City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Gateway Education Course
offered by Department of Media and Communication
with effect from Semester A in 2014/2015

Part I

Course Title: Celebrities and Media: Contemporary issues in Hong Kong Popular Culture

Course Code: GE1210

Course Duration: One semester

Proposed Area: (Please insert “1” for the single primary area, and “2” for the secondary area if applicable. Students will only earn credit units from the primary area.)

☐ Arts and Humanities
X Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations
☐ Science and Technology

No. of Credit Units: 3

Level: B1

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: 

Prerequisites: (Course Code and Title) NONE

Precursors: (Course Code and Title) NONE

Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title) generally none

Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title) NONE
Part II

1. Abstract

This course aims to examine the interplay among media, celebrities and scandals from various perspectives. Its theoretical implications and social impacts will be closely discussed and evaluated. There will be class discussion, case study, class debates, role playing, and other learning activities in this class. Through all these learning activities, students will get to extensively investigate a variety of topics, including public figures and privacy, political and social scandals, media coverage, the culture of paparazzi, pseudo-events, and the role and functions of communication.

2. Course Aims

Media in Hong Kong are obsessed with stories about celebrities, political and social scandals, and private lives of public figures. The notorious paparazzi have stalked celebrities and taken their photos for years, forming a significant part of the landscape of popular culture in Hong Kong. Such practices have serious implications for journalistic integrity, protection of privacy, moral standards, and citizen trust in public life. This course aims to examine the interplay among media, celebrities and scandals from various perspectives. Its theoretical implications and social impacts will be closely discussed and evaluated. Specifically, this course will start with examining the concept of celebrities from a sociological approach. Students will learn the concepts, issues and theoretical perspectives of celebrities and scandals, the processes and structure of their production and distribution, and their manifest and latent functions. The discussion will then turn to a psychological approach. Students will explore the uses and consequences of media representation of celebrities and scandals in terms of perceptions, gratifications, social learning, and framing as well priming effects. Finally, the course will take legal and ethical perspectives to address issues involving journalistic professionalism, social responsibility, decline of citizens’ trust in public institutions, market-driven consumerism, and quality of public enlightenment and entertainment. Through class discussion, case study, class debates, role playing, and other learning activities, students will get to extensively investigate a variety of topics, including public figures and privacy, political and social scandals, media coverage, the culture of paparazzi, pseudo-events, and the role and functions of communication.

3. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>CILOs</th>
<th>Weighting (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Define celebrities as a concept and describe celebrity as a mass communication phenomenon</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Identify the economic/cultural/social functions of celebrities.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Demonstrate ability to critically analyze news coverage about celebrities.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. **Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)**

*(designed to facilitate students’ achievement of the CILOs - Some TLAs may address more than one CILO.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLA</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Hours/week (if applicable)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures: Main concepts, theories, and case studies on media coverage of celebrities and conflicts between celebrities and media</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1-2 hours/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class discussions: Both in-class and online discussion will be conducted on issues of media and celebrities to engage students in deliberation and debates. Students are expected to integrate the concepts and theories that they learn into the discussions.</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>0-2 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class exercises/case study: Students are asked to participate in various in-class exercises and case discussions relating to specific topics or timely events/news assigned by the instructor. The concepts and theories will be incorporated in these exercises.</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>0-1 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams: Students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of main concepts, theories, case studies and implications that are discussed in class.</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>At least twice a semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role playing or group debates: Each group will role-play or debate different groups with an interest in the issue of media and privacy: journalists, photographers, media companies, celebrities, viewers/readers. As role playing and group debates are different activities, instructors could choose to conduct either or both. From the activities, students are expected to learn the concepts and theories in a simulated context.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Once a semester</td>
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</table>
5. **Assessment Tasks/Activities**
(designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs –Some assessment tasks/activities may address more than one CILO.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role playing/group debates: Assessment will be based on the extent to which students apply major concepts and relevant principles to analyze the issue of media and privacy.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Students will get instructor’s and peers’ feedback after the activities in oral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class exercises/case study: Assessment will be based on students’ ability to apply relevant theories and principles to the analysis on how media cover issues of celebrities. When a written report is required, assessment will also be based on the writing of the report, including clarity, grammar, and writing style.</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Students will get instructor’s and peers’ feedback after the exercises in oral or written form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam(s): The instructor can choose to have one midterm exam and one final exam or several in-class quizzes and one final exam. Assessment will be based on the extent to which the student demonstrates knowledge and principles of the interplay between media, celebrities, and audiences.</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Students will receive instructor’s feedback after the exams.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. **Grading of Student Achievement:** Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade point</th>
<th>Grade definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Strong evidence of original thinking; good organisation, capacity to analyse and synthesise; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Pass&quot; in a pass-fail course. Courses to be graded on a pass-fail basis for a programme are specifically identified under the programme in the course catalogue.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part III

Keyword Syllabus:
Celebrity, privacy, media literacy, celebrity involvement, paparazzi, media coverage and effects, popular culture, scandals, social responsibility, media ethics

Recommended Reading:
Text(s):


Rogers, R. (2002). French scandals on the web, and on the streets: A small experiment in


**Online Resources:**

Celebrity worship (selected):
  - http://jolin.info/
  - http://www.mjfanclub.net/home/index.php
  - http://www.awc618.com/
  - http://www.jay2u.com/

Media coverage of celebrities and scandals (selected):
  - Apple Daily Hong Kong http://hk.nextmedia.com/index.php
  - Oriental Daily http://orientaldaily.on.cc/
  - Celebrities http://celebrities.alltop.com/

Celebrities and privacy
  - CRF online forum http://www.crfforum.org
  - Hubpage online forum http://hubpages.com/forum