

# LMC 2400 Introduction to Media Studies

## Prerequisite

ENGL 1102

## Instructor

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she / her / hers

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Office hours: By appointment only.

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

## Course overview

In this course we will learn how to analyze and interpret media artifacts through a range of theoretical approaches. We will consider both the form and content of media artifacts, and take a critical approach to understanding embedded or emergent meanings, motivations, and representations in media. Course readings offer important concepts and vocabulary for analyzing media, and will be useful for understanding works of art and other cultural artifacts.

## Goals and objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will have developed the following skills:

- Broad understanding of the historical development and cultural impact of various media
- Theoretical tools for analyzing media texts critically
- Diverse vocabulary of formal and cultural elements of media and other cultural artifacts
- Ability to communicate analysis clearly and concretely through written and oral communication
- How to find and use scholarly research through GT library online resources

- Respectful, thoughtful, professional group discussion and collaboration
- Heightened awareness of how technologies impact, extend, and hinder information uses and behaviors based on race and culture in a variety of ways

## Course format

This is a seminar-style course. Discussion is a primary mode of instruction and learning. This necessitates that you have done the readings and approach discussions with a sense of curiosity and inquiry. If you don't do the readings, the course will suck and it will be your fault. It is also required for you to complete all written assignments to the best of your capacity – this is an essential practice of articulating your own thoughts. If you don't do the written assignments, you will fail the class and it will be your fault. Participation in in-class discussion allows you to explore the class readings and concepts with your peers and discover meanings and issues you would not discover on your own. In-class participation challenges you to question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations. I do not expect you to fully formed perfect understanding of each assigned reading, but I expect you to engage with each reading to the best of your ability, such as by asking questions, applying concepts to your own experiences, thinking of relevant examples or counter-examples, making connects or comparisons or contrasts to other concepts, etc.

Assigned readings should be done before class starts on the corresponding day on the syllabus. Assigned writings should be completed and turned in before class starts on the corresponding day on the syllabus.

## Schedule

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Read / Due before start of class</b>
1	Tue May 13	Course overview	
	Thu May 15	History of media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balbi &amp; Magaudda - A History of Digital Media – Chapter 1 – Why Study the History of Digital Media and How?</li> </ul>
2	Tue May 20	Medium & Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McLuhan – Medium is the Message</li> </ul>
	Thu May 22	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
3	Tue May 27	Encoding / Decoding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hall – Encoding / Decoding</li> </ul>
	Thu May 29	Bank Holiday – no class	Media analysis due
4	Tue Jun 3	Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hall – Representation and the Media</li> </ul>
	Thu Jun 5	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
5	Tue Jun 10	Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barsam and Monahan - Looking at Movies – Chapter 1</li> </ul>

	Thu Jun 12	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
6	Tue Jun 17	Orientalism and Colonialism in Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranji – Traces of Orientalism in Media Studies</li> <li>• Decolonial Aesthetics</li> </ul>
	Thu Jun 19	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
7	Tue Jun 24	Culture industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susen - Bourdieu and Adorno on Transformation of Culture in Modern Society</li> <li>• Bourdieu - Cultural Production</li> <li>• Adorno and Horkheimer - The Culture Industry</li> </ul>
	Thu Jun 26	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
8	Tue Jul 1	Aura, political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W Benjamin – Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction</li> <li>• W Benjamin – Theses on the Philosophy of History</li> </ul>
	Thu Jul 3	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
9	Tue Jul 8	Aura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bolter et al. – Reality Media – Chapter 8 – The Myth of Total VR</li> <li>• Bazin – Myth of Total Cinema</li> </ul>
	Thu Jul 10	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
10	Tue Jul 15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R Benjamin – The New Artificial Intelligentsia</li> </ul>
	Thu Jul 17	Media exemplars analysis	Media analysis due
11	Tue Jul 22	Summary : Last day of class	
	Thu Jul 24	No class	
	Tue Jul 29	No class	
	Thu Jul 31	No class	
	... Aug 5	Instructor must submit final grades	

## Policies and Resources

### Participation and Attendance

Class attendance and participation is mandatory\*.

