

Media & Communication Studies (MCST) Courses

MCST1010 Media, Culture and Society

This is a survey course that introduces students to the study of media in contemporary culture and society. The course focuses on three main areas: production, content and reception. Students engage with a variety of concepts from the field of media studies, as well as with political-economic and social-cultural analyses of media. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST1030 History of Media

This course asks students to grapple with the relationship between humanity and technology. Students interpret the meanings of letters or records (histories of media) in broader political-economic and social-cultural contexts. By the end of the course, students have refined their understanding of media to include all major modalities, from cave art to cell phones. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST1070 Writing for Radio, Television and Film

This course teaches students how to successfully write for radio, television and film by introducing them to the key elements of production for each medium. Students become familiar with a broad range of standard formats, acquire fundamental industry terminology and closely examine a variety of creative techniques for producing professional copy. The course balances theory and practice, providing students with many concrete examples through which to learn the essential components of script writing, from commercials, PSAs and talk shows to documentaries and a host of fictional formats. Students demonstrate their understanding of important concepts and develop their own skills and talents by writing a series of short scripts for each medium. This is a writing-intensive course in which assignments are designed to cultivate the strengths and interests of each student, while always requiring the student-writer to consider the demands of form and content, as well as audience and marketability.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2010 Media Industries

This course provides an in-depth look at the industrial contexts within which media professionals work. Of primary concern are the ways in which a range of factors (i.e., organizational philosophies, economic structures, regulatory contexts, technological innovations and day-to-day business practices) work to determine the ways in which media organizations operate, as well as how such contexts shape the kinds of media texts these industries produce. Ultimately, the course introduces future media professionals to concepts necessary for understanding and navigating the contemporary media landscape.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2030 Media Texts

This course surveys key theories and methods for conducting analysis in relation to media texts. As such, this course tackles advanced questions of textual construction, meaning and interpretation. Students closely read various media texts from a variety of theoretical perspectives, such as semiotics, narrative theory and discourse analysis. Through the application of such theories and methods, students develop a conceptual vocabulary with which to articulate the myriad ways in which media texts create meaning, elicit responses, and mobilize feelings and attitudes within audiences. Students also think deeply about the role media texts play in the construction, maintenance and transformation of our social world.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2050 Media Audiences

This course asks students to think critically about how they (as well as their friends, families and communities) influence and are influenced by mediated messages. Students compare and contrast the behaviors of film, radio, television and internet audiences from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By reading and writing about media audiences in historical and contemporary contexts, students come to understand the effects of, as well as their own responses to, mediated messages.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2100 Children, Youth and Media

This course examines selected works aimed at children and young adults, and focuses on the interpretation and analysis of how media engages and affects young viewers. In addition to viewing selected works, students read what researchers and critics have to say in their analyses.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2200 Television Studies

This course offers critical perspectives on American television and its complex relationship to contemporary culture and everyday life. Specifically, the course covers several aspects that are crucial to understanding television as a cultural artifact: economic structure, aesthetic practices and technological developments, the consumption habits of audiences, government regulation, and social impact. Along the way, students gain a solid grasp of television's history and speculate about its future.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2300 American Film

This course explores major developments in the U.S. film industry during its first 100 years. The course is structured chronologically and focuses on moments in film history that are particularly relevant to the medium's development as an aesthetic form, industrial product and cultural practice. While a large portion of the course covers the Hollywood film industry, focus is also on the development of independent film in the U.S., which has always existed alongside the mainstream industry in various and ever-changing states of co-dependence. Students gain a strong appreciation for the wide variety of cinematic movements and styles that make up U.S. cinema, as well as a deep understanding of the way in which economic factors and industrial logic determine the kinds of films that are made. American cinema is also discussed in a global context, considering the ways in which international films and filmmakers have influenced, and been influenced by, the U.S. film industry.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2400 Writing for Publication

This course focuses on the various sectors and processes of the publishing industry, including (but not limited to) periodicals, book publishing, professional journals and online publishing. Throughout the term, students explore the various sectors of the industry and become adept at researching the market and identifying appropriate venues for a variety of works. Instruction begins with critical analysis of the market and develops into an in-depth discovery of the industry from the genesis of a piece to representation, acquisition, editing, distribution and marketing. Issues of copyright laws, collaboration and issuance of contract terms are central to the course. By the end of the term, students are challenged to assess their own writing in regard to audience, timeliness and marketability in today's publishing industry.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST2450 Writing in Digital Media

This course examines the theory and practice of writing in a digital age. Special emphasis is on ethics and the rhetorical conventions for online communication and the design of information, particularly for professional purposes. Topics include designing an effective blog, Web style and identity online, social media applications, copyright and authorship issues, and participating in collaborative online environments.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST3050 Media Identities

