

City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of Media and Communication
with effect from Semester A 2019/20

Part I Course Overview

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

Course Code: GE1210

Course Duration: One semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: B1

Arts and Humanities

Proposed Area:
(for GE courses only)

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

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 Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

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, 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)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs [#]	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Define celebrities as a concept and describe celebrity as a mass communication phenomenon	10%	✓	✓	✓
2.	Identify the economic/cultural/social functions of celebrities.	20%	✓	✓	✓
3.	Demonstrate ability to critically analyze news coverage about celebrities.	20%	✓	✓	✓
4.	Evaluate the effects and implications of media coverage on celebrities' private lives to individuals and the society.	20%	✓	✓	✓

5.	Debate on the rights and responsibilities of different social members that include media, celebrities, and public in shaping media culture in Hong Kong.	30%	✓	✓	✓
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* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

100%

Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

4. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week(if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
Lectures	Main concepts, theories, and case studies on media coverage of celebrities and conflicts between celebrities and media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-2 hours/week
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.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0-2 hours/week
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.	✓	✓	✓	✓		0-1 hours/week
Tests	Students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of main concepts, theories, case studies and implications that are discussed in class.	✓	✓	✓	✓		At least twice a semester
Group debates	Each group will 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.				✓	✓	Once a semester

5. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: <u>100</u> %							
Group debates or case analysis: Assessment will be based on the extent to which students apply major concepts and relevant principles to analyze the issue of media and privacy.				√	√	20%	Students will get instructor's and peers' feedback after the activities in oral.
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.	√	√	√	√		45%	Students will get instructor's and peers' feedback after the exercises in oral or written form.
Test(s): Two in-class tests will be given. Assessment will be based on the extent to which the student demonstrates knowledge and principles of the interplay between media, celebrities, and audiences.	√	√	√	√	√	35% (Each test counts 17.5%)	Students will receive instructor's feedback after the tests.
Examination: N/A (duration: _____, if applicable)							
* The weightings should add up to 100%.						100%	

6. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Group debate or case analysis	Students will need to form groups and to conduct one debate or case analysis on a group basis. They will need to collect literature and local examples to make their points.	Work involved profound insights, original thoughts, adequate analyses, clear/logical arguments, and good presentation.	Work involved adequate analyses, clear/logical arguments, and good presentation.	Work involved adequate analyses, and clear presentation.	Work involved acceptable analyses, and clear presentation.	Work that has no logic or unclear.
2. In-class exercises / case study	There will be weekly exercises / case study for students to discuss a concept learned that week. Students will need to form ideas or arguments and express them.	Work involved profound insights, original thoughts, adequate analyses, clear/logical arguments, and good writing.	Work involved original thoughts, adequate analyses, clear/logical arguments, and good writing.	Work involved adequate analyses and clear writing.	Work involved acceptable logic and understandable writing.	Work that has no logic or unclear.
3. Tests	Students will be tested if they understand the concepts and theories covered in the class.	Work that demonstrates full understanding of the concepts and theories covered in the class.	Work that demonstrates good understanding of the concepts and theories covered in the class.	Work that demonstrates adequate understanding of the concepts and theories covered in the class.	Work that demonstrates minimal understanding of the concepts and theories covered in the class.	Work that demonstrates little understanding of the concepts and theories covered in the class.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

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

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

Recommended Reading:

1.	Alberoni, Francesco. "The Powerless 'Elite': Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars," in Denis McQuail (ed.), <i>Sociology of Mass Communications</i> (London: Penguin, 1972).
2.	Baird, Robert M.; Loges, William E.; & Rosenbuaum, Stuart E. (Eds.) (1999). <i>The media & morality</i> . Amherst, NY: Prometheus.
3.	Boorstin, D. J., (1992). <i>The images: A guide to pseudo-events in America</i> . Atheneum, MA.
4.	Cepernich, Cristopher. (2008). <i>Landscape of immorality: Scandals in the Italian Press (1998-2006)</i> . <i>Perspectives on European Politics & Society</i> , 9, 95-109.
5.	Colomina, B. (1994). <i>Privacy and publicity: Modern Architecture as mass media</i> . MIT: MA.
6.	Ekstrom, Mats & Johansson, Bengt. (2008). <i>Talk scandals</i> . <i>Media, Culture & Society</i> . 30, 61-79.
7.	Ganz, Herbert J. (1999). <i>Popular culture & high culture, revised & updated edition</i> . New York: Basic.
8.	Holmes, S. & Redmond, S. (2006). <i>Framing Celebrity: New directions in celebrity culture</i> . Routledge.
9.	Howe, P. (2005). <i>Paparazzi: And our obsession with celebrity</i> . Astisan.
10.	Jost, Kenneth. (1994). <i>Political scandals: is the obsession with scandal hurting the nation?</i> <i>CQ Researcher</i> , 4, 459-479.
11.	Lull, James & Hinerman, Stephen. (1998). <i>Media scandals</i> . New York: Columbia University Press.
12.	Mills, J. L. (2008). <i>Privacy: The lost right</i> . Oxford: New York.
13.	Morris, Jonathan S. & Clawson, Rosalee. (2005). <i>Media coverage of Congress in the 1990s: Scandals, personalities, and the prevalence of policy and process</i> . <i>Political Communication</i> , 22, 297-313.
14.	O'Neil, R. M. (1993). <i>Privacy and Press Freedom: Paparazzi and other intruders</i> . <i>University of Illinois Law Review</i> , 2, 703-716.
15.	Rogers, R. (2002). <i>French scandals on the web, and on the streets: A small experiment in stretching the limits of reported reality</i> . <i>Asian Journal of Social Science</i> , 30, 339-353.
16.	Sabato, Larry J. & Lichter, S. Robert. (1994). <i>When should the watchdogs bark? Media coverage of the Clinton scandals</i> . University Press of America.
17.	Sabato, Larry J.; Stencel, Mark; & Lichter, S. Robert. (2001). <i>Peepshow: Media and politics in an age of scandal</i> . Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
18.	Smolla, E. A. (1998). <i>From paparazzi to hidden cameras: The aggressive side of a free and responsible press</i> . <i>Communication Law and Policy</i> , 3, 2, 315-329.
19.	Thompson, John B. (2000). <i>Political scandal: power and visibility in the media age</i> . Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
20.	Tiffen, Rodney. (1999). <i>Scandals: Media, politics and corruption in contemporary Australia</i> . New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press.
21.	Tumber, Howard & Waisbord, Silvio R. (2004). <i>Political scandals and media across democracies</i> . <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> , 47, 1031-1039.
22.	Turner, G. (2004). <i>Understanding Celebrities</i> . London, GBR, Sage Publications.

23.	Waisbord, Silvio R. (1994). Knocking on newsroom doors: The Press and political scandals in Argentina. <i>Political Communication</i> , 11, 19-33.
24.	West, Mark D. (2007). <i>Secrets, sex, and spectacle: The rules of scandal in Japan and the United States</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
25.	Yue, X. D., & Cheung, C. K. (1999). Idol worshipping for vain glory, illusory romance or intellectual learning: A study in Nanjing and Hong Kong. <i>International Journal of Adolescence and Youth</i> , 7, 20-28.
26.	Yue, X. D., & Cheung, C. K. (2000). Selection of favourite idols and models among Chinese young people: A comparative study in Hong Kong and Nanjing. <i>International Journal of Behavioral Development</i> , 24(1), 91-98.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

Online Resources:

1.	Celebrity worship (selected): http://jolin.info/ ; http://www.mjfanclub.net/home/index.php ; http://www.awc618.com/ ; http://www.jay2u.com/
2.	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/
3.	Celebrities and privacy CRF online forum http://www.crfforum.org Hubpage online forum http://hubpages.com/forum

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

GE PILO	Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)
PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning	Students have to think through policy implications (CILO 1-5)
PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology	Case study on social scandals and pseudo-events is required (CILO 3-5)
PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills	Through the readings, exams, discussions, case study (CILO 1-5)
PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data	Through critically examining the media coverage on celebrities against guest lectures from “inside people” (such as celebrities, media professionals, and paparazzi) (CILO 3-5)
PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text	Case study (CILO 1-5)
PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills	Case study (CILO 1-5)
PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team	Case study (CILO 1-5)
PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues	Reading, case study, guest lectures, interact with guest lecturers (CILO 1-5)
PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions	Reading, , guest lectures (CILO 4, 5)
PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation	Reading, case study, guest lectures, interact with guest lecturers (CILO 1-5)

GE course leaders should cover the mandatory PILOs for the GE area (Area 1: Arts and Humanities; Area 2: Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations; Area 3: Science and Technology) for which they have classified their course; for quality assurance purposes, they are advised to carefully consider if it is beneficial to claim any coverage of additional PILOs. General advice would be to restrict PILOs to only the essential ones. (Please refer to the curricular mapping of GE programme: http://www.cityu.edu.hk/edge/ge/faculty/curricular_mapping.htm.)

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task	Related CILO(s)	Related GE PILO(s)
In-class exercises	1-2	1,3,4,8,9,10
Case study/In-class exercises	3	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Group debates, case study, interview with media/celebrity/paparazzi	4-5	3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10