

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communications and The Arts
Programme:	Art History & Visual Culture Communications: Advertising & PR Communications: Media Studies Digital Communication & Social Media Film & Photography Film Studies
FHEQ Level:	3
Course Title:	Foundations in Mass Media & Communications
Course Code:	COM 3100
Total Hours:	120
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course introduces the study of mass media in contemporary modern societies. The course will pay particular attention to the production and consumption of mass media, including newspapers and magazines, television, film, radio, and the internet. Thus, the course will encourage students to critically analyse the strategies of media giants, the impact of media ownership over democracy, the effects of media over culture, identities, and public opinion. Each topic of the course will be examined with reference to contemporary examples of mass media.

Prerequisites:

None

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this course is:

- To provide a comprehensive introduction to the key areas of media and communications studies.
- To introduce key concepts, the main theoretical approaches and current debates on modern mass media.
- To present an overview of contemporary mass media, from newspapers and magazines to TV and the internet.
- To provide a good understanding as to how the different mediums operate as a business sector.
- To explain how media ownership affects politics and public opinion.
- To introduce debates on objectivity and truth in news production.
- To explain audience theory and media effects.
- To provide students with analytical tools to critically engage with the different medium.

Programme Outcomes:

Art History & Visual Culture: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

Communications: Advertising & PR: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

Communications: Media Studies: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

Digital communications & Social Media: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

Film Studies: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

Film and Photography: A3(i), B3(i), C3(i), D3(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Understand key concepts in media and communications studies.
- Understand forms of communication, media, and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the processes through which they have come into being, with reference to social, cultural, and technological change.
- Exhibit an understanding of the processes linking production, distribution, circulation, and consumption.
- Students should demonstrate an ability to conduct basic research and organise ideas to communicate orally and in written assignments.
- Show awareness of the ways mass media affects public opinion and shapes our personal views.

Indicative Content:

- Print Industry
- Film Industry
- Television Industry
- Advertising Industry
- Gender and Mass media
- Consumer Culture and Marketing Communication
- Media Effects
- Digital Media and Media Convergence
- Social media

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

In line with the aims and objectives of the course, sessions are structured to provide a stimulating learning experience which encourages students to reflect on their reading and develop skills of analysis, evaluation, and presentation. To this end, formal lectures are combined with class discussions and exercises. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and being prepared to make short oral presentations in class. Students will be required to make a presentation in class, which should be a critical analysis of a topic explored in the lectures. Students will also work in groups to put in practice some of the concepts and ideas discussed in the lectures. There will be screenings of films and documentaries relevant to the course.

Indicative Texts:

McDougall, Julian and Claire Pollard, (2019) *Media Studies: The Basics*: Routledge; 2nd edition

Turow, J. (2013) *Media Today: An Introduction to Mass Communication*, 5th edition. London: Routledge.

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Updated course description	Oct 21 (Dept)	
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – Annual Update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	