Mission Statement:
Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS

REGENT UNIVERSITY

COM 632 - MAD
MEDIA AND THE CHURCH
FALL, 2009

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Marc T. Newman
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Office Hours: by Appointment
Office Location: The Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Over the years, rapid proliferation, development, application and creative uses of both traditional and newer media and communication technologies have impacted society in what many believe are unprecedented ways. Their influence on individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and professions has been dramatic and exciting and at the same time problematic and even alarming.

Traditional religions, religious institutions and religious cultures have experienced many of these technological changes and related cultural trends. The Internet and many other related technologies, in what is now a truly “converged” global media environment, also have stimulated the growth of new forms of religious organizations and activities. Some scholars and other observers have claimed that religious beliefs and practices are themselves being dramatically changed through the influence of these technological developments and uses.

The Church (i.e. “body of Christ” or all Christian believers), as well as Christian denominations, local churches, missionary and other types of Christian organizations, are being inspired and strengthened and yet challenged and threatened by these pervasive, technology-induced changes. As with the advent of new communication technologies and related cultural changes in the past, Christians are being encouraged to embrace them. At the same time they are being warned about their dangers.

The primary purpose of this course is to explore the effects and even the perils these communication technologies may have on the past, current and future mission and nature of the Church worldwide and on the mission, goals, nature, programs, activities and communication and artistic efforts of Christian organizations and ministries, including the local church, and on the cultures in which they reside. At the same time, and more important, the aim of the course is to explore new, creative opportunities for Christian ministry and more effective communication and artistic endeavors that these media or communication technologies present to individual Christians and Christian organizations that understand and utilize them. The course will blend historical, theological, philosophical and theoretical perspectives with very practical considerations in fulfilling this overall purpose.

COURSE OUTCOMES

A number of basic course objectives should be achieved as we strive to fulfill the stated purposes stated above. Once the course is completed you should:

In this course, students will:

• understand and contextualize the influence of various communication technologies over the past two centuries.
• Demonstrated in online discussion boards and research paper.
  • bring a variety of critical constructs to bear in order to assess technological movements in general, and media artifacts in particular.
    • Demonstrated in online discussion boards and research paper.
• understand, evaluate, and strategically implement contemporary trends concerning new media and its influence on the Church.
    • Demonstrated in online discussion boards, and Media in the Church project.
• construct an argumentatively sound scholarly analysis paper examining the intersection of Church and media
    • Demonstrated in the final paper.
• will assess rhetorical research and craft analytical critiques
    • Demonstrated through written blind peer evaluations of other student’s final paper and discussion boards.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS


INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING

C.S. Lewis, in his landmark essay, “Learning in War Time,” noted: “If all the world were Christian, it might not matter if all the world were uneducated. But, as it is, a cultural life will exist outside the Church whether it exists inside or not. To be ignorant and simple now – not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground – would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered. The cool intellect must work not only against cool intellect on the other side, but against the muddy heathen mysticism which deny intellect altogether…The learned life then is, for some, a duty.”

Faith informs knowledge as premises inform conclusions. All thought is founded on sets of presuppositions that will lead, inevitably to ends. The psalmist says, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” The soundness of our conclusions will be determined by the veracity of our presuppositions. Therefore, it is important that Christian scholars not think that they must abandon presuppositions in order to achieve some chimerical objectivity and advance in the academy. Worse, it is a lie. The scholar will not abandon presuppositions in any case, instead one set will merely be substituted for another. G.K. Chesterton, in All is Grist, explained, “The whole point of education is that it should give a man abstract and eternal standards by which he can judge material and fugitive conditions.” By integrating faith and learning we can bring the eternal into the temporal, allowing us to “test the spirits” and to “hold fast to what is true.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Readings and Class Participation
The week runs from Monday through Saturday. I pray that all of you will try hard to organize your schedules in such a way that you will not have to work on Sunday – everyone needs a day of rest.

Students will be expected to have read the assigned materials before the week in which those materials will be discussed. It is important that everyone participate, but also that none of us become completely overwhelmed. The key advantage of asynchronous education is that, unlike class, there is no predetermined start and stop time – this is also a key disadvantage.

Depending on the level of posting, students may be asked to lead discussions on particular reading chapters.

B. Discussion Boards and The Quality of Your Posts
Once discussions begin, I expect the kind of robust analysis and debate that might accompany a conference panel. You will be posting discussion on Blackboard threads. Some threads will be “hotter” than others, but everyone will be expected
to post universally (I will moderate that requirement if enrollment exceeds my expectations).

