

## UMBC UGC Instructions for New Course Request Form (revised 4/2016)

**Course number & title:** Enter the number and title of the course at the top of the page. Contact the Registrar's Office to confirm that the desired course number is available.

**Date submitted:** The date that the form will be submitted to the UGC.

**Effective date:** The semester the new course is in effect, if approved.

**Contact information:** Provide the contact information of the Chair or UPD of the department or program housing the course. If the course is not housed in a department or program, then provide the same information for the head of the appropriate academic unit. (See UGC Procedures) If another faculty member should also be contacted for questions about the request and be notified about UGC actions on the request, include that person's contact information on the second line.

**Course number:** For cross-listed courses, provide all the numbers for the new course.

**Transcript title:** Limited to 30 characters, including spaces.

**Recommended Course Preparation:** *Please note that all 300 and 400 level courses should have either recommended course preparation(s) or prerequisite(s) and that 100 or 200 level courses may have them.*

Here fill in what previous course(s) a student should have taken to succeed in the course. These recommendations will NOT be enforced by the registration system. Please explain your choices in the "rationale" (discussed below).

**Prerequisite:** *Please note that all 300 and 400 level courses should have either recommended course preparation(s) or prerequisite(s)* Here fill in course(s) students need to have taken before they enroll in this course. These prerequisites will be enforced through the registration system. Please explain your choices in the "rationale" (discussed below).

**NOTE:** Please use the words "AND" and "OR", along with parentheses as appropriate, in the lists of prerequisites and recommended preparation so that the requirements specified will be interpreted unambiguously.

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.

**# of credits:** To determine the appropriate number of credits to assign to a course please refer to the [UMBC Credit Hour Policy](#) which articulates the standards for assignment and application of credit hours to all courses and programs of study at UMBC regardless of degree level, teaching and learning formats, and mode of instruction.

**Maximum total credits:** This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.

**Grading method(s):** Check all that apply.

**Proposed catalog description:** Provide the exact wording of the course description as it will appear in the next undergraduate catalog. Course proposals should be a) no longer than 75 words, b) stated in declarative sentences in language accessible to students, and c) avoid reference to specific details that may not always pertain (e.g., dates, events, etc.). Course descriptions should not repeat information about prerequisites (which are always listed alongside the course description)."

**Rationale:** Please explain the following:

- a) Why is there a need for this course at this time?
- b) How often is the course likely to be taught?
- c) How does this course fit into your department's curriculum?
- d) What primary student population will the course serve?
- e) Why is the course offered at the level (ie. 100, 200, 300, or 400 level) chosen?
- f) Explain the appropriateness of the recommended course preparation(s) and prerequisite(s).
- g) Explain the reasoning behind the P/F or regular grading method.
- h) Provide a justification for the repeatability of the course.

**Cross-listed courses:** Requests to create cross-listed courses must be accompanied by letters of support via email from all involved department chairs. Proposals for new courses or the addition of a cross-listing to an existing course must include as a part of the rationale the specific reason why cross-listing is appropriate. Email from all involved department chairs is also required when cross-listing is removed and when a cross-listed course is discontinued. Please note that Special Topics courses cannot be cross-listed.

**Course Outline:** Provide a syllabus with main topics and a weekly assignment schedule which includes complete citations for readings with page numbers as appropriate. Explain how students' knowledge and skills will be assessed.

*Note: the UGC form is a Microsoft Word form. You should be able to enter most of the information by tabbing through the fields. The document is protected. In the rare case that you need to unprotect the document, use the password 'ugcform'. Beware that you will lose all the data entered in the form's fields if you unlock and lock the document.*

## UMBC UGC New Course Request: MCS 300: Methods in Media and Communication Studies

Date Submitted: February 20

Proposed Effective Date: April 1, 2017

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### COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	MCS 300
Formal Title	Methods in Media and Communication Studies
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Methods in MCS
Recommended Course Preparation	
Prerequisite <b>NOTE:</b> Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	"C" or better in MCS 101 <b>AND</b> MCS 222
# of Credits Must adhere to the <a href="#">UMBC Credit Hour Policy</a>	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

### PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

An introduction to interdisciplinary methods of gathering, analyzing, and presenting information used in media and communication studies research. Students will learn the theoretical assumptions behind, and rationales for, interdisciplinary methodologies. Students will establish a vocabulary for methodological approaches to research; analyze the usefulness and limits of certain qualitative and interpretive methods; examine the nature of research questions served by different methods; and design a methodologically rigorous research project.

### RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

MCS majors are expected to understand theoretical and practical aspects of media literacy and put them to work in their upper-level coursework, in their internships, and in their careers. Our recent APR and biennial assessment measures have demonstrated that some of our students would benefit from additional coursework to build these capabilities. Methods in Media and Communication Studies (MCS 300) provides a grounding in the utility of various interdisciplinary qualitative methods of conducting research in the varied fields under the umbrella of media and communication studies, including audience surveys, ethnographic field studies, archival research, content analysis, among many others. Building on the research skills taught in MCS 101 (Media Literacy) and the theoretical and historical knowledge introduced in MCS 222 (Intro to MCS), MCS 300 will provide students with valuable practice in employing these methods and will develop the critical skills necessary to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches in the scholarly, policy, and journalist work they encounter as students, consumers, and citizens. We see this course as an important contribution to the MCS curriculum, as it helps prepare majors and certificate students for independent research work, required upper level courses (400-level), and the various workplace environments that they will encounter throughout their careers. It will be taught every semester

so that every major will have access to it. Like all substantive courses in the MCS curriculum, MCS 300 will be regular graded and will not be repeatable. Regular grading ensures that students are evaluated properly. Non-repeatability is the standard choice for substantive academic courses in our discipline. We are confident that the addition of this course will improve the quality of the research our students produce in the major and beyond.

**ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):**

## **METHODS IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION & OVERVIEW**

This course is an introduction to interdisciplinary methods of gathering, analyzing, and presenting information used in media and communication studies research. The aim of the course is to understand the theoretical assumptions behind, and rationales for, interdisciplinary methodologies; to establish a vocabulary for methodological approaches to research; to analyze the usefulness and limits of certain qualitative and interpretive methods; to examine the nature of research questions served by different methods; and for students to be able to design a methodologically rigorous research project. Course readings will describe research methods, offer examples of research projects, and present critiques of research methods.

#### **Course Objectives**

- Examine how knowledge is constructed and disseminated.
- Examine how interdisciplinary perspectives inform research methods.
- Identify appropriate objects of analysis.
- Evaluate the arguments found in scholarly articles.
- Describe, analyze and criticize media texts.
- Find and formulate a research problem from a media studies perspective, review literature and select appropriate research methodologies informed by the course readings and discussion.

#### **Course Requirements & Evaluation:**

- Research log/ Annotated Bibliography Assignment (4 Parts) -- 20 pts
- 4 Method Assignments -- 10 pts each (40 pts)
- Final paper -- 20 pts
- Participation/in-class writing assignments -- 20 pts

### **COURSE FORMAT, GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, & ATTENDANCE**

Each class will begin with an introductory lecture that examines the themes and readings for the week. The rest of the class will focus on in class discussion and activities. Therefore, attendance is important and you are expected to have read the scheduled course material before class. Please bring a copy of the assigned readings to class each week. Active participation is required and part of your grade will be determined by how often you engage in class discussion and how carefully you have read and thought about the assigned readings.

Regular class attendance is required. **More than two missed classes without prior notice or documented excuse will result in your grade being dropped by 5%.**

Emergency' means emergency. If you need a deadline extension because of an emergency situation, remember that emergencies are illnesses (of you or a family member, including partners, spouses, or children) or other unpredictable events of that magnitude. "Emergencies" do not include vacations, commitments for other courses, social engagements, or voluntary shifts at work. **If you have extenuating circumstances or need special accommodations, please contact me before the due date, and I will try to work something out. If an assignment is not submitted within 4 calendar days after the deadline, it will receive a score of 0, except in cases of documented emergencies. Late work will be dropped one point for each day it is late.**

Because this syllabus is a guide, changes in schedule, readings, or assignments may occur. You will be properly notified in advance if changes need to be made.

Fair warning of things I will take note of, but may not call you on: Coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping in class, playing on your laptop or other electronic device, doing work for other courses in class—these activities will negatively affect your participation grade. Before class begins, please turn off all cell phones and any other items that might ring, buzz, play music, or otherwise call attention to themselves and disrupt class.

## **EVALUATION**

Grades will be on a 100 pt. Scale:

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

60 - 69 = D

0 - 59 = F

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

### **B=Good**

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

### **C=Average**

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

### **D= Unsatisfactory**

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

### **F=Failed**

This grade indicates a failure to participate.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities are welcome in this class! If you need to have an accommodation made for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to meet your needs. For more information on your rights as a student with a disability and the resources available to you, contact Student Support Services at 5-3250.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

Students who follow special religious holidays that may interfere with the class schedule need to see me at the beginning of the semester to talk about your schedule.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY & PLAGIARISM**

Integrity is the foundation of any scholarly community. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in our collaborative learning experience. This means that everyone's academic work and behavior will be held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty.

