

Ithaca College
Senior Seminar
Social Effects of Media on Children
Fall 2007

Instructor: Prof. Jack Powers

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Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. TR; and by appointment

Course description:

Children and the Media is a survey course designed to explore the role of media in the lives of children and adolescents—primarily from a social science perspective. Specifically, the course deals with three areas: 1) how the popular media socialize children; 2) the future media environment; and 3) policy issues and advocacy. Through lectures, class discussions, debates, videos, presentations, and assignments, we shall critically examine the impact the mass media have had on children in America (primarily—with some emphasis on the effects of media on children outside the United States).

Course Objectives/Goals:

By the end of the term, students enrolled in this course should be able to

1. Discuss and argue points of view related to children and media in the United States.
2. Understand and discuss the emergence of mediated learning in children's lives.
3. Understand and discuss the impact of the television and the computer on the lives of children.
4. Know the developmental stages in a child's development and the role the media play at each stage.
5. Synthesize research material regarding children and media.

To achieve these goals, students will read extensively, write summary/reaction pieces, make formal presentations, actively participate in intellectual discussions, and write and present a research paper about children and the media.

Required texts:

Comstock, G., & Scharrer, E. (2007). *Media and the American child*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Additional reading material will be made available to you throughout the term.

Evaluation and grading:

Overall grades will be based on the following percentages:

93 – 100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
67 – 69	D+
63 – 66	D
60 – 62	D-
00 – 59	F

Academic Integrity: Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. This includes plagiarism; copying from another student's exam; preparing cheat sheets; using devices to cheat; obtaining copies of the exam prior to the test date;

and so on. Please refer to the Ithaca College student handbook for the college's official stance. Feel free to speak to me concerning this subject.

Attendance:

Here is the official Ithaca College stance on attendance:

College Policy

Students at Ithaca College are expected to attend all classes, and they are responsible for work missed during any absence from class. At the beginning of each semester, instructors must provide students in their courses with written guidelines regarding possible grading penalties for failure to attend class. Students should notify their instructors as soon as possible of any anticipated absences. Written documentation that indicates the reason for being absent may be required. These guidelines may vary from course to course, but are subject to the following restrictions:

1. In accordance with New York State law, students who miss class due to their religious beliefs shall be excused from class or examinations on that day. Such students must notify their course instructors at least one week before any anticipated absence so that proper arrangements may be made to make up any missed work or examination without penalty. Faculty will not schedule examinations or quizzes on designated religious holidays on the calendar day following the designated holidays. Designated holidays are Rosh Hashanah (2 days), Yom Kippur, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

2. Any student who misses class due to a verifiable emergency - such as an illness requiring attention by the health center, or hospitalization, death, or serious illness of a family member, or required appearance in a court of law - shall be excused. Students may notify the Office of Student Affairs about any emergency, and that office will notify the appropriate faculty member.

A student may be excused for participation in college-authorized co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as athletic events, musical and theatrical performance, and professional conferences if, in the instructor's judgment, this does not impair the specific student's or the other students' ability to succeed in the course.

The course instructor has the right to determine if the number of absences has been excessive in view of the nature of the class that was missed and the stated attendance policy. Depending on the individual situation, this can result in the student being removed from or failing the course.

Obviously, a seminar does not work if students aren't in class to engage in lively, intellectual discussion. The goal is to create an environment so that students will "want" to attend. Students who regularly miss class will see their participation grades suffer.

Course material: Assigned readings should be completed prior to class. Seminar discussions are intended to enhance and/or supplement the readings. Some of the material will come from sources other than the assigned readings. You are responsible for this material as well as for the material in the readings—even if it is not specifically covered in class. If you have any difficulty understanding the readings, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification. Often, I will ask if anyone has any questions.

Make-up policy: As a general rule, make-up assignments are not allowed except in cases of emergency. It is your responsibility to complete the assignments. If an emergency does arise, it is imperative for you to contact me PRIOR to the scheduled due date. Do not expect to make-up a missed assignment without clearing it with me ahead of time. Incompletes are rarely given. In fact, an incomplete is ONLY given if you are unable to complete the coursework because of a serious illness, accident, emergency, or other crisis. A formal request must be made prior to the end of the term. An incomplete can only be granted with permission from the Dean.

Assignments:

Each student is required to submit a one-to-two-page summary reaction piece for one of the assigned articles for that week. A total of ten summary/reaction pieces are required. In addition, each student is responsible for two PowerPoint presentations on the assigned articles. Finally, each student will write a seminar paper and present his or

her findings in a formal setting. Details of the assignments and paper will be further discussed in class during the first two weeks.

Overall grades will be based on the following:

Participation—	20%	(200 points)
Summary/reaction pieces—	30%	(300 points)
PowerPoint presentations—	10%	(100 points)
Final paper—	30%	(300 points)
Formal paper presentation—	10%	(100 points)
		(1000 points)

Tentative Course Schedule:

Day	Date	Material to be covered
R	8/30	Introduction to the course; syllabus overview; class philosophy
T	9/4	Demographics and preferences in media use with attention on young
R	9/6	Demographics and preferences, continued (1)
T	9/11	Purposes and motives of TV viewing (2) Modes of response (2)
R	9/13	Developmental factors that influence viewing (2) Cognitive Stages and media
T	9/18	Influence of viewing on other activities (2); Social circumstances of viewing
R	9/20	Studying attributes of TV characters (3); Behavior of media characters (3)
T	9/25	Behavior of media characters, cont. (3);
R	9/27	Behavior of media characters, cont. (3)
T	10/2	Effects of TV viewing on scholastic achievement
R	10/4	Exposure to educational TV; TV viewing and the child's developing intellect
T	10/9	Advertising and marketing to kids via mass media; Evidence
R	10/11	Buying machine; Consideration of cognitive development in advertising
T	10/16	TV violence, aggression and other behavioral effects
R	10/18	Fall Break—No Class
T	10/23	Video game violence and aggression; Theories to help us understand behavior
R	10/25	Theories, continued; other hypotheses to consider
T	10/30	Roles and norms as influenced by media; Explanations for socialization
R	11/1	Roles and norms, continued
T	11/6	Kids and music media
R	11/8	Kids and sex media
T	11/13	Kids and sex media, continued
R	11/15	Updated research material

T	11/20	Thanksgiving Break—No Class
R	11/22	Thanksgiving Break—No Class
T	11/27	Putting it all together
R	11/29	Final Presentations
T	12/4	Final Presentations, continued
R	12/6	Final Presentations, continued
T	12/11	Final Presentations, continued
R	12/13	Last class—Wrap-up; Final Presentations
T	12/18	Final Exam 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary. It is meant as a guideline. Any changes will be announced in advance.