COURSE CODE: ISC2337  
COURSE TITLE: Special Topics in Social Communications I: Media and Public Opinion: A Philosophical Approach  
CREDITS: 3cr.  
SESSION: May/June, 2015  
PROFESSOR(S): Stuart Chambers, Ph.D.

**DESCRIPTION**

The course deals primarily with two aspects of mass media: (1) the philosophico-ethical foundations and normative assumptions that undergird media opinion; and (2) the role that the media plays in shaping public opinion. Philosophical foundations have a direct impact on the type of message being promoted by journalists, news broadcasters, and television personalities; hence, mass media functions as a form of social communication through its ability to influence individual and societal perceptions of reality. To demonstrate this connection between philosophico-ethical principles, mass media, and public perception, contemporary social issues and case studies will be examined at the local, national, and international level.

The influence of mass media on society will also be demonstrated in both theoretical and practical terms during class discussions. Particular emphasis will be placed on the following topics: reason and intuition; truth telling and truth distortion; populism and authenticity; liberalism and free speech; neoconservative media; media stereotypes concerning multiculturalism and Islam; media exaggerations of risk or harm; war and media spin; and social justice and journalism.

**OBJECTIVES**

Students are expected to: understand how the media functions as a form of social communication; recognize how public perception and reality are shaped by mass media; and understand not only what is being said in the media, but also how it is being said.

**WORKLOAD**

On average, two readings must be completed per class.

**ASSESSMENT**

The class assignments are as follows: midterm exam (30%); article analysis (30%); final exam (40%).

**MANDATORY READINGS**


**OTHER READINGS**

All other editorials, opinion pieces, and news items from Canadian, American, or British sources appear online and are mandatory reading for the midterm and final exam.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**


Please read this information on intellectual integrity (with resources regarding plagiarism and other forms of fraud): [http://ustpaul.ca/en/registrars-services-academic-fraud_1408_783.htm](http://ustpaul.ca/en/registrars-services-academic-fraud_1408_783.htm)

For examples of plagiarism see: [http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf](http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf)

Revision of marks: Please see the appropriate section in the academic regulations (8.10 Revision of Grades and Appeals)

Students must complete all assignments during the allocated time as per the schedule provided in this course outline, and in accordance with the final exam date. Failure to complete any of the in-class assignments will result in a mark of zero being awarded. Failure to complete either the mid-term or final exam will similarly result in a zero mark.
Learning support
Students who require accommodations or academic support because of a physical or learning disability, or any condition that affects their ability to learn, are invited to register with ACCESS SERVICE:
In person: University Centre 339
Telephone: 613-562-5976
TTY: 613-562-5214
E-mail: adapt@uottawa.ca
Web: http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/access/

Students can then meet with an Access Service specialist to identify their individual needs and to discuss appropriate interventions.

IMPORTANT Deadlines for requesting accommodations for:

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<tr>
<th>Quizzes, tests, mid-terms, deferrals</th>
<th>FINALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 day rule</td>
<td>FALL SESSIONS: November 15th</td>
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<td>WINTER SESSIONS: March 15th</td>
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<td>(excluding holidays and the day of the exam)</td>
<td>SPRING/SUMMER SESSIONS: 7 day rule</td>
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http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/access/students/adapted-exam-procedures.php

Student Success Centre (SSC)
The Student Success Centre (SSC) is your best resource for all your academic needs. Our counsellors and student-mentors provide you with the tools and strategies to ensure that you are successful in achieving your academic, professional and personal objectives.

Student Mentors
A team of student-mentors is available to support you as you get acquainted with research methods at the university level. The team will share with you, through workshops, study groups or one-on-one meetings, tips, guidance and resources to help you acquire the know-how for a positive university experience.

Academic Writing Help Centre
Writing advisors will offer you assistance in organizing, presenting and correcting your papers and avoid plagiarism. These sessions will be offered through one-on-one meetings.

Workshops on achieving academic success
Workshops especially designed to address questions and concerns such as stress management, budgeting, time management, and your exam preparation are offered. Please see our student-mentors.

The Student Success Centre (SSC) is located in rooms 40 and 42 Guigues Hall.
Telephone number: (613) 236-1393, extension 2640, e-mail: redaction-writing@ustpaul.ca