Verifiable instances of academic misconduct in MCS 370 will be penalized accordingly. The minimum penalties for violations of academic integrity in this course are as follows:

- The first offense will result in a '0' on the assignment and a deduction of 10% from the student's overall grade for the course. The offense will also be recorded in UMBC's Academic Misconduct Database.
- The second offense will result in failure of the course, and will be recorded in the Academic Misconduct Database.

- Depending on the nature of the infraction, the professor reserves the right to impose a stronger penalty. Upon review, UMBC's Academic Conduct Committee may also recommend additional disciplinary action, including notation on the student's transcript, suspension, or expulsion.

Academic misconduct is a choice, and therefore it is preventable. Remember:

- ALWAYS cite your sources (your professor can help with this)
- ALWAYS ask questions if you are unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty
- ALWAYS see your professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment

UMBC's Statement of Values on the issue of student academic integrity can be found at <http://www.umbc.edu/saf/policies/StudentAcademicIntegrityValues.htm>. A detailed discussion of the policies and procedures that UMBC employs to put these values into practice is available at [http://www.umbc.edu/provost/integrity/ACC\\_final.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/integrity/ACC_final.pdf).

## **WRITING RESOURCES**

The written work you submit for this course should be of the quality that professors rightfully expect from undergraduates, and thus should be precise, logical, well-organized, mechanically sound, and appropriate in topic and tone. There are a number of writing resources available to you as a UMBC student. Some of them include:

ME: I will provide detailed instructions for all assignments, and work to ensure that all students have the skills necessary to complete them successfully. I also encourage you to utilize my office hours if you have questions related to specific aspects of the writing process.

THE WRITING CENTER: All writers can benefit from conversations with skilled readers, and students are encouraged to utilize UMBC's Writing Center. The Writing Center is located on the Lower Level of the Library, and sees clients on a walk-in basis. For more information, call 5-3126 or visit [http://www.umbc.edu/lrc/writing\\_center.htm](http://www.umbc.edu/lrc/writing_center.htm)

## **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

Diminished mental health can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with other parts of your life can also contribute to decreased academic performance. UMBC provides cost-free and confidential mental health services through the Counseling Center to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being.

Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do -- for yourself and for those who care about you. For more resources get the Just in Case mental health resources Mobile and Web App. This app can be accessed by clicking: <http://counseling.umbc.edu/justincase>

The UMBC Counseling Center is in the Student Development & Success Center (between Chesapeake and Susquehanna Halls). Phone: 410-455-2472. Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Readings and audio-visual materials are available on Blackboard and Google Docs. (Your UMBC email account is required for access.)

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TOPICS

### 1/30 Class introduction and overview

#### Thinking About Knowledge and Evidence

#### 2/1 Epistemology

- Reading(s): James Schwoch and Mimi White, "The Questions of Method in Cultural Studies"

#### 2/6 Intersectionality

- Reading(s): K. Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful"

#### Developing a Topic and Research Questions

#### 2/8 Developing a topic

- Reading(s): U. Eco, "Choosing the Topic" from *How to Write A Thesis*

#### 2/13 Moving from a topic to research questions

- Reading(s): W. Booth, "From Topics to Questions"
- Due: **Research Log Part I**

#### Analyzing Techniques

#### 2/15 Library Resources: Secondary Sources/Bibliography (**Meet in AOK Library, room 259**)

- Readings(s)/Video(s): 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9T4COIEqA>; 2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s9wc6WZW74>;

#### 2/20 Note-taking, citations, and avoiding plagiarism

- Reading(s): Rampolla, "Taking effective research notes"; Rampolla, "Plagiarism: what is it and how to avoid it"; 3) Rampolla, "Quoting and documenting sources"
- 4) UMBC library: <http://lib.guides.umbc.edu/citing>
- Zotero, WorldCat
- Due: **Research Log Part II**

### Textual Analysis

2/22 Semiotics

- Reading(s): M. Danesi, "What is Semiotics?"

