

Media & Communication Studies (MCST) Courses

MCST1005 Introduction to Media & Communication Studies

This is a survey course that introduces students to the study of media across time and space. The course focuses on the histories of various modalities, from speech and print to television and social media. Students also engage with a variety of concepts from the field of media studies, as well as with political-economic and social-cultural approaches to media research.

Offered at Charlotte, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST1150 Introduction to Media Production

This production course introduces students to several modes of professional practice in the field of media production. Through the creation of short works of visual and auditory media, students acquire practical, professionally focused experience as well as the necessary technological skills to effectively communicate their message to an audience. With emphasis on the craft of storytelling, this course provides students with the foundational experience they need to engage in more complex, independent media productions.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1020 or ENG1024 or English placement.

Offered at Charlotte, Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST1210 Foundations of Digital Photography

This introductory course provides students with an overview of important concepts, terminologies and best practices associated with digital photography. Through a number of hands-on exercises, assignment work, and discussions and critique, students discover the many overlapping connections between image-based communication and personal expression. While learning how digital cameras work, students become immersed in a critical discourse which allows them to identify and create more successful imagery. Topics include portraiture, food and event-based photography, documentary and technological considerations.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1020 or ENG1024 or English placement.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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 (or concurrent). (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST2500 Digital Journalism

This course prepares students for reporting and delivering news stories. By researching, writing and reporting on newsworthy events, students assume the many responsibilities of a journalist in the 21st century: reporter, producer and content creator. Through both lecture and experiential coursework, students are trained in best practice techniques necessary for a career in professional journalism. Lessons include writing copy and recording voice tracks as well as video recording, editing and distribution — all of which culminate in the production of multimedia news packages.

Prerequisite(s): DME3300 or GDES3300 or MCST1150.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST2520 Introduction to Environmental Journalism

This course provides students with an opportunity to concentrate on environmental journalism for books, magazines, newspapers and websites. Exploring the genre, they learn how to write news and feature stories, as well as how to create multimedia packages. Topics also include developing sources, conducting interviews, crafting query letters and tailoring work to publications.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST2550 Introduction to Multimedia Storytelling

This course examines the practice of journalism and multimedia coverage in a digital age. Special emphasis is placed on preparing students to create content and to package news for a multi-platform audience. Topics include reporting and writing for the web; using photography, graphics, sound and videos to tell a story; designing and publishing online; and incorporating social media and networks.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST2610 Motion Picture Editing

Motion Picture Editing is a video post-production course which provides students with a thorough overview of non-linear editing software and techniques. Students work on a number of short video projects while gaining a thorough understanding of professional editing applications and their user-interfaces. Media management, post-production workflow, audio trimming, and mixing as well as color correction and file compression are studied.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST2650 Sound Production

This is an audio-based course that provides students with the necessary recording skills required to inform and entertain an audience sonically. While primarily focusing on the delivery of effective aural messages, students are responsible for the writing, recording, assembly and post-processing of short audio products such as podcasts and voice-over narration for television and film. Techniques in microphone usage, foley recording and sound design are introduced as students put the pieces together using a digital audio workstation.

Prerequisite(s): MCST1150.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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). 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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST3300 Hip-Hop Culture

Hip-Hop culture, over the course of its recognized existence, has given rise to much controversy, admiration and study. Now recognized as a global phenomenon that appeals to youth cultures, the Hip-Hop movement can be identified in nearly every aspect of human existence. Hip-Hop is also the subject of transnational dialogues about race, gender, sexual orientation, class, tradition and change. In the spirit of such dialogues, this course facilitates discussion and research about the creation, circulation and consumption of Hip-Hop culture. Course readings cover Hip-Hop's history from the African diaspora to contemporary influences around the world. Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, sophomore status.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST3400 Latinx Music Culture

This course traces the origins and evolutions of genres and styles of Latinx music in the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Through its chronological approach, the course places a significant emphasis on the geographies of Miami, San Antonio, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco as key sites of cultural production. Students consider the commercial appeal of crossover performers and independent musicians' approaches to folk and underground music. Throughout the course, students interpret the aesthetic, semantic, and symbolic properties of genres and styles such as Latin rock, salsa, and reggaeton, often in political and economic contexts. In the process, they are exposed to the stories of musicians, album producers, record shop owners, music critics, and radio DJs involved in the creation and circulation of Latinx music—all cultural workers with their own transnational, generational, socioeconomic, racial-ethnic, and gender-sexual identities.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, sophomore status.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST3600 Narrative Filmmaking

This course provides students the opportunity to collaborate on the production of a number of short films that explore fiction-based storytelling. Emphasis is on creating visual dynamism as students develop, write, direct and produce their own short films. Advanced techniques in lighting, cinematography and directing actors allow participants to create work of high-production value.

Prerequisite(s): MCST1150.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

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. Particular emphasis is placed 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 that bear the imprints of, on the one hand, transnational media corporations, and, on the other, regional audiences.

Prerequisite(s): ENG1021 or ENG1027, MCST1005 or MCST1010, senior status.

Offered at Charlotte, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, MCST1005 or MCST1010.

Offered at Charlotte, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, MCST1005 or MCST1010. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, MCST1005 or MCST1010, senior status. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

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, MCST1005 or MCST1010, sophomore status. (OL)

Offered at Charlotte, Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

MCST4400 Cinematic Lighting Studio

Lighting is explored as a narrative element in this advanced studio course. Students create short video sketches through their hands-on use of specialized tools, designed to produce the look of high-end cinematography. Through the analysis and reconstruction of various lighting studies from classic and contemporary films, techniques are put to practice in studio environments and field locations. Topics include how quality and placement of lights convey emotion, interview lighting, chromakeying and safety considerations.

Prerequisite(s): Junior status and two of the following production courses:

GDES3300, GDES3310, MCST1210, MCST2500 or MCST3600.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits