-line student. You will learn the features of Blackboard, determine if your computer meets the technical requirements, and hopefully get a sense as to whether learning on-line is something that is right for you. Please use the following to access the GVSU **Online Learning Orientation**: <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/an-orientation-for-learning-in-the-online-and-hybrid-formats-13.htm>

**Online Learning Readiness Assessment:** <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/tools.htm>

**Fully Online Learning:** <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/a-fully-online-course-10.htm>

**Technology Proficiency:** <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/what-about-the-technology--8.htm>

**Internet Access Requirement:** Students must have consistent access to internet connections at least 64bps.

**Hardware/Software Requirements:**

Students must have access to sufficient hardware and software to complete the course. The minimum requirements to access the course materials through the Internet are:

**Windows Desktop Minimum Configuration**

- \* Pentium 4 processor or equivalent
- \* Windows XP and above
- \* 60 Gig Hard Drive or larger
- \* 512 MB RAM or more
- \* CDROM drive
- \* 10/100 Ethernet adaptor
- \* Web Browser - Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 3
- \* **Microsoft Office 2003 or later**
- \* Anti-Virus software - provided by GVSU if living in on campus housing
- \* Anti-Spyware (recommended)

**Macintosh Minimum Configuration**

- \* 1.8GHz Intel/PowerPC (G5) 1.6GHz
- \* 1 GB of RAM
- \* OSX 10.4 (10.5 preferred)
- \* 120 gig HD
- \* CDR/DVD

- \* 10/100 Ethernet Card and/or Airport Wireless
- \* Speakers
- \* Safari, Firefox
- \* Anti-virus software
- \* **MS Office 2004**

For new computers, Information Technology lists the recommended standards. It is also helpful to get in the habit of checking for announcements regarding Blackboard on the log-in screen or on your portal once you have logged-in. You will find important notices about using Blackboard posted there.

For more information on **Blackboard** please see:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/it/bb/index.cfm?id=337EE3BF-9E47-2E86-18041876582465F0>

### ***Course Syllabus***

Course Syllabus available in Blackboard

### ***User Name and Password***

Each student has been given a Username and a Password for Blackboard. If you need assistance with your Username and Password, please contact the Academic Computing department at 616-331-2101.

### ***Updated Email***

Many of you have already updated your email address through Blackboard, but for those of you who have not or do not remember if you have, please log on to Blackboard (<http://bb.gvsu.edu>) and make sure the email address that shows up in Blackboard is the one that I can use to contact you.

### **COURSE Policies:**

**Late assignments will be deducted a letter grade for each day late.**

**Plagiarism:** “Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one’s own is plagiarism” (GVSU Student Code). This includes cyber plagiarism (stealing online papers). **You are required to submit papers to SafeAssign through Blackboard.** SafeAssign is a resource at Grand Valley State University that checks written work for originality and works through Blackboard. SafeAssign checks papers against several online databases, thousands of websites, and GVSU’s database of papers that have been submitted through SafeAssign. We will discuss this topic further in class and address any of your questions or concerns regarding citation and plagiarism. **Students caught plagiarizing will fail the course and are subject to disciplinary action.**

### **Academic Honesty:**

For a complete articulation of the University’s policy on Academic Honesty, please see the Student Handbook. University policy prohibits **cheating** (allowing submitting someone else’s work under your name), **fabricating** (falsifying or inventing any citation or information in academic work), **plagiarizing** (using another person’s words or ideas without proper attribution), and **facilitating academic dishonesty** (helping or attempting to help someone else commit academic dishonesty). The consequences for academic dishonesty are serious, and may include failing the course or being expelled from the university.

**Attendance Policies:** Students who miss more than 2 classes will have their class participation grade lowered by one full letter grade for each additional class missed.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Based on midterm grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must withdraw online by October 24. **October 24 is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty.**

**Environment:** GVSU is committed to providing a respectful and responsible learning environment. If you need academic accommodations because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) at 616-331-2490.

**Communication:** All official Grand Valley State University email goes to your student (gmail) account, including any email sent from Blackboard. I will send weekly email updates through Blackboard, so it is very important that you check your GVSU e-mail on a regular basis. Likewise, I would also expect that you check our Blackboard class site on a regular basis. Email sent from Blackboard includes the course number.

### **Assignments:**

You will earn your final course grade based on your success in the following endeavors:

**Attendance, In-class participation, and Team/Self Evaluation 20%**

**Discussion Board Forum Participation 20%**

**In-Class Discussion Leadership and Critical Review (Article & Book Chapter) 20%**

**Media Issues Team Annotated Bibliography 20%**

**Media Issues Collaborative Presentation 20%**

### **Grade distribution:**

<b>A = 100-93</b>	<b>B =86-83</b>	<b>C =76-73</b>	<b>D =66-60</b>
<b>A- =92-90</b>	<b>B- =82-80</b>	<b>C- =72-70</b>	<b>F =59-0</b>
<b>B+ =89-87</b>	<b>C+ =79-77</b>	<b>D+ =69-67</b>	

### **Grade Definitions:**

[ A ] Outstanding. Work displays thorough mastery of material, exceptionally good writing, and genuine engagement with the subject-matter. This grade is reserved for those students who attain the highest levels of excellence in thought and scholarship.

[ B ] Good. Work displays accurate understanding of the material; writing is clear and free of mechanical errors.

[ C ] Fair. Work displays basic grasp of material, though there may be the occasional misunderstanding or inaccuracy. Writing quality acceptable.

[ D ] Marginal. Work displays a grasp of the material adequate for credit, but quality of work indicates lack of effort or aptitude.

[ F ] Unacceptable. Excessive absences, assignments not completed, or assignments unworthy of credit.

**Attendance, In-Class Participation and Team/Self Evaluation (20%):**

I expect you to be in class, on time, awake, focused, and prepared to actively participate in discussion. Our classroom community depends on the consistent presence and thoughtful engagement of all members. As members of this community, it is imperative that we listen empathically to one another, that we articulate our disagreements thoughtfully and respectfully, and that we remain committed to critical comprehension of all ideas and materials.

Rude or disruptive behavior, including text messaging and other cell phone use, reading the newspaper, engaging in side conversation, treating classmates disrespectfully, or consistently arriving late or leaving early will lower your attendance and participation grade. **Please turn off your phone and ipod before entering the classroom. Laptops may be only used for class activities and lessons.**

Attendance will be taken by a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet. You may miss class 2 classes, with no impact on your attendance and participation grade. Each additional absence will lower your attendance and participation grade one full letter grade. **Excessive absence (more than 4) may result in automatic failure of the course.** You should always contact someone else from class to discuss missed class sessions before you contact me.

If you participate in any activity in which you represent GVSU, like band, choir, theatre, or sports, and will miss class for competitions or performances, it is your responsibility to make up all missed course work.

**Discussion Board Forum Participation 20%** (adopted from Professor Danielle Lake)

Active participation is expected every week. Active participation includes visiting the discussion forum **several** times throughout the week, posting and responding to the questions there, and engaging in dialogue in various different roles throughout the semester (as a facilitator, researcher, clarifier or summarizer). As a part of your participation grade you will also be expected to post a number of reading inquiries designed to judge your overall comprehension of the material covered in class *and* your level of personal reflection on that material.

Regular face-to-face discussions take place when people share the same space and time. We follow conventions for conversations by paying attention to what people say and we participate by offering counter points of view, challenging ideas put forth, supporting someone's perspective, and changing the topic or direction by introducing other views or new ideas. A conversation flows over time, changing direction as the participants want, and provides a forum for exchanging ideas and opinions. Key to any beneficial conversation is connecting ideas or topics so that everyone understands what has been said and has a chance to contribute their view.

Participation in online discussion is an *essential* part of this course and students are expected to read and respond (Reply) to discussion threads or messages with "substantive postings." Your discussion should add to the topic. Statements of agreement in response to a topic or a peer response demonstrate a lack of substantive content and should be avoided; that is, your postings should be *thorough* and *thoughtful*. Just posting an "I agree" or "Good Point" is not an adequate response. Instead, explain your reasoning as to why you might agree or disagree with an idea. Don't be afraid to hypothesize ideas; in fact, that can be more effective than asserting explicit and irrevocable ideas. **Be sure to back up your ideas with specific evidence from the texts – cited with page numbers as much as possible.** Do not be

reluctant to constructively challenge and test each other's ideas, assumptions, and reasoning (including your own and mine).

All participants should maintain a professional attitude and manner of discussion. While spirited debate is encouraged, unprofessional behavior is not. Often times, words come across "more directly and harshly" in this written form of communication, since there are no facial gestures, expression or tone of voice to help convey your message fully. Your contributions should not be overly negative or personal in nature.