2/27 Structuralism

- Reading(s): T. de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender"

### Systems of Interpretation

3/1 Ideological Analysis

- Readings: F. Yang, "Under the Dome 'Chinese' smog as a viral media event"
- **Assignment #1 Due**

3/6 In-class methods workshop

3/8 Political Economy

- Readings: Dana Polan, "Cable Watching: HBO, The Sopranos and Discourses of Distinction"
- **Assignment #2 Due**

3/13 In-class methods workshop

3/15 Discourse

- Readings: L. Gitelman, "A Short History of \_\_\_\_\_"
- **Assignment #3 Due**

3/20 **Spring Break**

3/22 **Spring Break**

3/27 Framing

- Reading(s): Kim, S.-H., Carvalho, J. P., & Davis, A. G. "Talking about poverty: News framing of who is responsible for causing and fixing the problem"
- **Assignment #4 Due**

3/29 Field Analysis



- Readings: D. Hesmondalgh, "Bourdieu, Media, and the Field of Cultural Production"

## Gathering Techniques

### Historical

4/3 Archival

- Readings: E. Patton, "Transforming Work Into Play within the Domestic Sphere: Hugh Hefner's Work/Play Revolution and the Making of the 'Knowledge/Cultural' Professional"

4/5 **UMBC Library Special Collections Workshop (Meet at AOK Library Special Collections & Gallery, 1<sup>st</sup> floor)**

- Due: **Research Log Part III**

4/10 Socio-Historical Analysis

- Readings: B. Peake, "Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, and the Broadcast Boundaries of Racialized Heteronationalism, According to the FBI"

4/12 Auto/biographical

- Readings: T. Cottom, "Who do you think you are?: When Marginality meets Academic Microcelebrity" (<http://adanewmedia.org/2015/04/issue7-mcmillancott/>)
- **Assignment #5 Due**

### Interviewing

4/17 **No class**

4/19 Oral History

- Readings: Mary Marshall Clark, "The September 11, 2001, Oral History Narrative and Memory Project: A First Report"
- **Assignment #6 Due**

4/24 Interviews and Focus Groups

- Readings: K Anderson and D. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses"

### Ethnography

- 4/26 Participant Observation
- Readings: D. Boyer, "News agency and news mediation in the digital era"
  - **Assignment #7 Due**
- 5/1 In-class methods workshop
- 5/3 Feminist Method
- Readings: B. Skeggs, "Feminist Ethnography"
  - **Assignment #8 Due**
- 5/8 Visual Methods
- Readings: Stefano & Shewbridge, "The Mill Stories Project: Safeguarding the Living Cultural Heritage of the Sparrows Point Steel Mill, Maryland, USA"; Adelman, "Pixelizing Atrocity"
  - Explore: <http://millstories.org/>
  - Due: **Research Log Part IV**
- 5/10 In-class workshop (Final paper)
- 5/15 Ethics
- Readings: K. Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan"
- 5/22 No class; **Final paper** due by 12p EST via Google docs

## Class Assignments

### **A) Complete Four (4) Method Assignments (3-4 pages each, double spaced, 12 pt font, include Works Cited page)**

#### **i) Choose 4 of the 8 assignments below (please see syllabus for individual due dates):**

- Assignment 1: Do a structural and semiotic analysis of a television series, sports activity, or cultural product.
- Assignment 2: Do an ideological analysis of a film or television show.
- Assignment 3: Choose a particular media or cultural product and map out the elements of its political economic context.
- Assignment 4: Choose a particular event or situation and discuss the discourses that are competing to define it.
- Assignment 5: Take an image or object and analyze its historical meaning.
- Assignment 6: Tell a personal story that makes a larger point from its specific narrative.
- Assignment 7: Interview one person who you know well and one person you don't know about their cell phone, TV viewing habits, or consumer habits. Compare the two interviews in terms of strategy, information you got, general conclusions you could make about the topic.
- Assignment 8: Observe a place for an hour and describe the patterns of behavior that you see.

### **B) Assignment: Research Log**

This assignment is designed to introduce you to a range of methods for researching your subject for your research paper, and to assist you in developing the concepts that will organize your analysis. You will be required to submit responses for each part of your log by its due date.

The Research Log consists of four smaller assignments designed to help you narrow and refine your research.

### **C) Final paper extending method of choice for a chosen media object (10 pages)**

### **D) Participation/in-class writing assignments**

Throughout the semester, there will be 12 unannounced in-class writing assignments. These exercises call for critical analysis and engagement with that day's topic and should reflect the level of your preparation before class meetings. In certain instances, group or partner work will be used in this manner, which will require members to collaboratively write a response to be

submitted during the class. At the end of the semester, only the 10 responses with the highest scores will count toward your final grade. This means that students will be able to miss 2 in class writing/class participation assignments without penalty. Responses are collected in class only and you can't submit them if you are absent. If you miss any of these in-class writings due to excused or unexcused absences, you will not be allowed to submit your responses afterwards. The goal of these assignments is to gauge your preparedness for class and act in part as a participation grade. Since you are allowed to drop two of these assignments, this compensates for the occasional absence. Plan accordingly.