Participation throughout the semester is part of the final grade for this class. Students are expected to participate in discussions and in giving and receiving feedback on their work with their peers. Students should try to foster a supportive, inclusive, welcoming space for

all their peers to participate in - this might mean talking a little more or talking a little less than your default.

Participation in class discussion is imperative because it allows you to explore the concepts collaboratively, and in the process, discover meanings and issues that you probably would not discover on your own. Participation in class also challenges you to continuously question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations.

There will be ways to participate on a smaller scale through smaller groups too. Part of participation is also helping make the class a supportive community for your peers to share their tentative thoughts.

\*Stay home and rest if you are sick! This is important for your health and the health of everyone else in the classroom. Please send an email to the instructor and GTA to let us know.

## Information for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at Georgia Institute of Technology will find programs designated to coordinate academic accommodations and promote access to all phases of university life. Such programming is coordinated through the ADAPTS-Disability Services.

The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is a functional part of the Office of the Dean of Students. ADAPTS-Disability Services Program personnel oversee and coordinate programs to ensure accessibility to students with disabilities on an individual basis. The Georgia Institute of Technology strives to provide equal access to a college education as well as support to students with disabilities in their experience in the university community.

More information is available at: <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>

## Statement on Inclusion and Diversity

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

We may discuss topics that challenge you to re-evaluate your assumptions or beliefs, which some people may find uncomfortable. Our classroom environment may not always

be comfortable, but we all have a shared responsibility to ensure that our classroom environment is always **respectful**.

## Mental health resources

Your health is more important than this class. If you are experiencing anxiety or depression or a medical, personal, or family crisis, or if you just feel overwhelmed, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. Everybody needs help sometimes, and being in school can be a personally challenging time. You are not alone, and many of us are available to be sympathetic listeners and to share our own strategies for coping with stressful situations. In addition, professional counselors and medical practitioners have expertise that can be very helpful. Here is a list of resources: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/get-help-now>.

## Writing and speaking support at the Communication Center

Alumni consistently emphasize the value of presentation skills for success in digital media careers. Everyone is encouraged to maximize their writing and speaking skills so that you can best convey your great thoughts and ideas. The Communication Center (<https://www.commlab.gatech.edu/home>) offers student support for communication skills. You have great thoughts and ideas, and communication skills can help you effectively share them with others.

## Sharing of work

Participation in the course implies permission for sharing your work done in this class with others:

1. In this class, for presentations, feedback, and critique – with your name associated with the work
2. With future students, if your work is a good example that can help other students learn – without your name associated with the work
3. In a public teaching portfolio for the instructor and/or GTA, to showcase the wonderful outcomes of the course – without your name associated with the work

If you are not comfortable with this for any reason, please let me know. I will respect your wishes regarding #2 and #3. I am not able to accommodate assignment privacy for #1 for pedagogical reasons, so please make sure that any work you turn in, you are comfortable sharing with the entire class. Unless I am informed by you in writing (email) that you do not want your work shared with others, I will assume that it is permissible to share your work in ways #1, #2, and #3 above. Also, let me know if you DO want your name shared in cases #2

and #3. I err on the side of protecting student privacy, but I am more than happy to give credit where credit is due.

## Honor Code Statement

Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code (<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code> ).

Have you heard the saying, "Good artists borrow, great artists steal?"

**Don't** steal anyone's work.

**Do** get inspiration from other people's work, and adapt it in your own way to make it your own by adding some of yourself to it.

**Do** cite your sources. You can cite your classmate's sketch from last week. You can cite some example code you found online. You can cite our wonderful TA who helped you figure something out. You can say you got help from a classmate. But be clear about what parts you took from someone else, and what parts you changed or added. Scholars are always building on others' work and citing others' work.