In the end, synthesis and evaluation are only possible when we engage in a true dialogue that genuinely considers differing viewpoints, and that can only happen in a sustained way *when we are willing to converse: not pose a question or comment and leave it to others, but to keep coming back to the idea, twisting and turning it and reexamining it.*

### Rubric for Assessing Forum Participation:

	0-2 Deficient	3-5 Emergent	6-8 Competent	9-10 Proficient
<b>Participation Quality: Civil Constructive, Rigorous</b>	Participation doesn't engage in the discussion much or in much depth, does not relate comments directly to the texts, or presents comments without much civility or is presented without much rigor; doesn't help others and self to develop ideas.	Participation is somewhat civil (responds to each other without blatant disrespect); somewhat constructive, (sometimes helps others and self develop their own ideas but other times tends to primarily repeat or affirm previous comments) and/or somewhat rigorous (occasionally challenges ideas or presents new ideas but tends to repeat ideas already stated; occasionally backs up ideas with specific quotations and summaries with page references), but needs to be more so, in order to better help others and self to develop ideas.	Participation is constructive (helps others and self develop their own ideas), generally rigorous (often challenges ideas constructively; often backs up ideas with specific quotations and summaries with page references from the readings, proposes some new ideas) and civil, (responds to each other with courtesy and respect).	Participation is constructive, (helps others and self develop their own ideas); rigorous (frequently challenges ideas constructively; nearly always backs up ideas with specific quotations and summaries with page references from the readings, proposes new ideas and fresh perspectives) and very civil, (responds to each other with courtesy and respect even in disagreement).
<b>Participation Frequency</b>	(0-1); postings are too brief or too rare to move the participation forward, or are posted too late in the week to be part of the week's discussion.	A few postings (1-2), postings are rather brief, postings are infrequent (posted once or twice), or posted primarily in the last days of the week's forum, rather too late in the week to be very helpful.	Several postings (3 or 4 ) a few times (2-3 times) through the week to a several topics in sufficient length (several sentences) in your group board.	Numerous postings (5+ in the part. group board) posted several times throughout the week (3+), to several topics and questions, and does so in depth (several sentences to a paragraph).

### In-Class Discussion Leadership (Article& Book Chapter) 20%

Integrating tools of inquiry and topics from the course, students will write a critical 1000 word critical review of an article and Book Chapter for in-class discussion (due week after in-class discussion leadership)

### Issues Project & Presentation: Annotated Bibliography 20% & Presentation 20%

Students will work in teams to study, examine, interrogate and to suggest solutions to problems surrounding **Media Coverage of Hurricane Katrina** based on selected articles, course texts, and team research. Each team will produce an annotated bibliography with a minimum of 12 sources and give a 15 minute final presentation addressing a specific problem with **Media**

**Coverage of Hurricane Katrina** in the form of a case study analysis and problem solving.  
**\*\*\*\*Please Note\*\*\*\*\* You must be present on all days of class presentations to receive credit for your Issues Presentation**

### **Unexpected Events:**

Sometimes, unexpected events or emergencies occur and must take priority over our academic commitments. If you cannot fulfill your responsibilities for this course because of circumstances beyond your control, please send me an email at [burnsarw@gvsu.edu](mailto:burnsarw@gvsu.edu) so we can work together to create a plan.

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments**  
*(Schedule subject to change based on needs of the class)*  
**Note some film content may move due to availability**  
**Note HW means Homework due the next class**

### **Week 1 Popular Culture, Mass Culture and Media – Hegemonic Power**

**M 8/25**      **Meet and greet - Review Syllabus – Sign up for Discussion Leadership**  
**HW – Read CTPC – Chapter 1 – What is Popular Culture? 1-14**  
**HW – Read CTPC – Chapter 2 – The ‘culture and civilization’ tradition 17-35**  
*Watch Stuart Hall Representation and Media Part 1,2,3,&4 External Links BB*

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 2 The Dialectical relationship between Media & American Society**

#### **No Seated Class – 9/1**

**HW - Read CTPC – Chapter 3 – Culturalism 37-58**  
**HW – Choose one of the articles under Course Documents in BB to read and begin planning your discussion leadership of the article**  
**HW – Read 5 Days - Note to Reader, Prologue, and Chapter 1**

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 3 Hurricane Katrina – Case Studies in Media**

**M 9/8**      **In-class Discussion 5 Days**  
**In-Class Discussion Formulating Problem Statements Handout**  
**In-Class - Work on Problem Statements for in-class Brainstorming**  
**HW- Read 5 Days- Chapter 2**  
**HW Read CTPC – Chapter 4 – Marxisms 59-88**

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 4 Intersectional Approaches to Media/Problem Statements**

**M 9/15**      **\*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 2 & Article**  
**In-class discussion of Problem Statements**  
**HW- Read 5 Days – Chapter 3**



**HW Read CTPC** – Chapter 7 - Gender and Sexuality 135-164  
*Watch Jeanne Kilbourne Killing Us Softly 3 – External Links BB*