While it is fine to acknowledge the work of another student with positive feedback, such congratulations do not really move the conversation forward in a meaningful way. All of the posts in this class should advance at least one of the following objectives:

1) Initiate: all original posts should initiate new arguments for consideration. Additionally, your responses can initiate new lines of thinking sparked by the originator’s post.

2) Extension: you agree with the poster’s conclusions and you wish to extend upon them by offering corroborating evidence from another source, or by offering additional analysis that will illuminate a related area of thought.

2) Clarification: you are not clear about what a student means, so you ask questions to clarify the thoughts of another student. You should all be on the lookout for clarifying questions, and be prepared to respond by providing more analysis and examples.

3) Challenge: you think the poster’s position is inaccurate, wrong, or inadequate in some way. Respectfully identify the argument you believe to be mistaken, explain why it is flawed, provide evidence an analysis to support your position, and, if you have one, provide a counter argument.

A Note on Timeliness of Postings: You must keep up with the flow of the postings for the week; that way we can all track through the course together. I recognize that sometimes life gets in the way of academics, but when students routinely participate in a timely manner, it enhances the educational opportunity of all of the other students in the class and serves as encouragement (see Phil. 2:3-4).

C. Late Policy
All scheduled written assignments are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on dates indicated on the syllabus. (I know that this appears to give an advantage to students on the East Coast as Pacific Standard Time students will have to have their assignments in by 8:59 PM, but “left coast” students will also receive their assignment three hours earlier, so it all works out.) All assignments turned in after that time will be considered late. All late assignments will receive a deduction of one letter grade. No work will be accepted after four days. Late assignments will be graded without comment – if you are looking for feedback, please submit your work on time.
**D. Extensions**

Unless stated by the professor, all assignments are due on the date stated in the syllabus. **Late assignments will be graded down one letter grade unless the student has an approved extension.** Except in cases of emergency, requests for extensions must be made to the instructor, at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. Be prepared to defend your reason why you need the extension.

**E. Incomplete Grades**

It is your responsibility to monitor your status in this class. I will not initiate a drop from class. If you find yourself unable to complete the work for the class, you must drop in a timely fashion. Failure to secure a drop will result in an "F" for the class. My experience demonstrates that 80% of students receiving "I" or "Incomplete" grades never complete the work. In an effort to spur you to complete any missed assignments in a timely fashion, I will not assign incomplete grades. In extreme circumstances, when extensions are provided to students, outstanding assignments may be completed early in the following semester and a grade change, if warranted, will be issued at that time. The only students who will be considered for extensions on end of semester assignments will be those who have completed all of the other work for the semester, and who have been diligent in their posting for the class.

**F. Academic Integrity**

The Regent University Graduate Catalogue notes: “A community of teachers and scholars recognizes the principles of truth and honesty as absolutely essential. The expectation at Regent University is that these principles will be rigorously followed in all academic endeavors, including the preparation of class reports and papers, giving and taking of examinations, and in protecting the validity of assigned grades. This assumes that all work will be done by the person who purports to do the work without unauthorized aids. Instructors will exercise due diligence in planning and supervising the academic program so that the principles of truth and honesty are encouraged.”

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a student utilizes the ideas or words of another author without appropriate citation. Plagiarism is a severe academic violation, and will not be tolerated. The university’s policy on plagiarism is that a first instance will result in a failure of the assignment in which it occurs. I will notify the dean of any act of plagiarism in my classes. A second instance will result in failure of the class, and a third instance may result in expulsion from the university.
**Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism**

In an electronic, cut-and-paste age, plagiarism is easy to do, even if you do not intend to do so. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to adopt a research regime that keeps quoted material separate from your original writing until such time as you need it. When doing research on the computer, open a separate file for every article or book you examine. At the top of the page, write in all bibliographic information, then, under that heading, type or paste quotations or paraphrases along with the page number associated with the quotation or paraphrase. Then, when you craft your paper, each time you paste a quotation or paraphrase, insert the parenthetical citation in text, and copy and paste the bibliographic information immediately into the “Works Cited” page.

**G. ASSIGNMENTS**

All essays written for this class must be turned in using Times New Roman, 12 point font (this assures uniformity in guidelines). All essays must conform to the current edition of MLA. I am a big fan of subheadings, so since the assignment identifies parts in a paper, you should identify those parts with subheadings that are clear. My preference for subheadings is: major headings should be centered, subheadings flush left, sub-subheadings (if it gets that far) flush left and underlined or italicized.

1. **Media in the Local Church Proposal**—The primary goal of this assignment is to creatively and practically offer specific ways in which current media, communication technologies or artistic forms could be used in the local church setting.

