COMMUNICATION AND CHILDREN
Psych 266, Summer Semester 2005

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COURSE OUTLINE

PURPOSE:

This course is designed to examine the role of communication, especially as it relates to the socialization and enculturation impacts of family, television and mass media in the cognitive, emotional and social development of children from preschool to the adolescent stage. It is intended to present the student with a critical analysis of research and theory concerning family socialization processes, the social and psychological attributes of children's television, including commercial advertisements, the patterns of gratification and social learning that might result from televiewing at different developmental stages, and the relationship between television violence, sexual portrayals and emotional and behavioral disorders including aggression. In addition, we will also examine alternative ways of using television to foster social, cognitive and perceptual skills and prosocial behaviors among children.

TEXTBOOKS:


SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:

I. COMMUNICATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIALIZATION: IDENTIFYING THE MAJOR ISSUES


2. The Changing American Family and Community

Mon 7/11 3. Communication and Television in the Socialization of Children. Winn, M., chaps. 1, 2,3; Calvert, Chap. 1.


II. FAMILY, COMMUNICATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF CHILDREN


III. FAMILY, TELEVISION AND DEVELOPMENT STAGES.

Mon 7/18 1. Family and Televiewing as Learning Environments - Winn, M., chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Calvert, chap. 7.


IV. THE SYMBOLIC WORLD OF TELEVISION AND MASS MEDIA- THE MEANING OF SYMBOLIC CONTENT AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Wed 7/20  

**HOURLY EXAMINATION #1**

1. Role Models, Gender Roles, Sex and Social Stereotypes in Children's Television and Adult Television Fare – Calvert, chap. 3.


2. Portrayal of Social Norms, Cultural Values, and Ethnic Minorities, Berns, R., chap. 9, Calvert, chap.4.


4. Portrayal of Sexual Relationships and Intimacy.


**CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT, GROUP #1 DUE**

V. FAMILY SOCIALIZATION, TELEVISION AND PATTERNS OF SOCIAL LEARNING


2. TV use, Social Learning, and Role Modeling Effects, Berns, R., chap. 11; Winn, M., chaps. 12, 13, Calvert, chap.9.

4. TV violence, and short term and long term effects. Calvert, chap.2.
a. Arousal Effects and Aggression
b. Desensitization Effects
c. Psychological Disorders including Anxiety, Fear, Phobia
d. Role of Catharsis
e. Role of Social Psychological Conditions for Arousal, Imitation Learning and Modeling of Aggressive Behaviors.


SECOND CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT, GROUP #2 DUE/ RESEARCH PROJECT AND ABSTRACTS DUE

VI. TELEVIEWING, MEDIA ADVERTISING AND SOCIALIZATION IMPACTS

Mon 8/1 1. Perceptual and Cognitive Learning by children from Advertisements. Calvert, chap.5.

2. Developmental Stages, and Learning of Consumer Values and Norms.


4. Advertising and Sex and Role Stereotypes.


VII. THE POTENTIAL OF TELEVISION AS AN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FORCE: A LOOK AT WHAT CAN BE DONE


2. Using TV for Human Learning and for Development of Cognitive and Social Skills.
3. Role of Family and School in Regard to Children's TV Consumption for Fostering Prosocial Values - Winn, M., chaps. 12, 16, 17, 18, 19.

SECOND HOURLY EXAMINATION

PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS/CASE STUDIES

PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS

CLASSES END

READINGS:

All readings corresponding to the list of topics indicated in the outline that are drawn from Calvert, Berns, and Winn, will be required of all class members. Reading materials other than these textbooks are at the Bailey/Howe Library and are optional.

ASSIGNMENTS:

The expectations for each student are:

1. Research Abstracts: For this option, each student will review and prepare 10 (ten) abstracts of most recent empirical studies from professional journal articles and scholarly publications. The abstracts should focus on a specific topic that you have chosen for your research paper. Each abstract should include complete bibliographic reference along with a summary of research objectives, methodology, findings and conclusions. The purpose of these abstracts is to enable you to become familiar with important research studies on a designated topic and integrate them in your individual research paper as explained below. The abstracts should be typed and are due on Wednesday, July 27, 2005, along with your research paper.

