

**COM 3095 Media Literacy**  
**Department of Communication Studies**  
**Spring 2022**  
**Section 1 T/R, 11-12:15pm**  
**Classroom: RLC 108**

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**Office Hours: See Canvas**

### **Catalog Description**

A critical approach to interpreting media messages grounded in the study of how messages are constructed, how media industries function, and how communication theory, research, and media ethics explain media impact on society. Emphasis is placed on making informed choices as a media consumer and considering the impact of media from a Christian perspective.

### **Required Texts**

Hobbs, Renee. 2021. *Media Literacy in Action Questioning the Media*. Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Szeman, Imre, and Susie O'Brien. 2017. *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*. Hoboken, NJ : Wiley Blackwell.

Additional reading assignments TBD + various handouts distributed by the professor

Required films (see Course Schedule) -- pay for streaming fees as required

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

As a result of this course, students will display an understanding of, and/or be able to do the following:

1. Students will gain a critical understanding of mass media economics and systems.
2. Students will be more informed consumers of all forms of media, including understanding how to distinguish among information sources and evaluate their reliability.
3. Students will gain a fuller understanding of the journalistic process, the challenges journalists face, the impacts of journalism in democratic society, and the relationships between journalists and the public they serve.
4. Students will better understand the workings of state and local governments, including how state and local government decision-making affects our daily lives, how news coverage and other media content influences these decisions and how citizens can engage to influence change. The course focuses significantly on helping students understand and evaluate journalistic products and processes and their role in democracy. However, it also will provide students an opportunity to learn more about state and local government structures and processes and how they can be influenced by citizen engagement.
5. An ability to apply a biblical-Christian worldview and faith perspective to media analysis, critique, and the production of media messages.
6. An understanding and ability to apply media literacy analysis knowledge and skills in the four different dimensions of media literacy:
  1. Cognitive/Background-Factual dimension: includes the background-facts about the message, including: the medium and the messenger-- who created the message, their background and role in this message, their perspectives, ideology, the target/principle

audience(s), when the message was created, where did it appear, how much money it cost to make and how much money it made, its popularity and awards, and other factors.

2. Emotional dimension: how and why messages engage us emotionally and intellectually and the effects of this emotional engagement on our values, beliefs, and behaviors/actions.

3. Aesthetic dimension: the artistic aspects of mass media messages, and how story in words and/or imagery and sound elicit emotional reactions and can affect us in positive and negative ways.

4. Moral-ethical-spiritual dimension: includes the moral, psychological, and spiritual effects of media on individuals, culture, and society, and the ability to analyze and determine the ethics of media message content and their effect(s).

### **PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

### **Course Policies and Requirements**

**Attendance:** *Attendance is required. Missing class for other than medical emergencies or excused absences will affect your grade, as per the University Catalog.* Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

**Class Preparation:** All assignments must be completed prior to the assigned due date and time. Some assignments will be discussed in class while others will be completed individually but not discussed.

**Class Participation:** *Regular* contributions to class discussion are expected, including but not restricted to discussions of weekly readings, related experiential exercises, and open dialogue. Despite the size of the class, I want everyone to feel compelled to share their thoughts on course assignments. Enthusiastic and responsible participation in assigned group projects (in-class and outside of class) is expected of all.

**E-Mail:** Please use e-mail (not Canvas email) for simple, logistical questions or clarifications. Write: "COM 3095" in the subject line. Allow 24 hours/ 1 business day for a reply.

**Canvas Messages:** Please use Canvas messages (not Canvas email) for all information regarding assignments submitted to Canvas.

**Smart phones and laptops:** may be used for classroom related activities only.

**Public Discourse:** Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus you should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.

**Inclusive Language:** All public language used in this course, including written and spoken discourse, will be inclusive. This standard is outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and is the norm in university-level work. These academic style guides provide background information and good examples of how to maintain non-sexist language use in your writing.