Develop a brief proposal (4-6 pages) for one or a combination of any of the following—a new or improved Internet website; a new or better strategy for using mobile/portable communication devices/media; an innovative way to use a blog(s); a creative way to use an online social network of some type; or a new or better strategy for incorporating media and the arts into worship services at an existing (or perhaps hypothetical) local church.

The body of your proposal should clearly 1) describe the problem your proposal seeks to solve, 2) describes the communication/artistic vehicle(s) you intend to implement, 3) any costs or barriers (both structural and attitudinal) to implementation that you think you might encounter (NOTE: structural barriers are those barriers that are present in the current church and could include things like inadequate wiring, lack of appropriate projection equipment, a tech-challenged pastorate; attitudinal barriers are barriers that exist in the minds of the people who might implement this proposal and would include things such as traditionalism, technophobia, etc.), 4) how you intend to meet those costs and/or overcome those barriers. and 5) the benefits that you could argue would accrue to the local church and its ministries’ communication objectives – particularly in what ways it would be an improvement over the organization’s existing uses of media or
communication technologies or be an improvement over what other local churches typically are doing in these respects.

2. Research Project/Paper—The very broad subject of “media and the church” offers a great many possibilities for scholarly research dealing with particular topics, questions and issues. Select a research topic within this context that interests you greatly, search relevant literature, and develop a scholarly paper that addresses a theme, issue and/or specific research questions that scholars and/or practitioners would be interested in and provides them with new insights.

Your study could rely primarily on secondary sources or also involve data collecting, using any particular research methodology. Ideally it should attempt to provide a new contribution to research/thinking in your chosen area of study.

Use the most recent MLA style as you organize your paper and cite sources or materials.

Choose something to study within the context of “media and the church” (again, specific choices are many considering the purpose and nature of this course) that truly interests you.

Page Length Guidelines –

- MA Students – 12-14 pages, minimum of 15 source citations of which at least 7 must come from scholarly journals.
- PhD Students – 18-20 pages, minimum of 20 source citations of which at least 10 must come from scholarly journals.

Peer Review – Toward the end of the class you will be assigned a student’s final paper to peer review. Your job will be to look over your classmates paper and to evaluate how well the paper adheres to the MLA styles sheet, do some light proofreading (please make sure you thoroughly proofread your own paper before submitting it for peer review), identify areas of strength and weakness in paper, with special attention to the fit between the theory and the artifact, the quality of evidence in support of clear arguments, whether the conclusions are justified, and to generally make sure the paper meets the requirements of the assignment. Critique should be phrased in a positive way – with an emphasis on being helpful. That being said, you are not to help rewrite papers, just provide suitable critique so that students can make final adjustments. The peer review process is blind. You will not know the name of the author of the paper and the author will not know the identity of the reviewer.
EVALUATION AND GRADING

A. Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media and the Local Church Proposal</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
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B. Scale

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>96–100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>93-95</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>75-77</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>74 or less</td>
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In assigning grades to each of the graded sections of this class, I will use the following general standards.

Discussion:

A = Robust, universal posting on all reading assignments. Student shows insight into the reading, often going beyond the text to incorporate ideas, theories, and constructs from other works. Student drives discussion by consistently asking probing questions for follow up.

B = Regular posting on all reading assignments. Student demonstrates comprehension of the reading and the ability to apply it. Student interacts consistently with other class members.

C = Regular posting on most reading assignments. Demonstrates a grasp of the content. Responds to other class members.

Writing Assignments:

A = Strict adherence to style sheet. Assignments thoroughly proofed. The student establishes significance. Analysis is exceptionally well-organized and arguments are well-substantiated. Student demonstrates insight in conclusions and implications of the analysis. Writing style is strong.

B= Adheres well to style sheets. Assignments reveal few spelling, grammatical, or style errors. The student chooses appropriate artifacts. Analysis is organized
and easy to follow. Student demonstrates an understanding of conclusions and implications in the analysis. Writing style is acceptable.

C = Paper meets the minimum standards for the assignment.

NOTE: Any paper written for this class that is accepted for publication in a scholarly journal or for presentation at a regional or national scholarly convention will be assigned an A as long as the acceptance for publication or presentation occurs within one year of the end of this course.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

At or near the end of the course you will receive an opportunity to evaluate course content and instruction. However, you are invited and encouraged to interact with me regarding the course at any time during the semester. I am most anxious to serve you and see that the course fits your needs as much as possible.

