MODULE 3: Sociology of the Media

Stage	1		
Semester	1		
Module Title	Sociology of the Media		
Module Number	3		
Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)	Mandatory		
Module ECTS credit	5		
Module NFQ level (only if applicable)	9		
Pre-requisite Module Titles	N/A		
Co-requisite Module Titles	N/A		
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No		
List of Module Teaching Personnel	Níall Meehan		

Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (Hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent work	
24			12	36		48	120

Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)

	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total
Percentage contribution	100%				**100%**

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Critically assess the merits of different sociological positions, as they relate   to the media, with respect to possible implications and consequences for individuals and society.
2. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the interrelationship of media with government, politics and economics.
3. Critically analyse the main theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that sociologists use when engaging in research about the mass media.
4. Competently identify and apply the knowledge, concepts and perspectives relevant to their work in media related employment.

Module Objectives

The media, its institutions and practices are a major source of information, while they also contribute to cultural and political development in society. Learners must be able to not only operate within but also to examine objectively this immensely powerful institution. The purpose of the module is to provide an understanding of the relationship of social processes to the media. Learners should view and critically understand the interrelationship of media and society.

This module aims to:

- Impart a knowledge and practical awareness of how and why media institutions, practices and culture developed in the way that they have in western society.
- Focus on media industries in a critical and evaluative manner. The media is examined in a broad social and historical context,
- Critique media institutions within their interrelationship with society, politics and the economy.

Module Curriculum

Topic One: Introduction to Media Theory

Theories of how the media operate are basically theories of society which specialise in how the media fit into those theories. They are subject to change and modification, as are all theories, based on a confrontation between theories and the evidence or facts that researchers promote as proof of their point of view or theoretical framework. In this section of the course however, learners are introduced to a range of media theories including agenda setting.

Topic Two: News Values

This topic examines how news values are determined. Learners as part of this topic examine the attempt by its practitioners in the media (broadcasters, film-makers journalists, etc.) to present themselves as a *profession* with a particular responsibility to, and duty towards, audiences, which transcends the narrowly defined interests of the market place, of the state, or of proprietors. Within that context learners should be able to focus on the key news values that predominate in the presentation of, and choice of, news and be able to be critical of them.

Topic Three: Media Event – Event as event

Learners examine the extent to which the media can be said to exist within a stereotypical view of reality and to present news in stereotypical terms. The key reading here is by Noelle Neuman and Mathes and their critique of journalistic 'consonance' – if the media say something will happen then it will happen the way the media said it would!

Topic Four: The Public Sphere

This topic explains what the public sphere is and seeks the answers to a number of key questions: Does the theory of the 'public sphere' as derived from the history of the industrial revolution and of capitalism still hold sway? Can it be updated? Or is mass media inevitably a form of propaganda? The topic also looks at media in the public interest (public sphere) versus media in a conglomerate Using arguments from James Curran and/or Nicholas Garnham learners should be able to articulate a public sphere of interest, of politics, and of democracy, in the space between the buying and selling of information by private owners and the regulation and/or control of information flows by the state

Topic Five: Ireland and the EU as media markets

This topic examines the media as social institutions, whether they are large privately owned conglomerates or public or private corporations. We look at their relationship to the state and to the economy. This process began in Ireland in 1985 with the Stokes Kennedy Crowley report on RTE. Broadcasting came to be increasingly viewed as a purely economic, rather than as a cultural activity - as exchange-value rather than cultural value. Learners refer to the Green Paper on Broadcasting, to the debate surrounding the granting of the license increase to RTE in 2002 and to aspects of EU policy on broadcasting.

Topic Six: Influences on media and professional autonomy

Learners should be able to describe the media as an institution which is both industrial (part state-owned, part, and increasingly, privately owned) and which is also a public service. Learners should ask questions about the relationship between private goods (privately owned media institutions) and public goods (the information they shower the public consciousness with)? Learners look at the relationship and tensions between economics, politics and democracy.

Topic Seven: Media Censorship

This topic examines whether the media play a role in providing reinforcement of, or resistance to, the dominant definitions of reality. Learners examine the effect of state censorship (both here and in Britain) in terms of how censorship reinforced or contradicted media practice. A comparison is made in this section between privately owned print and state regulated broadcast media.

