

SAMPLE SYLLABUS



NYU Accra

Journalism & Society: Cultural Contexts and African Media

Course Number

JOUR-UA 9503

Instructor Details

Timothy Quashigah,

Office Hours: By Appointment

Journalism & Society: Cultural Contexts and African Media

Class Details

Thursday 13:10 to 16:10

NYU Accra Academic Centre, Classroom 1

N/A

Prerequisites

This course examines the intersections and complexities between journalism, society and culture within the Ghanaian and African context. In order to account for the broad spectrum of

Class Description

issues regarding how the media and society intersect, this course addresses concepts and theories which help students understand the way the media functions and its effects or influence on society and vice versa.

Facilitation: The pedagogy includes presentations, discussions, group activities and field trips to media establishments and other places of interest.

At the end of the semester students will:

Desired Outcomes

- Be familiar with the historical, cultural and social underpinnings of the media industry in Ghana and Africa;

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- Be able to critically examine, appreciate and analyze media products within an African and global context;
- Be able to understand media production, reception and the multiple forms of mass communication from an Afrocentric perspective; and
- Appreciate evolving forms of communication and emerging journalistic practices, their effects or influence within the African setting

Assessment Components

- A short book review on the African media (15%)
- Class anthology that tracks, covers and reports on major socio-political issues within Ghana or Africa (10%).
- Critical reflection papers (10%)
- Class participation, Field Trips and presentations (25%)
- Term Paper (40% of grades)

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: An 'A' student attends class regularly and always contributes to the class discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues; building on other's ideas and challenging assumptions/perspectives; all of his/her discussion questions reflect a synthesis of readings and discussions; all of his/her reflection papers eloquently link class material/discussion to his/her experience; the final exam reflects an ability to elegantly synthesise course material and draw on the appropriate material to answer questions.

Grade B: A 'B' student attends class regularly and sometimes contributes to the class discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues; building on other's ideas and challenging assumptions/perspectives; three-quarters of his/her discussion questions reflect a synthesis of readings and discussions; 2 out of 3 of his/her reflection papers eloquently link class material/discussion to his/her experience; the final exam reflects an ability to synthesise course material although not elegantly and draw on the appropriate material to answer questions.

Grade C: A 'C' student attends class regularly but rarely contributes to the class discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues; building on other's ideas and challenging assumptions/perspectives; half of his/her discussion questions reflect a synthesis of readings and discussions; 1 out of 3 of his/her reflection papers eloquently link class material/discussion to his/her experience; the final exam reflects an inability to synthesise course material but draws on the appropriate material to answer questions.

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Grade D: A 'D' student attends class regularly but never contributes to the class discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues; building on other's ideas and challenging assumptions/perspectives; a quarter of his/her discussion questions reflect a synthesis of readings and discussions; none of his/her reflection papers eloquently link class material/discussion to his or her experience; the final exam reflects an inability to synthesise course material and a weak ability to draw on the appropriate material to answer questions.

Grade F: An 'F' student attends class irregularly and never contributes to the class discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues; building on other's ideas and challenging assumptions/perspectives; his/her discussion questions have no bearing on the readings and discussions; his/her reflection papers make no links whatsoever between class material/discussion and his/her experience; the final exam reflects an inability to synthesise course material and fails to draw on the appropriate material to answer questions.

Grade conversion

GRADE CONVERSION		
A	94- 100	Excellent
A-	90-93	Very Good
B+	87-89	Good
B	84-86	Above Average
B-	80-83	Average
C+	77-79	Pass
C	74-76	Pass
C-	70-73	Pass
D	65-69	Concessionary Pass
F.	Below 65	Fail

Grading Policy

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Attendance Policy

Study abroad at a Global Academic Centre is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since the class will meet once a week, a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of the course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the center is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure. Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or family emergencies.

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and or after the holiday. Students must notify the professor and the Assistant Director of Academics in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. Accommodations would be made to allow students who have been absent for religious reasons to make up any missed work.

Requests to be excused from a class on medical grounds should go to the Student Life Coordinator. All non-medical requests must go to the Site Director and should be made in person (not by email) BEFORE the day of class.

Late submission of work will be penalized by mark deductions

Late Submission of Work

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

See: (<http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html>)

Plagiarism Policy

Students must adhere to [NYU's academic integrity policy](#) while studying away at a global site. As that policy states: *"At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By*

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accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others.”

