

ANT 324 - Anthropology of Contemporary "News"

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to help students become familiar with current events and become proficient in accessing information, as well as understanding and developing opinions about current world issues through the use of online newspapers, the world wide web, and any other sources of virtual information. Students will develop the skills needed to critically evaluate news stories and articles, as well as compare different sources of information. Furthermore, they will apply these skills and build their knowledge of media through online discussions, written texts, and group presentations.

Students will have the opportunity to explore various world issues such as: new patterns of global inequality, war and neo-colonialism, health and globalization, social justice and indigeneity, religious fundamentalism, gender inequalities, and biotechnologies and society.

Course Goals Relating to Constructivist Pedagogy:

1. Allow students to become updated and familiar with world issues through personal access and reflection.
2. Encourage students to apply the tools of critical analysis in their interaction with news text and media.
3. Provide students the opportunity to collaboratively construct opinions and develop deeper understandings of important world issues and their impact on the average individual.



Role of Technology:

Technology will assist students in accessing current events through online mediums. In addition, the use of a learning management system (LMS) such as KeC will provide a tool for students to discuss, debate, and build knowledge with one another.

For the purposes of this course, students will be required to make use of the following technology forms:

- Online newspapers
- Current information on the World Wide Web
- The KeC Learning Management System (Discussions and Responses)
- Online Videos
- TV news
- Blogging Tools/Website-building tools
- Use of "typewithme" (an online collaboration tool) will be introduced and encouraged; **Teams may suggest an alternate collaborative tool if they wish*



Meeting Schedule:

The class will be conducted weekly in a 3-hour face-to-face setting. Students must prepare for lessons by selecting current event articles and keeping up-to-date. There is also an online component to supplement the class learnings and increase the opportunity for further discussions outside of class. While students are expected to participate in online discussions, they may wish to exceed the required expectation in order to further their own, or their peers, understanding of the material.

Students will be divided into 5-6 teams of 4-5 people for in-class and online purposes.

F2F Classes - Each Week for 3 hours:

- 1 hour - Lecture on "Tool of Critical Analysis of the Week" + Discussion + Sharing of examples (may include written, audio, or visual examples)
- 0.5 hour - Group collaboration + discussion
- 1 hour - 10 minute presentations by each group on their critical analysis (opportunity to invite questions and discussion from classmates)

Online Component - Each Week:

- Throughout the course each group will represent an "expert" on a certain world issue
 - Each group member must post one article/story related to their world issue on the group's thread each week
- Group members will read each others contributions and post comments or questions creating a discussion within their thread
- Each student will be asked to read at least one other post from any of the other groups and write an editorial response (using the "Tool of Critical Analysis" of that week)
 - *Optional: Students may continue to visit other group's threads in order to enrich their understanding of other current events, and have the opportunity to comment or ask questions to the "experts"*

Course Content & Weekly Schedule:

These topics will be included in the 6 weeks of the course. Each week will focus on one tool and be examined in-class, as well as online during discussions.

Tools of Critical Analysis:

Week 1: Bias (Author + News Provider + Country, etc)

Week 2: Censorship (when, why, what, etc)

Week 3: Evaluation of Credibility of Source/Author

Week 4: Where/How Accessed?

Week 5: Analysis of Content (validity of arguments/points presented)

Week 6: Respectful Disagreement + Identifying Gaps in Information
(Follow-up Questions)

Assignments

1. Individual Journals

Students are asked to keep a personal journal or log in order to document their learning throughout the course (students may chose to do this through as a blog, word document, hand-written notebook, etc). Students should reflect on any changing views or perspectives throughout, discussing class lectures and online discussions. This journal will be helpful in writing their reaction papers in Week 5.

- 2. (10%) Group Facilitation (online postings) + discussions**
- 3. (20%) Group Presentations (5 total, beginning during 2nd week)**
- 4. (25%) Individual Editorial Responses (6 total);
Group Editorial Responses (6 total)**
- 5. (20%) Reaction Paper + Self-Assessment (Due in Week 5)**
 - Include an explanation of, after the duration of this course, where you now prefer to get you news and why. Incorporate learnings from the course and how this preference may have changed throughout the course.
- 6. (25%) Final Group Project - A summary of your learning about your World Issue and the tools for critical analysis applied to your learning - (Due in Week 6)**
 - Presented in a creative way (website/Powerpoint, etc)
 - Students will find it helpful to look back at their journals in order to see how their understanding of the content has changed over the course

Resources

- Students will be responsible for finding different news sources
- The instructor will provide resources (articles, research papers, chapters from texts, etc) as examples or supplements to illustrate the "Tool of Critical Analysis of the Week" at each class meeting. These resources will be available online prior to class.
- During Week 4 and 5, the instructor will invite a guest reporter and a production manager for a local news agency. Students will have the opportunity to pose questions and hold interactive discussions with these guests in order to further deepen their understandings of contemporary news.