**Online Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 5 Race, Gender and Sexuality in Media**

**M 9/22 \*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 3 & Article  
 IN-CLASS Pitch Problems/Form Research Teams  
 Bibliographic Instruction and Searching  
 HW Read CTPC** – Chapter 8 Race, Racism and Representation  
**HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 4  
 HW – 4 sources Due next class  
 Watch Stuart Hall Race the Floating Signifier External Links BB**

**Online Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 6 Collaboration and Shared Goals**

**M 9/29 \*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 4 & Article  
 \*\*\*\*\*Due 4 Sources  
 HW Read CTPC Postmodernism 181-211  
 HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 5  
 HW – 4 Sources Due next class  
 Watch Bell Hooks Cultural Criticism and Transformation Links BB**

**Online Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 7 Ideology and Mass Media**

**M 10/6 \*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 5 & Article  
 In-class Team Meetings  
 HW Read CTPC The Politics of the Popular 213-235  
 HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 6  
 HW- 4 Sources Due next class  
 Watch Hip Hop – Beyond Beats and Rhymes External Links BB**

**Online Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 8 Integrating Sources**

**M 10/13 \*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 6 & Article  
 \*\*\*\*\* Due 4 Additional Sources  
 In-class: Team Meetings  
 HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 7**

**Online Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

**\*\*\*\*October 24 is the last day to Withdraw without academic Penalty\*\*\*\***

### **Week 9 Deliberation, Integration and Problem Solving**

**M 10/20**      **\*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 7 & Article**  
**\*\*\*\*4 Sources due in class**  
**HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 8**

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 10 Integrating Interdisciplinary Approaches to Problem Solving**

**M 10/27**      **\*In-class Student Lead Discussion Chapter 8 & Article**  
**\*\*\*\*Due 4 Final 4 Sources**  
**HW Read 5 Days – Chapter 9 & Conclusion**

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 11 – Disciplinary Approaches to problems of historical, social, political, cultural media constructions**

**M 11/3**      **In-class team meetings for first 20 mins, then we will attend below event**  
 Running from 5-8:30 p.m., the event will feature a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Lisa Perhamus, Padnos/Sarosik Endowed Professor of Civil Discourse, followed by roundtable discussions meant to engage faculty, students, staff, and community members in meaningful discussion and problem solving. The symposium expands on the civil discourse course, *IDS 350: Detroit's Public Dialogues: Listening Across Differences, Seeing Beyond Stereotypes, Talking Among Communities*, and will feature four panelists whose social justice community work exemplify the successes of peace-based, neighborhood-nurturing initiatives happening in Detroit. More information about the symposium, along with biographical sketches of the 4 panelists, can be found at this link: <http://gvsu.edu/civildiscourse/symposium-4.htm> Here is the agenda for the evening:

5:00 – 5:45 Light Dinner Reception

5:45 – 6:00 Introductory Remarks

6:00 – 6:50 Film, "We are not Ghosts"

BREAK

7:00 – 7:45 Panel Discussion with Detroit Community Leaders

7:45 – 8:30 Interactive Community Dialogue (GVSU faculty, students, staff, community members)

In addition to attending yourself, I hope you will also encourage your students to participate as well so that they can engage in dialogue around a range of civil discourse and social justice issues within the context of Detroit: racism, racialized poverty, public health, the feminization of poverty, urban blight, neighborhood revitalization, community engagement, and changing labor conditions. Attached is a flyer that you can share with your students and colleagues. All are invited to [RSVP](#).

#### **HW Work on Annotations**

**Online**      **Post answers to 3 discussion board questions and respond to peer posts**

### **Week 12 – Deliberation, importance of integration, and inherent difficulties in problem**

solving

M 11/10 In-class Discussion Chapter 9 & Conclusion  
 Team Meetings  
**\*\*\*\*Final 12 Source Annotated Bibliography Due**  
 In-class Team Meetings  
 HW Prepare for final team presentations

Online Work in BB collaborate to finalize team Presentation

### Week 13 – Collaborative Problem Solving

M 11/17 In-class Team Meetings in Library – Rooms Reserved by Team  
 HW Prepare for final team presentations

Online Work in BB Collaborate to finalize Presentations

### Week 14 – Collaborative Presentation Preparation

M 11/24 **TEAM Presentations**

### Week 15 – Self & Peer Evaluation

M 12/1 **TEAM Presentations**

### Week 16 – FINAL Presentations during Exam Period

**W 12/10 FINAL EXAM 4-5:50 Team Presentations**

**\*\*\*\*Final Exam Presentations– \*\*\*\*Please Note\*\*\*\*\* You must be present on all days of class presentations to receive credit for your Issues Presentation**