

Media Literacy  
Syllabus  
Ms. Gina Bailiff  
2015-2016

## PURPOSE:

The primary focus of this course is to examine various forms of media in popular culture and to understand their impact on culture, in terms of both their advantages and their limitations. Students will be encouraged to think critically about how media are used to influence, shape, and manipulate public opinion and attitudes. More specifically, the following objectives will be taught through projects, tests, reading, writing, journaling, and oral presentations: critical analysis of various forms of mass media (development of critical reading and viewing skills); to discover how “facts” can be manipulated to shape perception; to create an awareness of the different types of media, their historical backgrounds and various purposes; and an understanding of the technical aspects of film (camera, light, and sound).

## TEXTS AND MEDIA RESOURCES:

A great deal of the material in class will be articles, essays, handouts, and videos taken from the Center for Media Literacy and the Media Education Foundation as well as other sources. Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, advertisements from a variety of sources, recordings of television programs and commercials, documentaries or instructive videos related to media topics are also essential components of the course.

Other texts include:

*Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition* (Alfred Rosa and Paul Eschholz)

*The Riverside Reader* (Joseph Trimmer)

*Understanding the Film* (Jan Bone and Ron Johnson)

*Understanding Mass Media* (edited by Bill Jawitz)

## FILMS:

Many of the films or film excerpts that are shown in class will be selected from the attached list. Because of time constraints, all of these films may not be used. I have also included the director and film rating. This list does not include educational videos that may be used to enhance understanding of the various units of study. Educational videos may examine political, social, and economic factors related to the media and show clips or segments from film, television, magazines, and other media that are part of popular culture.

## POSSIBLE BOOKS FOR SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR):

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lois Lowry's series: *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger*, *Son*

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*; *The Lord of the Rings* series

Karl Weber and Participant Media's *Food Inc.: A Participant Guide*

Assigned book from departmental reading list

## TOPICS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Specific examples will be used to examine the following topics. For each form of media, we will evaluate: 1. characteristics of that particular form of media; 2. how that form is used to communicate in our culture and its impact, both positive and negative; and 3. advantages and limitations of such a medium.

commercial and magazine advertising

comics and animation

censorship in relation to media, books and films

newspaper and television news

corporate control, responsibility and issues related to media

television programs

music

film

Internet and social media

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

homework

class work (both individual and group)

essays

oral presentations

class discussion and seminar

projects (both individual and group)

media circle assignments

tests

quizzes

critiques

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

## GRADING POLICY:

Students will access individual grades through the program Parent Portal.

In addition to the course requirements outlined above, students will receive two participation grades each nine week grading period, one at midterm and one at the end of term. This is an extremely important component of class because this work is intended to prepare students for the course requirements as outlined above in the syllabus. Failure to complete or put effort into daily participation

assignments may impact other work required in class. The participation grade includes two components:

1. All daily class work and/or homework is included in the participation grade.  
To ensure that students are keeping up with assigned work throughout the grading period, there will be random checks on some assignments.
2. Being on time and prepared for class as well as staying on-task during class is also included in the participation grade. Students are expected to bring writing utensils, texts, paper and notebook, and any required work for the day as part of the participation grade.

If a student is absent or needs to check on assignments, it is his or her responsibility to make up missing work in accordance with the deadlines outlined in the syllabus. If there are questions about an assignment or additional materials that the student needs, arrangements need to be made for a time to come after school. Instructional time will not be used to do this.

**Late work policy:** Please see the Policy for High School English Department which is posted on my web page. This is extremely important to your child's success.

## MATERIALS:

- \* Notebook
- \* Textbook or classroom handouts
- \* Students are expected to bring a notebook, pen or pencil, and the appropriate text to class every day. This is crucial to classroom participation. If unprepared, this will affect the student's participation grade.

## CLASSROOM RULES:

- \* Come on time to class and find a seat before the bell rings.
- \* Be fully present in class. Reading materials unrelated to class, doing homework for another class, napping, talking to friends, passing notes, playing on the calculator, tardies, etc. will cost participation points.
- \* You are responsible for and expected to give your very best work.
- \* Listen.
- \* Respect the dignity and worth of every person in the classroom. This includes your peers, your teacher, and the perspectives of those individuals studied in class. Use "I" statements in class discussion.

# Film List

Julian Amyes: *Great Expectations* (Not Rated, BBC video)

Gillian Armstrong: *Little Women* (PG)

Richard Attenborough: *Gandhi* (PG)

Brad Bird: *Iron Giant* (PG)

Jeffrey Blitz: *Spellbound* (G)

Steve Box and Nick Park: *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (G)  
*Wallace and Gromit in Three Amazing Adventures* (NR)

James Cameron: *Avatar* (PG-13)

Godfrey Reggio: *Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation* (G)

Alfonso Cuaron: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (PG)

Alfonso Cuaron: *Gravity* (PG-13)

Robert Enrico: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (Not Rated)

Chris Eyre: *Smoke Signals* (PG-13)

Victor Fleming and George Cukor: *The Wizard of Oz* (PG)

Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske: *Alice in Wonderland* (G)

Davis Guggenheim: *An Inconvenient Truth* (PG)

Peter Jackson: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (PG-13)

Steve James: *Hoop Dreams* (PG-13)

Robert Kenner: *Food, Inc.* (PG)

Micha X. Peled: *China Blue* (Not Rated)

Jacques Perrin: *Winged Migration* (G)

Harold Ramis: *Groundhog Day* (PG)

Godfrey Reggio: *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* (Not Rated)

Thomas Riedelsheimer: *Rivers and Tides* (Not Rated)

Phil Alden Robinson: *Field of Dreams* (PG)

Peter Weir: *The Truman Show* (PG)

Orson Welles: *Citizen Kane* (PG)