NYU defines plagiarism as “presenting others’ work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own.” Before submitting assignments, students are expected to reference all sources that you have consulted in preparing them, and to include a full bibliography for every assignment where you make use of outside sources.

Plagiarism, the use of another writer’s words without due acknowledgement, is a serious academic offence for which you will be penalized. The following acts constitute plagiarism:

- Using a phrase, sentence or passage from another person’s work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.
- Paraphrasing words or ideas from another’s work without attribution.
- Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another (including another student).
- Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.
- Submitting your own original work (be it oral presentations or written work) toward requirements in more than one class without my prior permission. If there is an overlap of the subject of an assignment with one that the student has produced for another course (either in the current or previous semesters,), s/he is obliged to inform me.

Required Text(s)

READING LIST 1. On Ghana and Africa Media

Ace Anan Ankomah, 2017. *Is There Not A Cause To Rant?* Accra: DAKpabli & Associates.

Gyekye, Kwame. 2003. *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company.

Karikari, K. & Kumado, K. (eds.). 2000. *The Law and the Media in Ghana*. School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana.

Gadzekpo, A Karikari, K. & Yankah, K. (eds.) *Going to Town: The Writings of P.A.V. Ansah* (Ghana Universities Press, 1996).

Street, John. 2001. *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. New York: Palgrave.

Alexander, A. & Hanson, J. 2009. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Mass Media and Society* (10th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Barton, Frank. 1979. *The Press of Africa: Persecution and Perseverance*. London: Macmillan Press Limited.

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Takis Fotopoulos - *DEMOCRACY & NATURE: The International Journal of INCLUSIVE*

DEMOCRACY vol.5, no.1 (March 1999)

Chris Paterson (2013) Journalism and social media in the African context, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*

Media and Power: How can the media hold governments in developing countries, international financial institutions and donors to account? - Mark Wilson, Panos & Orlando Bama (in) Charlie Beckett and Laura Kyrke-Smith

Nana Yaa Ofori-Atta, *Affect leads to effect. Daily Graphic*, Wednesday January 10, 2018. p 10.

Gen. Daniel Kwadjo Frimpong, *Kofi Chokosi Speaks: From Archaeology to Zoology*.

Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)

The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development. 2002. World Bank Institute.

David Croteau & William Hoynes. 2000. *Media Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*. Pine Forge Press.

Ansah, P.A.V. 1995. *Golden Jubilee Lectures*. Accra: GBC.

Karikari, K. (Ed). 1994. *Independent Broadcasting in Ghana*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Session 1

Introduction to the historical foundations of journalism in Africa: what is journalism, indigenous communication and the post-colonial press?

06/02/2020

Readings:

- Barton, Frank. 1979. *The Press of Africa: Persecution and Perseverance*. London: Macmillan Press Limited. (Chapters 3 & 4).
- Towards an African Journalism Model: A Critical Historical Perspective - Ibrahim Seaga Shaw from: <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/13131>
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 1988. *Concepts of Journalism North and South*. Bon: Media and Communication Department (FES). (Chapter 1).

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- Assignment for the week: A journalistic piece of no more than two pages on any activity that reflects social and cultural values as observed over the week to be submitted at the end of the class.

Session 2

The nature of African society and mass media considered: culture, values and Africanness/Society

13/02/2020

Readings:

- Mass Media and Challenges of Africa's Development: An analysis of Press Freedom and Access to Information in Africa – Ifeanyi, F. Didiugwu & Vincent Onyeaghanachi Odoh. Journal of Law, Policy and Globalisation, Volume 32, 2014 (online). (Pages 1-9).
- Gyekye, Kwame. 2003. African Cultural Values: An Introduction. Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company. (Chapter 12)
- Assignment for the week: A journalistic piece of no more than two pages on any story in the news that draws a relationship between Ghana and any country of your choice to be submitted in class.

Session 3

Contemporary Mass media in Africa [today]: A broad discussion on the nature and scope of mass communication in the modern era.

