

OKANAGAN COLLEGE  
Department of Communications  
**CMNS 110: Introduction to Mass Communication**

**Course Description**

This course examines the history, structure, institutions, and processes of the print, audio, visual, and digital sectors of the mass media. Central to our examination is the interrelation between the mass media, technology, culture, and power. Students will explore issues related to regulation, freedom of expression, globalization, and commodification of meaning.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Outcomes**

Students will:

1. Understand the distinction between print, audio, visual, and digital communication
2. Critically examine the influence of the mass media in the development of individual, local, regional, and national identity
3. Analyse the relationship between the media and the interests of power
4. Assess the role of policy and the political economy in the debate over freedom of expression and regulation
5. Understand the impact of the media on the development of culture
6. Identify media trends such as digitization, convergence, globalization, and personalization

**Topics**

1. The history of the mass media in Canada
2. Mass media and the development of cultural industries in Canada
3. Freedom of expression vs. regulation
4. Media policy
5. Media as commodity; conglomeration and concentration
6. Globalization of the mass media and its impact on the developing world
7. Mass media and the spread of private enterprise
8. Interpenetration of media, marketing, and consumption

**Texts**

Augie Fleras. 2003. *Mass Communication in Canada*. Toronto: Nelson.

**Course Requirements**

Media policy analysis	15%
Media trend analysis	25%
Midterm	15%

Critical Journal (see attached assignment sample)	20%
Presentation	15%
Participation (including attendance, preparation, responses to study questions, informal group presentations, engagement in class activities, and low-stakes writing assignments)	10%

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

Students will collaborate with the instructor to determine detailed criteria for each assignment. The criteria will vary according to each assignment's audience, purpose, content, and communications medium and will be developed in advance of a given assignment's submission date. Students will also engage in reflective self-assessment as a means of better integrating evaluation with learning.

### **Method of Instruction**

As a learner-centred course, students share responsibility with the instructor for the success of each class session. Having carefully read and contemplated the texts and topics under consideration in advance of a given class, students should be prepared for vibrant class discussion. Classes will feature a fluid combination of lectures, presentations, individual and collaborative work, workshops, and seminars.

## **CMNS 110: Introduction to Mass Communication**

### **Sample Assignment: Critical Journal**

**Worth: 20%**

This assignment is an opportunity for students to critically examine the role of the mass media in the world around them and to document that examination in a creative and critical way.

Throughout the term, students are required to explore the impact of the mass media on the development of individual, local, regional, and national identities. Students should ensure they examine all forms of media, including print, audio, visual, and digital, and they should assess the interrelationship of these forms and the interests of power. The goal of the assignment is for students to become attuned to the interpenetration of the mass media, marketing, and consumption.

Students may design their journal as best suits their interests and/or needs. Some students may wish to keep a visual record (e.g. a collage, painting, or video) of their observations and analysis; others may choose a verbal record (e.g. blogs, poetry, or a column for the student paper). Some may choose a combination of a range of media for expression.

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

The journal will be submitted 4 times in the semester and each submission will be worth 5 marks.