This course analyzes the ways in which media texts, from films to television shows, represent contemporary forms of social identity such as gender, race, class and sexual orientation. Specifically, students are encouraged to ponder the role contemporary media plays in constructing popular understandings of social identity, as well as how audiences use media representations to form their own sense of identity. Students engage with contemporary theoretical perspectives on media representation, evaluate current research in the field, and perform their own analyses based on this material.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST3090 Critical Perspectives on New Media

This course examines the rise of digital media technologies and their impact on contemporary culture. Topics include economic issues, such as how the new digital landscape contributes to the consolidation of media ownership; industrial issues, such as how digital technologies cultivate new kinds of relationships between media producers and consumers; social issues, such as how the internet and social media change the way that individuals interact with one another and re-imagine themselves; and political issues, such as digital technology's potential to break down some barriers (i.e., global, national, cultural) while erecting others (i.e., economic barriers related to access and the digital divide). Through critical engagement with these issues, students are encouraged to think deeply and ethically about the media's past, present and future.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, junior status. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST3100 Radio, Records and Popular Music

This course is divided into three interlocking sections: genres, industries and technologies. The genres section explores major forms of popular music, such as jazz, blues, country and rock. The industries section examines how the businesses of radio and music produce culture. The technologies section describes the gramophone, phonograph, radio, jukebox, tape recorder and digital files in their social and technological contexts. Borrowing from multiple fields, such as media studies, sociology, anthropology, history and musicology, the course situates these genres, industries, and technologies alongside several themes, including noise and silence, listening and recording, body and voice, regionalism and urbanism, race and class, and creativity and commerce.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST3200 History of Photography

This course covers important photographic inventions, from the camera obscura and the daguerreotype to the 35mm still camera and the Polaroid. Various formats and prints are studied from social-cultural perspectives, such as banquet camera photographs, cartes de visite, magic lantern slides, news photographs and picture postcards. The documentary quality of photographs is also addressed, with examples that draw from the works of Margaret Bourke-White, Dorothea Lang and Walker Evans, among others.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4010 Global Media

This course takes a critical look at the practices of media corporations, governments and audiences, mostly through the lenses of nationalism and imperialism. Emphasis is on the idea of globalization and its connection to contexts of reception at local, national and international levels. The course also addresses key themes such as trade, tradition, nation, globalism and localism. Students read political-economic and ethnographic analyses of cultural artifacts and production sites, such as Nike sneakers, Tokyo Disneyland, Al-Jazeera America, Brazilian telenovelas and Nigerian popular music, artifacts and sites that bear the imprints of transnational media corporations and regional audiences.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, senior status. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4050 Media & Popular Culture

This course surveys the ways in which everyday acts and artifacts communicate messages. Students interpret how fashion, food, fiction and other forms of communication influence and are influenced by social structures and global institutions. Students also consider the ways in which icons and symbols generate meaning for diverse audiences. Course readings address ideology, identity, community, subjectivity and the body, among other topics.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4100 Media Theory

This course examines the major critical, cultural and social theories of media that have emerged from various schools and sites, such as Birmingham, Chicago, Columbia, Frankfurt, Paris and Toronto. Representative theorists studied include Stuart Hall, Louis Wirth, Paul Lazarsfeld, Walter Benjamin, Paul Virilio and Marshall McLuhan, among others. Students are expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate multiple approaches to media studies.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, MCST1010. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4190 Media Research Methods

This course provides essential training on how scholars think by asking students to participate in the process of knowledge creation. Readings focus on interpretive and critical methods, from interviews and participant observations to historical and textual analyses that draw on Marxist, post-structural, psychoanalytic, feminist, queer, postmodern and post-colonial thought. This course is beneficial to students who wish to pursue research positions in the media industries, as well as for those who plan to continue their studies in graduate school.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, MCST1010 or COMM1010, senior status. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4200 Senior Seminar in Media & Communication Studies

This seminar draws on coursework from the major and synthesizes it in the form of one research-based project on an original topic. Projects focus on substantive issues and may take several forms, from traditional scholarship such as a research paper or a critical analysis, to creative work — film or television scripts, journalism, fiction, photography, music or any type of performance art. The seminar is a continuation of MCST4190 Media Research Methods.
Prerequisite(s): MCST4190, senior status. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours

MCST4300 Special Topics in Media Studies

This course focuses on a different area, issue or theme each year, depending on student interest. Possible topics under consideration include dead media, documentary media, Latin media, media philosophy, mediated bodies, mediated cities, mediated memories and mediated war.
Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, MCST1010, sophomore status. (OL)
Offered at Charlotte, Denver, Online, Providence
4.5 Quarter Credit Hours