**Academic Honesty/ Policy on Plagiarism:** Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information.

**PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy:** PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

**Final Examination:** *The published time for the final examination is one of the considerations when enrolling for a course. Students are expected to arrange their personal affairs to fit the examination schedule.* Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

**FERPA Policy:** In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/ graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

**PLNU Copyright Policy:** Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

### Grading Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-

78-79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

### Grading

20%	Reading and Film Notes
10%	Reflection Papers
10%	Class Discussion Paper
10%	Global News Project
30%	Class participation: arrive to class on time; use smart phones and laptops for classroom use (or receive a "0" for the week); complete unannounced assignments; work with peers in small groups; ask and respond to questions in class; pay attention to presentations, lectures, and films; take notes; attend the entire class.
20%	Final Exam Written Project

### Assignment Descriptions

**All assignments are due on Canvas before class begins: 11:00am T/R.** Assignments require attendance for the entire class period on the day they are due in order to be eligible to receive a score.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Be sure to hand in your assignment on time, or make a prior arrangement to submit the assignment before the assigned due date. Otherwise, a late submission will not be accepted. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

**Paper Format:** Please submit in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format in Chicago Style, typed and double-spaced. Submit assignments in black ink on 8.5"x11" white paper. Use a non-decorative 12-pt. font, such as Times New Roman. Use the Chicago Manual of Style for style, grammar, format, and citation issues.

- <https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/chicago-manual-style>
- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/chicago\\_manual\\_17th\\_edition/cmos\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/chicago\\_manual\\_of\\_style\\_17th\\_edition.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html)

### Reading Notes

**Objective:** This assignment requires that students take notes while reading our course texts--our class requires being active readers rather than passive readers. You may write your notes in the form of bullet points or prose. Cutting and pasting the text or outside sources into the document does not count towards the word count requirement.

**Form:** Length: 1/2 page (minimum 200 words, more if you would like), single-spaced. See template on Canvas (within the "Modules" tab).

1) open attached template; 2) fill out the document by writing ½ page of your notes on the day's reading assignment; 3) submit the document to Canvas.

Grading:	5: full set of notes including specific examples and personal commentary
	4.5: full set of notes including specific examples
	4: full set of general notes, certain sections and personal observations omitted
	3.5: nearly a full set of notes
	0-3: less than ½ page, lacks clear detail &/or entire reading is not accounted for

## Class Discussion Paper

**Objective:** Write a reader-response to the assigned class reading.

**Form:** 1.5- 2 pages (500-675 words including heading). Summarize important details in the assigned text; offer your critical assessment of key themes, and contribute questions that facilitate class discussion. Make photocopies so each class participant has a copy. Submit one copy to your professor. Present your class discussion paper in class and be prepared to guide the subsequent class discussion.

## Reflection Papers

**Objective:** Write a one-page reflection on a topic of interest to you based on the reading or lecture materials presented in the previous two weeks of the course.

**Form:** 1 page (325-375 words including heading). Word count strictly enforced. No outside sources.

## Global News Project

**Objective and Form** see handout in Canvas.

## Final Exam

**Objective:** Use relevant examples from the lectures, in-class examples, readings, and films to respond to questions that take into account the content of the course.

**Form:** Written, open-note/book examination.

## Evaluation of Assignments

The following questions will be considered when assignments are evaluated and graded. All questions may not be relevant to each assignment.

- Does the assignment fulfill the assignment objective?
- Does the assignment make an academic argument?
- If a claim is required, is it clear and plausible? Is it stated and contextualized effectively?
- Is there sufficient and relevant evidence to ground the claim?
- Does the assignment effectively select and use material from the course materials to support and validate the analysis? Does it summarize, paraphrase, and quote effectively?
- Does the assignment use all relevant details from course texts both to support the claim and to provide a context for the case being made? Does it ignore material that should be taken into account?
- Does the assignment demonstrate an awareness of how the argument being proposed fits into the larger set of claims made about the topic in our course readings?
- Does the assignment work through the complexities of the material (as opposed to oversimplifying or overgeneralizing)?
- Is the assignment well organized?
- Does it cite material from the sources using Chicago Style?
- Are there sentence structure problems or grammatical errors that interfere with the meaning?