20/02/2020

Readings:

- Chris Paterson (2013) Journalism and social media in the African context,

Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies, 34:1, 1-6, DOI: 10.1080/02560054.2013.767418 at <https://www.google.com.gh/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwixyMTmxMrYAhWN16QKHUdcAPAQFgg7MAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tandfonline.com%2Fdoi%2Fpdf%2F10.1080%2F02560054.2013.767418&usg=AOvVaw2QFe8m61wSOXRSx2Dx7v5M>

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- The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development. 2002. World Bank Institute. (Chapters 1, 17).
- Assignment for the week: A critical reflection paper on the topic, based on the readings.

Session 4

27/02/2020

Mass media and democracy in Africa and Ghana. We will discuss the changing political context of media practice.

Readings:

- Media and Power: How can the media hold governments in developing countries, international financial institutions and donors to account? - Mark Wilson, Panos & Orlando Bama (in) Charlie Beckett and Laura Kyrke-Smith. pp. 21-28 at <https://www.google.com.gh/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjewZqJn83YAhVkJcAKHcBLCmQQFggsMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lse.ac.uk%2Fmedia%40lse%2FPolis%2Fdocuments%2FDevelopmentGovernanceMedia.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3tmC0a0Os1Ecl7xdlFCsmv>
- Media and Democracy in Africa: Mutual Political Bed fellows or Implacable Acrh-foes – Jimmy Ocitti (1999) from <https://programs.wcfia.harvard.edu/files/fellows/files/ocitti.pdf> (Online).
- The Mass Media and the struggle for democracy in Africa: The Nigerian Experience – Christopher Ochanja Ngara & Edward Ndem Esebone. Nordic Journal of African Studies 21(4): 183-198 (2012). from http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol21num4/ngara_esebonu.pdf (Online).
- Assignment for the week: Review of Ace Anan Ankomah's *Is There Not A Cause To Rant?* or Gen. Daniel Kwadjo Frimpong's *Kofi Chokosi Speaks: From Archaeology to Zoology*. **Students may visit the author for an interaction.**

Session 5

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05/03/2020

News production and practices in Ghana: A visit to selected newsrooms in Ghana. This will help put in context our next discussion on news room and media culture.

- A visit to *Radio Ada*.
- Assignment for the week: A critical review paper on experiences gathered from the visit to be submitted in class the following week.

Session 6

12/03/2020

Media culture and public interest – this includes discussions on what values determine selection of news and programming; also a revisiting of issues involving public interests, community interests etc.

Reading:

- Takis Fotopoulos - *DEMOCRACY & NATURE: The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY* vol.5, no.1 (March 1999) at https://www.democracynature.org/vol5/fotopoulos_media.htm
- Assignment for the week: A critical reflection paper on media culture and public interest, drawn from the major reading.

Session 7

19/03/2020

Political Economy of News & Media Ownership: This examines how economic and business considerations affect the operations of media and determine media content.

Readings:

- Street, John. 2001. *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. New York: Palgrave. (Selected chapters – 5,6,8,11).
- **A visit to a Commercial Radio Station in Accra** to understand the political economy of news and media ownership and newsroom practices.

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- Assignment for the week: A comparative critical review paper on experiences gathered from the visits to *Radio Ada* and a Commercial Radio Station in Accra to be submitted in class the following week.

Session 8

Public Service/State Broadcasting: We will discuss the emergence, role and dynamics of state broadcasting in Ghana.

26/03/2020

Readings:

- Ansah, P.A.V. 1995. Golden Jubilee Lectures. Accra: GBC.
- Karikari, K. (Ed). 1994. Independent Broadcasting in Ghana. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Assignment for the week: Presentations by each member of the class.

Session 9

The other tiers of broadcasting: commercial/private broadcasting and community broadcasting.

02/04/2020

Readings:

- Karikari, K. (Ed). 1994. Independent Broadcasting in Ghana. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Ansah, P.A.V. 1995. Golden Jubilee Lectures. Accra: GBC.
- Assignment for the week: A critical review paper on the synergy between and among commercial/private and community broadcasting to be submitted in class.

Session 10

Contemporary, New Media, Digitization and the effect of globalization. We discuss growing trends in the context of flow of global media products – Kwami Ahiabenu, PenPlusbyte. (Guest Lecturer)

09/04/2020

Readings:

- Alexander, A. & Hanson, J. 2009. Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Mass Media and Society (10th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill. (Unit 1, Unit 6).

