Mass Media and Cultures

COURSE IN BRIEF

*Mass Media and Cultures* is a directed study university-level course designed for students interested in international mass media as a method of understanding other cultures. It is structured to give the academic traveler an opportunity to compare U.S. and foreign methods of framing and packaging news and advertising messages. It also explores cross-cultural attitudes about freedom of expression.

Students will be required to complete a series of academic lessons which have been divided into three separate, but related study *phases*. These are identified as the *Pre-Travel* phase, the *Travel* phase and the *Post-Travel* phase. Each of these stages has its own set of required *tasks* that have been designed not only to familiarize the student with a specific topic relative to his/her travel experience, but to also create a foundation on which to base the next phase of the course.

Students may select either a 3 or 5 credit option. Course requirements vary with the number of credits.

REQUIRED READING (provided when you register, at no cost to the student.)


COURSE REQUIREMENTS (3 Credits)

THREE credits requires the satisfactory completion of:

**PRE-TRAVEL PHASE**

1. Prior to departing, complete background study of your travel destination, as directed in the Pre-Travel Lessons handout, sent to you after you register.

2. The background study for these assignments should be done before departure. If you are traveling to several countries, you may *select one country* to complete the pre-travel lessons. Upon completion of the lessons, submit your work online.

3. Write a two to three [2-3] page *Media Reflection Paper* in which you discuss how media might be different in the country you are visiting than in your home town. When anticipating how *media in the country you visit* will differ from the one in your home town and in comparing and contrasting media, consider:

   - How major events and trends in the history of the nation you will be visiting may have shaped the media.
   - How recent events may be bringing about new developments.
• Material covered in lessons from of the *International Field Study Workbook*.

Submit your paper online. See *General Information* below for instructions.

4. Read chapter five from the handout *Media and Ideology in Media Society* (sent to you when you register.) Use the ideas in this chapter and from the workbook assignments to write a two to three [2-3] page *Media in Society Paper*. Use the topic: “Some Ways the Media Reflect My Society” to begin your paper.

Select media samples from your community. With your media examples in front of you, evaluate “the underlying images of society” (*Media and Ideology*, p. 157) in your home town. This paper may raise questions such as:

- What do newspapers, magazines, billboards, etc. seem to want to convey beyond their explicit messages? What kind of world do they portray? What attitudes do they seem to recommend?
- Are these attitudes apparently in line with the areas “official” values, or do they seem to clash in any way with traditional values? The reading “Media and Ideology,” gives many examples of how one might find surprising information in seemingly straight-forward media. See if you can find any such information in the media in your town.

Submit your paper online. See *General Information* for online submission instructions.

**TRAVEL PHASE**

1. While traveling, obtain a newspaper or magazine in the country in which you are traveling. Also, pay attention to the country’s media: television, billboards and posters, etc. and make notes on your observations. Photograph examples of these if you can.

2. Record your observations in your daily *journal* and use these observations as the starting point for your *Media Analysis Paper*.

3. Fill in your portion of the *University Credit Evaluation Form* and give to your leader to complete. (Note: This form must be submitted in order for credit to be awarded. The travel leader may choose to submit the form to the university directly or may have the student submit the completed form. This form should be submitted via postal mail or fax. See *General Information* below for contact information.

**POST-TRAVEL PHASE**

When you return, write a two to three [2-3] page *Media Analysis Paper*. Just as you did in your pre-travel paper for your own community- consider the media samples from your host country. Evaluate “the underlying images of society” (*Media and Ideology*, p. 157) gathered in the country you visited. Again, reflect upon:
What do newspapers, magazines, billboards, etc. seem to convey beyond their explicit messages? What kind of world do they portray? What attitudes do they seem to recommend?

Are these attitudes apparently in line with the country’s “official” values; or, do they seem to clash in any way with traditional values? The reading Media and Ideology gives many examples of how one might find surprising information in seemingly straightforward media. What “messages” did you pick up in the media of your host country?

Submit your paper online.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS** (5 Credits)

**FIVE credits** requires the satisfactory completion of:

**PRE-TRAVEL PHASE**

Same as for THREE [3] credits.

**PLUS**

**Prepare for Foreign Citizen Interview**

You will be conducting an interview with a citizen of your host country. Use questions from the Interview Questions section (below) as the basis for your interview. Be sure you have these questions BEFORE you depart the United States. When preparing for the interview with the foreign source, try to anticipate how their socioeconomic, religious, and political history, combined with recent events, might influence their response, and prepare your questions accordingly. The ideas and concepts developed in the Non-Confrontational Response portion of the Pre-Travel exercises should be helpful in preparing for this assignment.

**Interview Questions**

Use the following as a guide to complete the Travel interview(s) with a citizen of your host country (required for the five credit option). However, don’t feel limited to only these questions — you are encouraged to use other interesting material in addition to this outline.

- Person Interviewed
- City/Country
- Date of Interview
- About the Person
- What protections for the media and for freedom of speech does the constitution in your country contain?
- Is there an equivalent section of sections in your constitution to the U.S. Bill of Rights?
- Does the education system in your country emphasize these rights?
- Is the media in your country actually free to operate according to these rights, or is it controlled by the state in any way?
- If not, how does the government in your country actually control the media (restrictive laws, military or police force, control of the supply of newsprint or ink, etc.)?
- Does the media in your country abuse these privileges?
- Do you think the average citizen in your country understands the importance of these rights?
**TRAVEL PHASE**
Same as for THREE [3] credits

**PLUS**

**Foreign Citizen Interview**
Conduct your interview with a foreign citizen. Record the responses in your travel journal. Remember that you will need this information in order to complete the Attitudes Essay during Post-Travel. For information on writing your interview questions, see *Pre-Travel* section above.

**POST-TRAVEL PHASE**
Same as for THREE [3] credits

**PLUS**

Write a three to five [3-5] page *Attitudes Comparison essay* comparing attitudes about freedom of speech and the media in your host country with your own attitudes and observations about America’s approach to these freedoms. Include the responses of the person(s) you interviewed. In writing this essay, use what you have learned from the following:

- Your interview with a foreign citizen;
- Relevant observations gained from the assignments in the workbook or covered by your Teacher/Leader during *Pre-Travel*; and
- Observations you made during the trip about how the media actually works and how people respond to the rights contained in their constitution.

Submit your paper online upon completion.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**
Click here for general information on this and all Field Studies courses or go to:

[http://outreach.ewu.edu/1500](http://outreach.ewu.edu/1500)
## COURSE REQUIREMENT OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work on during:</th>
<th>Required Assignments</th>
<th>3 Credits</th>
<th>5 Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Travel</td>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Timeline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Travel</td>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Travel</td>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio-Visual Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Travel</td>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper Comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Travel</td>
<td>Media Reflection Paper</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2-3 pages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Travel</td>
<td>Media in Society Paper</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2-3 pages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Interview with foreign citizen</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Will not be submitted. Must give evidence of interview in required Attitudes Essay.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Travel</td>
<td>Media Analysis Paper</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2-3 Pages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Travel</td>
<td>Attitudes Essay</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3-5 pages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give to leader during trip; Submit after travel is completed via postal mail or fax</td>
<td>University Credit Evaluation Form</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Credit will not be granted unless the student successfully completes both the academic and travel phases of the program. Exceptions to the stated course requirements will be granted by EWU only under extenuating circumstances. Refunds will be granted according to official university policy. EWU will make the final determination on matters in question.

Eastern Washington University complies with all state and federal rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran.