NYU SUMMER JOURNALISM COURSE
MAY 27 – JULY 8, 2017

JOURNALISM AND SOCIETY:
CULTURAL CONTEXT OF AFRICAN MEDIA
Professor Audrey Gadzekpo
Email: audreygadzekpo@gmail.com/agadzekpo@ug.edu.gh
Tel: +233-244-462652

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores how the media interrelate with and impact African societies, especially through the practices of journalism. Informed by the history and political economy of Ghana and other exemplar African countries, the course discusses the socio-cultural and philosophical context of media in Africa and examines the broader issues that impinge on how the media function, including media policies and laws as well as cultural, religious and gendered beliefs.

DESIRE OUTCOMES
At the end of the course students will:

• Be able to demonstrate background knowledge of African media in general, and the Ghanaian media in particular.

• Gain a better understanding of the role and function of media within Ghanaian society and their complicity in how people experience the world around them.

• Be familiar with various theoretical approaches to be able to critically examine the norms and practices of journalism in Africa

• Be able to critique media texts and enhance their critical thinking and understanding of the interplay between media and the social world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS
- All assignments must be typewritten and presented on time. The lecturer reserves the right to either reject any late assignment or to deduct marks for lateness. Assignments will be evaluated for content as well as writing technique. Mechanical errors will always adversely affect the final score.
- **Assignments**
  2. Critique of African film, with particular reference to gender representations (20%)
  3. Term Paper (20%).
  4. End of Semester Exam (30%)
  5. Class participation (10%)

**Term Paper (15000 words)**

Despite persistent digital divides, the tremendous increase in mobile phone use in African countries such as Ghana is not only impacting the lives of ordinary people but is also transforming the way in which news and information is exchanged and how the media operate. Investigate the role of social media in citizen participation and media practice in Ghana. You can draw from media and scholarly sources as well as your own observations. Be sure to properly cite and reference all sources.

**COURSE OUTLINE (Six Weeks)**

1. **Friday, June 2: Media in the context of African culture and society**

In this introductory lecture students will be introduced to the nature and structure of the course, and to controversies about how the West sees and covers Africa.

**Class Structure**

- a. Lecturer introduces course and goes through course outline
- b. Lecturer delivers lecture and shows videos on the subject followed by questions and comments
- c. Group discussions and reactions to examples of Western coverage of Africa, extracts from readings

**Readings:**

2. **Tues, June 6: Media in Africa and Ghana**

This lecture examines the historical and changing context of media practice and regulation in Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

**Class Structure**

a. Lecturer delivers short lecture on the subject this includes question and discussion time
b. Class watches clip on media in Africa
c. Group work critique session of examples of news content followed by discussion

**Readings:**


3. **Tuesday June 13: Community Radio in Africa:**

We will explore the role of community radio in the lives of deprived communities by visiting Radio Ada, a community radio station outside Accra.

**Class Structure**

Day Trip to Radio Ada:

a. Lecturer will discuss community radio
b. Community radio practitioner will discuss how community radio functions within the Ada community and give a guided tour of radio operations in the newsroom and within the community.

**Readings**


2. Handout on, “From Homa Bay to Ada: Lessons on Community Radio, Access and Participation” presentation by Alex T Quarmyne

4. **Monday, June 19: Media Coverage of Topical issues: Pandemics and Migration**
The lecture interrogates how the media cover stories of crisis such as the recent outbreak of Ebola in three African countries and illegal migration of mostly young African men to Europe.

**Class Structure**

a. Lecturer delivers opening lecture on the subject  
b. Class watches short clips on Ebola coverage and on migration followed by discussions  
c. Group work critiquing coverage

**Readings:**

Horsti, K. (2008). Hope and Despair: Representations of Europe and Africa in Finnish news coverage of "migration crisis" University of Helsinki

5. **Tuesday June 27: Media and Religion**

Historically, the media has been used as a tool for both propagating and challenging religion. Today in Ghana, religious media is converging across mediums—in traditional media, popular culture, news, internet, and social media. We will discuss the importance of media in spreading religious messages, how religion is represented in the news and focus on the growing influence of Pentecostal media ministries in particular.

**Class Structure**

a. Lecturer delivers lecture on the subject. This includes questions/discussions arising out of readings and viewing of a tele-evangelist DVD  
b. Search for presence of religion on internet by students.  
c. Final discussions on media and religion.

**Readings**


6. **Tuesday July 4: Media and Conflict**

The media play a powerful role in the unfolding drama of peace and conflict in Africa and shape the way people perceive conflict both within, and outside of the affected location. We will examine the role of media in conflicts and war in Africa and Ghana, explore the complicity of the media as well as inherent tensions and tradeoffs in reporting conflict and peacebuilding.

**Class Structure**

a. Lecturer delivers lecture on the subject including questions and answers
b. Class watches and discusses documentary ‘Cry Freetown’
c. Exam

**Readings**


*Electronic and Scanned Versions of the readings will be provided.*