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- David Croteau & William Hoynes. 2000. Media Society: Industries, Images and Audiences. Pine Forge Press. (Chapters 1 & 8).
- Assignment for the week: A journalistic piece on the discussions held regarding the topic in relation to a contemporary news item in Ghana or elsewhere.

Session 11

16/04/2020

Pop-Culture, Folklore, Drama and Music as forms of mass communication and representations in society

Readings:

- Alexander, A. & Hanson, J. 2009. Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Mass Media and Society (10th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill. (Unit 5, Unit 4 & Unit 6)
- Assignment for the week: A critical reflection paper on how pop-culture, folklore, drama, music can be used as a veritable force of mass communication (to be submitted in class.)

Session 12

23/04/2020

Media Literacy and Analysis: an examination/critique/analysis of variants of media products.

Readings:

- Analysis of "Critical" Approach in Media Literacy – Kuniomi Shibata. Keio Communication Review No. 2, 202. From <http://www.mediacom.keio.ac.jp/publication/pdf2002/review24/7.pdf> (online)
- Karikari, K. (Ed). 1994. Independent Broadcasting in Ghana. Accra: Ghana Universities Press. (Pages 57-68 & 97-106)

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- Assignment for the week: Write a feature on the relevance of media literacy to the journalist (to be submitted in class).

Session 13

Media Effect, theories and concepts

30/04/2020

Ethics and Constitutional Foundations of Journalism Practice in Ghana/Africa – Dr. Etse Sikanku (Guest Lecturer).

Readings:

- The Evolution of Media Effects Theory: A six stage model of cumulative research. W. Russel Newman & Lauren Guggenheim. – Communication Theory 21 (2011) 169-196. International Communication Association. (Online). from http://www.wrneuman.com/nav_pub_95_397962857.pdf
- Media effects Theory and Research. Annual review of psychology, 67. Valenburg., P. M., Peter, J & Walther, J.B. (2016). doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033608
- Assignment for the week: Students will be required to raise at least five (5) key questions that should underlie media effects theories and concepts for discussion in class.

Session 14

Journalism, Society and the Future: Freedom of expression, Social Change and Audience Reception

07/05/2020

Readings:

- Gadzekpo, A Karikari, K. & Yankah, K. (eds.) *Going to Town: The Writings of P.A.V. Ansa* (Ghana Universities Press, 1996).
- Karikari, K. & Kumado, K. (eds.). 2000. The Law and the Media in Ghana. School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. (Chapters 2, 4 & 8)
- Assignment for the week: Present an analysis of freedom of the press in Ghana in comparison with freedom of the press in another country in a critical review paper.

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Session 15

14/05/2020

Final Examination: Term Paper (1500 words)

Your final examination will be a term paper on an emerging issue/current issue of socio-cultural significance of your choice. Your paper must be predicated on at least a month's worth of reading, watching or listening to how various news media are covering the issue in one selected Western country and in Ghana. Your analysis must draw concrete examples from the media you have analyzed to underpin the points you make and reflect the readings on the subject. Your paper should be properly referenced with citations of literature and sources of information properly attributed.

classroom Etiquette

We need to be respectful of each other in order to create a classroom environment that encourages the full participation of each student. Both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication that are disrespectful will not be tolerated. **Cell phones are not to be used for social media or texting purposes during class sessions.** Laptops are only to be used for word-processing purposes.

You may be allowed to nibble savories and not whole meals in deference to others.

Required Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular Activities TBA

Suggested Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular Activities TBA

Note: Salient aspects of this syllabus are subject to change.

Your Instructor

Timothy Quashigah is a senior lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, teaching Journalism, Feature Writing, Radio & Television News Presentation and Advanced Reporting. He has had considerable exposure in broadcasting and was the Head of Training at the GBC. He has written extensively on social issues of interest. His current publications include book reviews on Investigative Reporting: A study in Technique (*Journal of Communications, Media and Society*, volume 13, Number 1, October, 2016.), Investigative Journalism: Proven Strategies for Reporting the Story (*Ghana Social Science Journal*, volume 13, Number 1, June, 2016.), African Cultural Values: An Introduction (*Ghana Social Science Journal*, volume 12, Number 2, December, 2015.) and

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Kofi Chokosi Speaks: From Archaeology to Zoology (Daily Graphic, Saturday, December 9, 2017). He is currently a PhD candidate at University of Ghana, studying sociology of the media and communication.