

## **Media Images and Labor 37:575:394:02**

Thursdays, 8:40-11:40 a.m., Levin

**Instructor:** Nat T. Bender  
**Phone:** 908-377-0393  
**Email:** [nbender@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:nbender@newark.rutgers.edu)

Office hours after class

**Media images of work, workers and workers' organizations in news and popular media.** In this class students will learn to "read" media tracts in print and electronic communication to critically review constructed meaning and analyze intended impact.

### **Specific Learning objectives:**

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate a functional understanding of critical theory of propaganda in mass media and how that influences how media characterize workers; particularly those who exercise collective action in labor unions or social movements.

### **Questions explored will be:**

- How does the structure of corporate media organizations, particularly media consolidation, impact the content and scope of issues discussed?
- What is the political economy of news and entertainment media and how does that influence the creation of content and meaning?
- What assumptions must media workers internalize to succeed commercially and how do those assumptions impact their coverage, questions, critique and analysis of news events or direction of creative projects?

Student learning will be assessed primarily by an exam covering readings, assignments and group exercises.

**There are four sessions for this class and a final exam date.** It is imperative that you attend all five sessions. If you have a serious emergency such as an automobile accident or a hospitalization, you will need to bring documentation of that emergency, and then undertake extra credit work.

### **Grading will be based on participation and the final exam.**

- 25 points. Attendance and participation in group exercises done in class. Knowledge of readings and course concepts demonstrated through discussion, group leadership, and contributions in group exercises.
- 25 points. One homework assignment, and
- 50 percent. Final exam on Dec 14 (25% written exam; 25% group project presentation)

There also will be an opportunity for extra credit. (Up to 5 points additional credit).  
**Expected behavior:** Please arrive on time and stay until the class ends.

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### Session I – Oct. 31, 2013

**News videos:** Who killed the Twinkie?

**Qualitative content analysis introduction** (Bruno)

**Economic arguments introduction** (Kumar)

**Assignment part 1:** Identify article and media ownership and post to Sakai bulletin board before Nov. 14 class (5 points)

**Group Assignment:** assign one of Kumar's economic arguments to each group to do short group presentation next week.

**Read for Session II** (Reading is available on Sakai)

Kumar, *Outside the Box*. Chapter 3. Pages 59-88. "Us" and "Them": The Nationalist Narrative in Network Television News.

Bruno. *Evidence of Bias in the Chicago Tribune Coverage of Organized Labor. A Quantitative Study from 1991 to 2001*. Labor Studies Journal. Vol. 34. No. 3. Sept, 2009.

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### Session II: Nov. 7, 2013

**Critical practice:** Group presentation of economic arguments (Kumar)

**Critical practice:** Content analysis of print articles

*(Apply Bruno methodology to supplied article. Short group presentation.)*

**Watch** *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism*. Director Robert Greenwald. Brave New Films.

**Individual Assignment part 2:** Recreate Bruno methodology for your article, submit first draft to me before 11/21 class (5 points) answering and assessing each item

**Group Assignment:** assign one of Chomsky/Herman's filters to each group to do short group presentation next week.

**Read for Session III** (Reading is available on Sakai):

Edward S. Herman, Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Chapter 1. A Propaganda Model.

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### Session III: Nov. 14, 2013

**Five Filters:** Group presentations. Lecture and discussion.

**Assignment 3:** Submit assignment based on whatever comments I give you to draft. Post to Sakai bulletin board before Dec. 5 class (15 points)

**Final exam group project prep:** Select one article from the articles analyzed by group participants for the assignment.

**Group assignment:** assign one of Martin's frames to each group to do short group presentation next week.

**Reading for Session IV** (Reading is available on Sakai):

Martin, *Framed*. Chapter 1. How Labor Gets Framed. Pages 1-20.

Park, Wright. *Giving Labor the Business? Changes in Business and Labor Reporting from 1980 to 2000*. Labor Studies Journal. Vol 32. No. 1. March 2007.

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### **Session IV: Nov. 21, 2013**

**Five Dominant Frames of Labor News:** Group presentations. Lecture and discussion.

**Final study guide review**

**Final exam group project prep time:** Group meeting two

**Extra credit assignment:** Select one of your classmates' articles/analysis from the Sakai bulletin board which is not being used for a group presentation and write an analysis of it in relation to Kumar, Chomsky/Herman and Martin as indicated in the final exam description.

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### **Session V: Dec. 5, 2013**

#### **Final Exam**

1. Group project presentations
2. Short answer/objective exam covers both what is discussed in class and what is in the reading.