**Understanding Media   
NPHS Syllabus**

Instructor: Lisa St. John   
Email: lstjohn@newpaltz.k12.ny.us  
Phone: 845.2456.4175 X 69535

[*The effect of the mass media is not to elicit belief but to maintain the apparatus of addiction.*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/christophe366672.html?src=t_mass_media) *-Christopher Lasch*

*“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”  
 –Robin Williams*

Introduction

Welcome to Understanding Media. We are going to explore and critically analyze media in its many forms. Media—from the Latin ‘medium’– meaning middle. The media is the communication mechanism, ‘in the middle’, that conveys aspects of the world and society to the receiver/audience.[[1]](#footnote-1) 'The media refers to the different channels we use to communicate information in the everyday world. Media is the plural of medium (of communication), and the main media are:  
 Print  
 -books  
 -magazines  
 -newspapers  
 Radio  
 Music/Recordings  
 Film   
 Television  
 Internet  
 Video Games

Sample Daily Procedure

Introduction of topic and new vocabulary  
Daily Question  
Group work and/or reading to find preliminary answers  
Class discussion  
Individual writing and/or homework assignment and/or quiz

Evaluation

Participation (on time attendance and collaboration)

Homework

Quizzes

Reaction Papers

Presentations

Research Paper  
Midterm Exam  
Final Exam

Participation:

It is extremely disrespectful to be late (tardy) for class. Good attendance, on task behavior, and punctuality will be rewarded. Students receive 5 points per day for participating in class. If a student is absent, tardy, or non-participatory, they will receive a zero for that day. Zeros can be made up by making up time with the teacher during study hall and before or after school. It is the student’s responsibility to make up missed work.

Homework:

Be prepared. There is no reason to miss assignments. All due dates will be posted on the website. All work is -10 points per day that it is late.

Writing:

One of my goals is that you become the best writer you can be. My job is to help you do just that. I will look at (and comment on) any writing assignment before it is due. I am available to help before and after school also.

A Sample of Student Responsibilities

You are responsible for **taking notes** on videos and other texts. Many of our quizzes will be open-note, but students cannot share notes. If you are absent, you must get the notes from another student.

You will learn how to **collaborate** with other students. We will have many group activities. Although the group assignments will change frequently, students will be graded (in part) on how cooperative they are in a group setting.

As an educator and as a writer, I welcome **academic honesty** in written work. On the other hand, I abhor academic dishonesty (copying, not citing your sources, cheating—basically plagiarism in all its ugly forms). This type of behavior will not be tolerated. If a student chooses to plagiarize at any time during this course disciplinary action will be taken, and the assignment will be given a zero.

Be a **proactive learner**. I am here to help you any way that I can. I expect you to work as hard as I do. I know that’s a lot to ask, but hey, you are not a little kid.

**Reaction Paper Guidelines**

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to write several reaction papers to articles, videos, visuals, or discussions. Reaction papers should:

* be at least one page long.
* be typed using 12 pt. Times New Roman
* use MLA format, including a heading and title. Your title should indicate what you are reacting to (ex. Reaction to “Movies that Matter”)
* include one direct quotation or cited paraphrase. If you are reacting to a video, you must listen and take notes. If you are reacting to an article, you must include a parenthetical citation (ex. Hughes 3)
* address the specific issues/questions/arguments presented in the original work.
* show that you understand the thesis, main ideas, and supporting ideas of the piece you're writing about
* evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the piece.
* reflect your own impressions or experiences on the ideas presented in the piece
* Use some of the following prompts to get you started if you need them.
* I learned . . .
* I want to remember . . .
* I wished . . .
* I was angry/glad that . . .
* I was not expecting . . .
* I am confused about . . .
* I wonder . . .

**Scavenger Hunt**

Answer all questions in terms of Understanding Media.

1. Who owns the biggest newspaper chains?
2. What is the function of the FCC?
3. What is an “affiliate?” Give one example.
4. What is a “conglomerate?” Give one example.
5. What is “vertical integration?” Give one example.
6. What is “deregulation?” Is it positive or negative?
7. How much money did the U.S. spend on each of the following in 2014?

movies in theaters  
home DVDs  
satellite and/or cable  
internet  
books  
magazines  
newspapers  
audio media

1. The 1st Information Communications Revolution was writing. What are the 2nd and 3rd?
2. Who owns ABC?
3. Find and print an article about media (from 2015 or 2016) on a topic you are interested in exploring further.

1. *Media Studies 101: A Creative Commons Textbook https://mediatexthack.wordpress.com/* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)