2. Individual Research Paper: As part of this assignment, each of you will be required to complete a three (3) page long independent paper designed to provide an informative perspective on a specific problem pertaining to the role of communication and developmental impacts in the lives of children. The research paper should be based on a synthesis of your 10 (ten) research abstracts pertaining to your topic as explained above. It should articulate the importance of the topic, and document the need and justification for further research work on this problem and how you might go about doing such a study. This assignment is due on Wednesday, July 27, 2005. You will be invited to make a brief presentation of your research followed by a class discussion.

3. Case Study Assignments: For this option, each student will complete one class assignment in the form of a case study pertaining to a selected aspect of the following topics and turn in a report of about 10 (ten) typewritten pages on the results of your analysis. Each assignment should focus on a clearly defined question and provide an empirical and/or observational analysis of the basic problem of your case study. You should document at least 8 (eight) most recent empirical research studies from Professional Journals (i.e., who said what, when, and where). You will be invited to make a brief oral presentation of your case study followed by a class discussion. The due dates and topics for your case study assignments are as follows:
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<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Topics for Case Study</th>
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| Mon 7/25 | * Family and the development process, family interaction, conflict and communication, family, and televiewing, children's play behavior. **OR**
| Group #1 | * Developmental needs, Psychological motives, gratifications and patterns of televiewing and media consumption, children's language, and interpersonal behavior among peers. **OR**
|          | * Psychological aspects of televised Portrayal of human values, roles, human relationships, sex and role stereotypes, aging, ethnic, religious and occupational groups, conflict, violence, and crime. **OR**
| Wed 7/27 | * Patterns of social learning and role modeling associated with use of televised violence, children's perceptions, emotional responses and behavioral problems associated with the use of televised violence **OR**
| Group #2 | * Psychological impacts of television advertisements on cognitive learning, sex role development and on values and attitudes towards health, nutrition and alcoholic consumption among children and teenagers **OR**
|          | * Social Psychological approaches for critical televiewing and for using TV for Prosocial learning among children **OR**

4. **Examination:** There will be two hourly examinations based on class discussions and assigned readings that are listed in your course outline and a final examination. Each examination will incorporate multiple choice, true-false, short answer and essay questions. The final examination is cumulative and covers the entire course materials.

5. **Examples of Topics for Case Study and Research Paper:** There are several interesting topics focusing on the impacts of television and other media on adolescent health and development such as:

- Food Choices, Nutrition, and Obesity among Children, on Eating Disorders and Body Image concerns among Adolescents, and on Smoking and Alcoholic Beverage Consumption among Children.
COURSE EVALUATION:  -- You must choose one of the following 4 (four) options:

OPTION I

Your final grade in this course will be determined on the basis of your performance in your individual research paper, case study assignments, class presentations and participation, and in the examinations. Specifically, each of these components will be evaluated as follows:

1. Research Paper and Abstracts/Class Participation = 33.33% of final grade
2. Case Study Assignment/Class Presentation and Participation = 33.33% of final grade and Participation
3. Two Exams and Final = 33.33% of final grade

OPTION II

For this option, your grade will be determined as follows:

1. Class Participation/Research Paper Assignment = 33.33% of final grade
2. Two Exams and Final = 66.66% of final grade

OPTION III

For this option, your grade will be determined as follows:

1. Case Study Assignments/Class Presentation and Participation = 33.33% of final grade
2. Two Exams and Final = 66.66% of final grade

OPTION IV

If you choose option IV, your overall grade will be determined as follows:

1. Two Exams and Final/Class Participation = 100% of final grade
# DEADLINES TO REMEMBER!

A.  **Case Study Assignment**  
    Group #1  
    Monday, July 25th  
    Group #2  
    Wednesday, July 27th  

B.  **First Hourly Examination**  
    Monday, July 20th  

C.  **Second Hourly Examination**  
    Wednesday, August 3rd  

D.  **Research Abstracts/Research Paper**  
    Wednesday, July 27th