Recently, Regent University also established the following policy with regarding student course evaluation and a form that is used in the process:

Becoming Christian leaders includes learning how to evaluate others by providing honest evaluations that include positive affirmation and constructive feedback, as appropriate. Consequently, university policy requires that all students submit a formal student evaluation of teaching form at the end of the academic term. This mandatory requirement must be completed before students will be able to access their final course grade. This form is only available in an online format. Prior to the end of the course, students will receive an e-mail indicating that the form is available. Instructions on accessing the evaluation will be included. Since these evaluations are only available for a limited time, students should complete the evaluation as soon as they receive the e-mail notification that the evaluation form is available. Instructors will not have access to course evaluations until after grades have been submitted and will only have access to anonymous summary data. Students are also encouraged at any point during the term to offer comments that may be helpful to the improvement or refinement of the course. Students can access the online evaluation system at: http://eval.regent.edu/regentsurvey/students.cfm. If you have questions about the online evaluation please contact evaluation@regent.edu.

COURSE FORMAT

We will be taking a roundabout tour in this course. We will begin with Malcolm Muggeridge – a classic on Christianity and the Media, and then we will move to the present to evaluate current trends in new media. Then we will go back and historically contextualize by examining historical developments in media and its relationship to the church, while picking up good theoretical constructs.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

### COM 632—WEEKLY READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Each week we will begin on Monday by discussing the reading assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Assignments due that week (in italics) / Reading assignment for following week (in bold)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>Overview of the Course. / Students introduce themselves. Respond to opening questions on Blackboard. Assignment to discussion days. / Read Muggeridge: Foreword by Billy Graham, Introduction and Lectures 1-3. You may read the Q&amp;A if you like but it is not required.</td>
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<td>WEEK 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>The Opening Salvo – Muggeridge and the Long View of Media. Read Reynolds and Overton, Chs. 1-3.</td>
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<td>WEEK 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – enjoy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>New Media. Read Reynolds and Overton Chs. 4-7</td>
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<td>WEEK 4</td>
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<td>January 24</td>
<td>Blogging. Read Reynolds and Overton Chs. 8-10</td>
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<td>WEEK 5</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>Church and New Media. Read Reynolds and Overton Chs. 11-12</td>
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<td>WEEK 6</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Teaching and New Media. Read Reynolds and Overton Chs. 13-15</td>
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<td>WEEK 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>President’s Day – enjoy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>Issues in New Media. Read Schultze, Introduction and Ch. 1 and 2.</td>
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### WEEK 8
February 21  Laying a Theory Foundation. **Read Romanowski Chs. 1-3**

### WEEK 9
February 28  Break for Modular Week

### WEEK 10
March 7  Creating a Historical Context. **Read Schultze, Chs. 3-4.**

### WEEK 11
March 14  The Press and Radio. **Read Romanowski, Chs. 4-5./ Media in the Local Church Proposal Due on March 16th, by 11:59 PM Eastern time.**

### WEEK 12
March 21  Theater. **Read Shultze Ch. 5.**

### WEEK 13
March 28  Narrative. **Schultze, Chs. 6-7.**

### WEEK 14
April 4  Television and the News. **Read Romanowski Chs. 9-11 (You might notice that I have left out Romanowski 6-8. These chapters largely deal with the Production Code and this history of early Hollywood. You may read about these on your own.)**

### WEEK 15
April 11  Youth Culture and Blockbusters. **Read Romanowski 12-13 and Schultze, Ch. 8.**

### WEEK 16
April 18  The Way of the Critic. **Final papers due on April 19th to be sent out for peer review. Peer reviews of those papers due on Friday, April 22. Papers must be emailed to me by 11:59 PM Eastern time. Email papers to marcnew@regent.edu and COPY TO marc@movieministry.com.**
WEEK 17

April 25  Final papers with all corrections are to be posted to the forum created for those papers by April 26th by 11:59 PM Eastern time.

Critical Dates and Deadlines

March 16  Media and the Local Church Proposal must be posted by 11:59 PM EST
April 18  All final papers must be emailed to Dr. Newman by 11:59 PM EST
April 22  All peer reviews must be emailed to Dr. Newman by 11:59 PM EST
April 26  All final papers must be posted by 11:59 PM EST

University Policies and Resources

Please review the following links for important information on University policies:

- Academic Calendar/Registrar Information
- Bookstore
- Honor/Plagiarism Policy
- Regent Library
- Student Services (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- Technical Support – University Helpdesk
- Grading Policies (incompletes, extensions, IPs, etc.)
- Student Course Evaluations
- www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student_life/disabilities.cfm

Disability Statement—the student is responsible for contacting the assistant director of Student Services at 752-353-4486 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangement with each instructor. The website above is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regard to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better informed of their responsibilities toward the disabled students and their classes.