Topic Eight: The Role of the Internet

Is more information also more knowledge? Is the internet the equivalent of a giant library with the books scattered on the floor? Is it a mass democratic medium or is it subject to corporate or government control ultimately? This topic examines the role of the Internet as a precursor of an enlarged public information flow and examines whether it will (or can be?) be regulated by the state in the interests of economic forces.

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Bardoel, Johannes & Leen d'Haenens, 2008. 'Reinventing Public Service Broadcasting in Europe: Prospects, Promises and Problems', in, Media, Culture & Society, Vol. 30(3): 337–355.

Curran, James & Michael Gurevitch, 2005. *Mass Media and Society*. (4th Edition). London: Hodder Education.

Curran, James, 2002. *Media and Power*. London: Routledge.

Croteau, David & William Hoynes, 2006. *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Croteau, David & William Hoynes, 2003. *Media Society: Industries, Images & Audiences* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2003

Doyle, Gillian, 2005. *Media Ownership: The Economics and Politics of Convergence and Concentration in the UK and European Media.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Edwards, David & Cromwell, David, 2006. *Guardians of Power: the Myth of the Liberal Media*. London: Pluto Press.

Keane, John, 2004. *The Media and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Matheson, Donald, 2005. *Media Discourses: Analysing Media Texts.* Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

McCombs, Maxwell, 2004. *Setting the Agenda: the Mass Media and Public Opinion.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

McCombs, Maxwell & Donald Shaw, 1972. 'The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media', in, Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, pp 176-185.

Secondary Reading

Croteau, David & William Hoynes, 2006. *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

De Burgh, Hugo, 2003. 'Kings without crowns? The re-emergence of investigative journalism in China', in, Media, Culture & Society, Vol. 25: 801–820.

Evans, Harold, 1994*. Good Times, Bad Times*, 3rd Edition. London: Phoenix.

Frost, Chris, 2000. *Media Ethics and Self-Regulations.* Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.

Goodman, Amy, and David Goodman, 2005. *The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them*. New York: Hyperion.

Harcup, Tony, 2004. *Journalism: Principles and Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Kerrigan, Gene and Pat Brennan, 1999. *This Great Little Nation: The A-Z of Irish Scandals and Controversies*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd.

Lewis, Jon E (ed), 2003. *The Mammoth Book of Journalism: 101 Masterpieces from the Finest Writers and Reporters.* London: Robinson.

O'Toole, Fintan, 1995. *Meanwhile Back at the Ranch: The Politics of Irish Beef*. London: Vintage.

Palast, Greg, 2006. *Armed Madhouse*. New York: Dutton

Pilger, John, 1989. *Heroes*. London: Pan.

Randall, David, 2005. *The Great Reporters*. London: Pluto Press.

Smyth, Sam, 1997. *Thanks a Million Big Fella*. Dublin: Backwater Press.

Spark, David, 1997. *A Journalists Guide To Sources.* Oxford: Focal Press.

Stossel, John, 2004. *Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media*. New York: HarperCollins.

Tulloch, John, 2007. 'Hunting ghost planes - An interview with journalist Stephen Grey', in, Journalism, Vol. 8(5); pp: 510–516.

Williams, Eesha, 2001. *Grassroots Journalism: A Practical Manual for Doing the Kind of Newswriting That Doesn't Just Get People Angry, but Active-That Doesn't Just Inform, but Inspires*. New York: Apex Press.

Module Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to both engage the learners and to encourage their critical thinking. This is achieved through lectures which are designed to stimulate discussions and questions.

Learners are also supported with resources to offer structure and guidance. This includes lecture notes, reading materials as well as a detailed module curriculum which includes the learning outcomes, a class schedule, the necessary reading material and the assignment strategy. Participants also have access to Moodle, the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This module is supported with structured web-based resources and applies the use of the programme Teaching Learning and Assessment methodologies. Specifically, the module is delivered using:

- Formal Lectures
- Seminars

The module is taught through a mixture of formal and participative lectures, allowing learner interaction and questioning. Case studies are presented to the class in order to highlight the practical ramifications of the subject matter.

Module Assessment Strategy

The module is examined by two pieces of written assessment as follows.

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	40%	Continuous Assessment	Critically Reflective Essay
2	60%	Continuous Assessment	Critically Reflective Essay