## Evaluation Standards

- An “A” assignment demonstrates excellent work. It has something to say and says it well. It develops its point of view clearly and consistently, demonstrating a complex understanding of the assignment, and does so using a variety of perspectives. It often rises above other assignments with particular instances of creative or analytical sophistication. There may be only minor and/or occasional structural errors.
- A “B” assignment demonstrates good work. It establishes a clear point of view and pursues it consistently, demonstrating a good understanding of the assignment. There may be some mechanical difficulties, but not so many as to impair the clear development of the main idea. While a “B” assignment is in many ways successful, it lacks the originality and/or sophistication of an “A” assignment.
- A “C” assignment demonstrates adequate work. It establishes an adequate grasp of the assignment and contains a point of view. In addition, the assignment may rely on unsupported generalizations or insufficiently developed ideas. It may also contain structural errors.
- Work that earns a grade of “D” or “F” is often characterized by the following problems: it fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment; it fails to articulate an adequate point of view; and/or it contains significant structural problems.

## Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Tuesday: online/asynchronous</b> No classes.	<b>Thursday: online/asynchronous</b> <b>Read:</b> Syllabus and <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 1 (2-31) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 1 <b>Topic:</b> Media Literacy
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 2 (32-58) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 2 <b>Topic:</b> Media Importance	<b>Thursday</b> <b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 3 (59-81) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 3 <b>Topic:</b> Information Access
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Tuesday: online/asynchronous</b> <b>Watch:</b> <i>3:10 to Yuma</i> (Daves, 1957) <b>Notes:</b> 1 page submitted to Canvas <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 1	<b>Thursday: online/asynchronous</b> <b>Watch:</b> <i>3:10 to Yuma</i> (Mangold, 2007) <b>Notes:</b> 1 page submitted to Canvas
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Topic:</b> Adaptation as Cultural Transmission of Ideology	<b>Thursday</b> <b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 4 (82-111) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 4 <b>Topic:</b> News Sources

<b>Week</b> 5	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 5 (112-141) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 5 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 2 <b>Topic:</b> Propaganda	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 6 (142-166) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 6 <b>Topic:</b> Popular Narratives <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 1

<b>Week</b> 6	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 7 (168-190) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 7 <b>Topic:</b> Preferences and Tastes	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 8 (191-213) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 8 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 2 <b>Topic:</b> Aesthetics and the “Good” <b>Global News Project:</b> Check-in 1

<b>Week</b> 7	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 9 (214-236) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 9 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 3 <b>Topic:</b> Who do you trust?	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 10 (237-266) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 10 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 3 <b>Topic:</b> Media Profitability

<b>Week</b> 8	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 11 (267-289) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 11 <b>Topic:</b> Social Media	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 12 (291-313) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 12 <b>Topic:</b> Stereotypes

**Spring Break**

<b>Week</b> 9	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 13 (314-335) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 13 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 4 <b>Topic:</b> Media Addiction	<b>Read:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 14 (336-364) <b>Notes:</b> <i>MLIA</i> Chapter 14 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 4 <b>Topic:</b> Media Education <b>Global News Project:</b> Check-in 2

<b>Week</b> 10	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 1 (1-28) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 1 <b>Topic:</b> Pop Culture Defined	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 2 (29-56) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 2 <b>Topic:</b> History of Pop Culture

<b>Week</b> 11	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 3 (57-90) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 3 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 5 <b>Topic:</b> Representation and Reality	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 4 (91-122) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 4 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 5 <b>Topic:</b> The Business of Culture

<b>Week</b> 12	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 5 (123-150) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 5 <b>Topic:</b> Consumer Culture	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 6 (151-182) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 6 <b>Topic:</b> Identity <b>Global News Project:</b> Check-in 3

Week	Tuesday Location	Thursday
13	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 7 (183-212) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 7 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 6 <b>Topic:</b> Identity and Community	Easter Recess: No classes

Week	Tuesday	Tuesday
14	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 8 (213-242) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 8 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 6 <b>Topic:</b> Counter and Sub-Cultures	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 9 (243-280) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 9 <b>Class Discussion Paper:</b> 7 <b>Topic:</b> Globalization

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
15	<b>Read:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 10 (281-310) <b>Notes:</b> <i>PC</i> Chapter 10 <b>Writing:</b> Reflection 7 <b>Topic:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Pop Culture	<b>Writing:</b> Reflection 8 <b>Topic:</b> Course Reflection <b>Global News Project:</b> Check-in 4

<p><b>Final Exam</b>          Finals Week, Thursday 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.</p>
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