COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department: Communications and the Arts

Programme: BA Communications and Media Studies

***FHEQ* Level:**   5

Course Title: Media Power

Course Code: COMM 5102

Total Hours: 160 (Lev 3-5) (4 US Credit)
Timetabled Hours: 45
Guided Learning Hours: 15
Independent Learning Hours: 100

Credit   16 UK CATS credits
8 ECTS CATS credits
4 US credits

Course Description:

This course offers a critical exploration of the complex and multifaceted relationship between media and power. By examining historical and contemporary issues, the course explores the media as a tool for propaganda, control, and influence by various entities, including governments, corporations, and social movements. Through an analysis of media structures, we investigate the impact of ownership and corporate control on the diversity of content, representation, and the democratic process. Engaging with the key theories of media power and hegemony, students learn how media contributes to the maintenance of dominant ideologies and the marginalization of alternative viewpoints, and also how it drives consumer culture, influences consumption patterns, and shapes individual and collective identities. On the flipside, the course also emphasizes the role of media activism and participation politics, examining how grassroots movements and alternative media challenge dominant narratives and create spaces for marginalized voices.

Prerequisites:

40 Credits

Aims and Objectives:

Students will develop a critical understanding of the dynamic of media power enabling them to analyse how media shape public opinion, culture, and societal norms. They will analyse the structure and functioning of the media industry, gaining insights into the economic and political forces that drive media production and distribution alongside the effects of digital technology. Through lectures, case studies, and critical discussions, students will develop a deep understanding of the power dynamics within media and their implications for society preparing them to critically navigate and engage with the media landscape in an informed, active, and reflective manner.

Objectives:

- Critically evaluate and analyse media content using theoretical frameworks related to propaganda, hegemony, and consumerism.

- Identify the implications of media ownership concentration on content diversity, representation, and political discourse.

- Understand and explain the concept of cultural hegemony and how media contributes to the reinforcement or disruption of dominant ideologies.

- Evaluate and analyse the role of media in promoting consumer culture and shaping consumer behavior whilst giving attention to ethical considerations.

- Demonstrate an understanding of media activism by showing and understanding of strategies that challenge dominant media narratives and support alternative perspectives.

Programme Outcomes:

5AII, 5BI, 5CI

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:

- Demonstrate a critical engagement with theories and concepts used in communications and media studies, particularly as relates to media power.

- Demonstrate critical understanding of the key problems and issues addressed in media power both from the top down and bottom up.

- Demonstrate the ability to formulate and communicate arguments cogently, retrieve and generate information, and select appropriate criteria to evaluate sources and/or data.

Indicative Content:

- Media Power and Society – shaping public opinion (e.g. agenda setting, framing, priming)

- The Public Sphere and Counter-public spheres

- Global Media Industries - Ownership and Control (Hegemony and Power)

- Culture Industries – Consumption

- Influencers, Celebrity Culture and Digital Entrepreneurship

- Corporate Media Strategies and Branding

- Media Ethics, Activism and Social Change

- Digital Intervention and Manipulation (e.g. AI and Deepfakes)

- Participatory Culture - Social Media and Social Change

- Independent and Alternative 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:

Course meetings will consist of interactive lectures on assigned readings, small group discussions, reflection activities and the presentation of audio-visual materials.

Indicative Text(s):

Chandler, D. and Munday, R. (2020) *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curran, J. and Hesmondhalgh, D. (2019) *Media and Society*. London: Routledge.

Curran, J. and Redden, J. (2024) *Understanding Media Communication, Power and Social Change*. London: Pelican Books.

McQuail, D. (2020) *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory.* 7th edn. London: Sage.

McDougall, J. and Pollard, C. (2019) *Media Studies: the Basics*. 2nd edn. UK: Taylor & Francis.

Nielsen, R. and Ganter, S.A. (2022) *The Power of Platforms: Shaping Media and Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O'Shaughnessy, M. and Stadler, J. (2016) *Media and Society.* 6th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turow, J. (2022) *Media Today: An Introduction to Mass Communication. 8th edn.* London: Routledge.

Journals

International Journal of Communication.

Websites

Henry Jenkins. Available at http://henryjenkins.org (Accessed: November 2024).

Apophenia. Available at: http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/ (Accessed: November 2024).

Critical Media Studies. Available at: https://critical-media-studies.captivate.fm (Accessed: November 2024).

MIT Media Podcasts. Available at: https://player.fm/series/mit-comparative-media-studieswriting (Accessed: November 2024).

Media Studies. Available at: https://soundcloud.com/media-studied/2-alternative-media (Accessed: November 2024).

Sage podcasts. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/communication-media-studies-language-linguistics (Accessed: November 2024).

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
First edition document	Nov 2024	