**In this class, you are required to give credit to others by citing their work.**

## Generative AI Tools Policy

Assignments are a form of communication. The assignments in this class are meant to be opportunities to demonstrate and evaluate your learning. They enable receiving useful feedback from peers and the instructor, to help you learn and improve on your skills and work. **Using automated tools to do most of the assignment for you can break that feedback loop, transforming the assignments from useful to busy work – Ultimately this is just harming *your* learning, wasting *your* educational opportunity in this program.**

Generative AI tools are based on matching patterns on past materials. They are not actively thinking/reasoning like a human does. (A metaphor: if you asked me to design a bridge without any engineering training, and I drew up some blueprints based on a bunch of designs of bridges through Google, it might look pretty cool and it might even stand up! But we probably wouldn't build that exact bridge because I didn't follow any of the reasoning and requirements that have been developed in structural and civil engineering. In fact, building that bridge might be extremely dangerous, and turning in that bridge design for an assignment might deserve a failing grade.)

Assignments in this class may not always feel straightforward, because learning to think through these kinds of assignments is part of getting a top-notch education! There can be temptation to turn to an automated AI tool as soon as you hit a challenge. It's OK to sit for a while and be unsure, or work on something else for a while and come back, or talk to a person. I'd rather you talk to your peers first for ideas and brainstorming before turning to ChatGPT.

That being said, I know that tools like ChatGPT and generative AI can be useful for certain types of tasks, or as resources to help in writing. Therefore, for any assignment for which you use ChatGPT or any other generative AI, you must both (1) cite the tools you use, as you would cite a research paper or other resource that you used in your work, and (2) add a section titled "Generative AI Usage" documenting how you used the tool(s). Include transcripts of LLM text or dialogues, and any iterations of generative image, sound, or other media from/with AI, etc., to thoroughly document your process of using generative AI in producing the output of your project.

In general, you will not be penalized for using ChatGPT and other generative AI tools **if you disclose how you used it**. Of course, low quality assignments will still receive lower grades. However, writing a false statement about your use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools, or turning in a document that was completely written by ChatGPT or an AI tool, are likely violations of the academic honor code (plagiarism, false claims of performance, deliberate falsification), and will result in a 0 grade and a possible referral to the Office of Student Integrity.

Likely useful ways of using generative AI:

- Helping to re-word or re-structure a sentence or paragraph to help you more clearly convey an idea
- Translating languages (you may need to double check manually for errors)
- Finding a specific resource/paper you already know about but can't remember the name of, then referring to the original source
- Providing a template for a paragraph
- Asking it to critique your writing
- Cut down words you've written to meet a word count or page limit.

Likely counterproductive ways of using generative AI:

- Writing the assignment for you and turning it in – this is likely a violation of the academic honor code and will be dealt with as such

- Citing factual statements from ChatGPT – ChatGPT can “hallucinate,” or create convincing sounding facts and citations, and pass them off as real
- Finding new sources and papers – the hallucination problem again
- Using ChatGPT as a general search engine – the hallucination problem again, plus the normative biases of what ChatGPT has in its training data vs. what is left out
- Brainstorming – Generative AI tools are trained based on examples from the real world; they are just rehashing examples of what they have previously seen in the real world; thus they are inherently normative. Brainstorming with a generative AI tool is a great way to come up with a lot of tired old ideas that have already been shared a million times. Your goal in brainstorming is to come up with many ideas in the hopes of finding some interesting and relatively unique ideas, based in the collective or individual perspectives of you and your teammates and all the contextual knowledge you have built up about what makes sense for the project you all are doing.

**Remember, your perspective and voice matter, and your mind, body, and emotions offer exquisitely complex and sophisticated capabilities that you can use to do things no generative AI can do. In this class, I would much rather you put forth a unique, interesting, and flawed piece of work, and your own sincere perspective and in-progress thoughts, rather than aiming for something generically normatively 'good' with generative AI tools.**

Please also refer to Georgia Tech Office of Information Technology’s AI guidelines and policies: <https://oit.gatech.edu/ai>