Journalism 571

Spring 2011

Faith, Values and the Mass Media

Prof. Cecile S. Holmes

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Office: Room 4004

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Office Hours:

11 a.m.-noon Tuesdays

2-4 p.m. Wednesdays

3:30-4:30 p.m. Thursdays

***Required Readings:***

***“Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media”***

***1-supplied by the professor***

***2-Textbook: American Grace: How Religion Unites and Divides Us***

***Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell***

***3-Handouts and readings from Religion As News: Selections taken from book provided by the professor. Other handouts as provided by the professor***

**DESCRIPTION**: An upper-division survey of how faith and values shape the media and of how media covers faith and values in the United States. This course may include guest speakers, field trips, films, library or online research and class discussion in addition to papers and projects. It will offer an introduction to how the American media -- in areas from public relations to news stories to advertising --reflect and are covering the growing religious changes in the United States. Students will discuss common misconceptions and stereotypes related to different faith groups and how the media deal with those stereotypes.

**ATTENDANCE**: Since we have only 28 class sessions, attendance is very important. You may miss no more than two of those 28 classes without providing a doctor’s excuse and pass this course. In addition, you must meet required deadlines for journals, papers and the final presentation or you will not pass this course.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Grades will be based on class participation; completion of required readings, papers and writing assignments (including a daily journal for the days we have class) and one final in-class presentation. When we have a guest speaker, ask questions. When we see a film or video, express your opinion during class discussion. Knowledge of the English language, attention to spelling and grammar, AP style (when applicable) and other basics also are important.

**GROUND RULES:**

I will not ask you to do anything that might conflict with your personal religious beliefs. At the same time, I ask you to do your best to keep an open mind towards other religious groups, especially when we visit a house of worship or are discussing a faith group in relation to religion and media. It is also completely unacceptable to make inappropriate remarks regarding someone else’s faith or practice. We will discuss media coverage of religion and faith-related issues just as we might discuss any other topic. I want to know what you think, but I also expect you to respect others’ religious beliefs, even when you completely disagree.

Grades are based on a numerical scale. An A is 93-100, a B+ is 86-92, a B is 80-85, a C+ is 76-79, a C is 71-75; a D is 68-70. Anything under 68 is an "F."

**GRADING:**

Daily journal, 25 percent of final grade.

2 Writing Assignments, 30 percent of final grade

Class participation (Discussing readings, asking questions of speakers) 20 percent.

Final Presentation/ Oral presentation and three-page typewritten guide to chosen topic/ 25 percent. (Topics must be approved by the professor.

**Graduate Students**: In addition to the daily journal, in-class writing assignment and final presentation, graduate students must complete additional assignments. Graduate students must write one short critical papers, outside of class, exploring media coverage of a faith and values issue. The first paper must be eight pages and explore how two national newspapers cover religion. The second will be six pages and will explore television coverage of a faith and values issue. A graduate student may discuss teaching the class for extra credit.) The critical papers and/or class teaching will count more heavily than the other assignments, except for the final presentation.

**\*\*\*This syllabus may be revised in the course of the semester or at the instructor's discretion. In particular, the scheduling of videos, field trips and guest speakers (based upon their schedules and availability) may change. Please check your email regularly before attending class.**

**PURPOSE:** My goal is to help you see how the world around you is changing, how the religious landscape is changing and how that influences journalism, advertising and public relation, and how it influences American public life.. I urge you to think creatively and "outside of the box." Participation in classes, including field trips is significant. If your papers or projects fall short of the mark, your class participation might help you achieve a better grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

***Part I The Intersection of faith, values and media***

JAN. 11 Cancelled/Snow

JAN. 13 Introduction

JAN. 18 Religion in Public Life

Read Chaps. 1 & 2 in textbook

JAN. 20 Bridging the Gap

Read Bridging the Gap report, provided by professor

2 student discussion leaders

JAN. 22 Media Coverage of Religion/Video

Read Chapters 3 and 4 in textbook

JAN. 25 Media Coverage of Religion/Video (cont.)

“ Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero”

First writing assignments.

1-Don’t forget to write in your journal daily beginning after Jan. 18 class. (You should write 150 to 200 words per day and keep this file electronically. You’ll turn in an electronic version and a hard copy of your work.)

2-Then, research the impact of Sept. 11, 2001 online

and consider what you learned through the film. Also review the current controversy over building a mosque and Muslim community center near Ground Zero

3-Then, write a 400-word response paper.

Tell me what you learned

How religion impacts public life

How the media could cover it better and more thoroughly

Due at start of class on Thurs., JAN 27

We will talk about your thoughts as class discussion that day.

***Part II Religion & Media: Partners and Adversaries***

FEB. 1 Religion in Pop Culture/Focus on Film

Read handouts

2 student discussion leaders

FEB. 3 Religion in Pop Culture/Focus on TV

Read handouts

2 student discussion leaders

FEB. 8 ***Research Day/No class***

***Second assignment***

***1-Pick one of the 3 following films.***

***“Avatar”***

***“Signs”***

***“The Social Network”***

***“Legend of the Guardians”***

***2-Watch on DVD or in a movie theater***

Assignment: Write a 600-word paper to turn in on

Thursday, Feb. 10

The paper should explore the film's religious values. Give me your opinion on

whether those values (as depicted in characters, lines, cinematography)

are like traditional religious values or different from such values. Tell me

about the film's symbolism. Convince me that this film

is --or is not -- worth watching if one is interested in religion and media.

FEB. 10 Media Coverage of Religion on TV

Read Chaps. 5 & 6 in text

2 student discussion leaders

FEB. 15 Religion and Issues in Public Health/Ailcia Best, graduate student

FEB. 17 Media Coverage of Religion/R&E Newsweekly

Read handouts from professor

2 student discussion leaders

FEB. 22 R&E Newsweekly continued

FEB. 24 ISLAM Overview

Read handouts from professor

2 student discussion leaders

MAR. 1 African-American Islam/Tentative Field Trip

MAR. 3 Religion coverage/Magazines

Copies provided by professor

3 student discussion leaders

MAR. 6-13 Spring Break, No classes

***Part III Religion & Media/Public Relations and Advertising***

MAR. 15 Religion coverage/Newspapers

Read assigned handouts from professor

3 student discussion leaders

MARCH 17 Public relations and advertising for religious clients

Geah Pressgrove, Guest speaker (tentative)

MAR. 22 Religion & Advertising

Karen Mallia, Guest speaker

***Part IV Religion and American Culture***

MAR. 24 Religion, media, music

Read Chaps 7 & 8 in textbook

2 student discussion leaders

MAR. 29 Minority religions in the U.S.

Read Chapter 9 in book

1 discussion leader

Due: Presentation proposals. Students submit 1 to 2 written paragraphs describing proposed final presentation. Professor approves/disapproves and returns paragraphs with notes, suggestons at next class

MAR. 31 Field Trip Hindu Temple

APRIL 5 Religion On the Internet (overview)

Read Chaps 10, 11 and 12 in textbook

3 student discussion leaders

April 7 Religion & Public Affairs

Bring in 2 articles from the Internet or a Newspaper or Magazine

Related to politics and religion

April 12 Presentations begin

April 14 Presentations continue

April 19 Presentations

April 21 Presentations