MRTS 3615: Understanding Media Industries
University of North Texas
Fall 2022

Professor:	Dr. Jennifer Porst	Email:	jennifer.porst@unt.edu
Class:	T 2– 4:50P	Classroom:	RTFP 184
Office Hours:	T 5-6P & by appointment	Office:	RTFP 235

Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to the organization and function of the major media industries across societies, nations, and time periods. With a focus on the moving image media of film, television, video games, and social media, students will gain knowledge of how those media industries work, why they work as they do, and understand the broader theoretical and practical implications of media industry structure and function. The knowledge and skills provided by this class will prepare students for success in 4000 level coursework and industry studies classes in particular, as well as future careers in the media industries.

Student Learning Goals:
This course will provide students with an opportunity to:
- Understand the basic organization and function of the media industries
- Gain critical knowledge of the relationship between the media industries and culture
- Conduct research on the media industries using a variety of methods
- Clearly present complex ideas through both oral presentations and writing
- Ability to successfully work in a group as well as on individual projects

Required Texts:
1. Timothy Havens and Amanda Lotz, *Understanding Media Industries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) *Need to purchase via Perusall*
2. "The Town with Matthew Belloni" podcast
3. Any additional readings will be available via PDF or as hard copies distributed in class

Course Requirements:
All assignments will be discussed in detail before we come to them, and further information about assignments is available on our course website in Canvas.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly, and attendance will be kept track of using iClicker through Canvas. If a student missed the iClicker attendance check-in, they should sign in with Dr. Porst at the mid-class break. Students are responsible for all work done in classes when they are absent, and are encouraged to get class notes from a classmate or meet with Dr. Porst to get caught up.

Since life happens, all students get one "pass" for an absence. In order to have any additional absences excused, students should work with the Dean of Students office. Students must provide the Dean of Students (University Union, Suite 409) with official and verifiable documentation related to the reason for the absence. After you bring that documentation to the Dean of Students and talk with one of their staff members, they will send a notification to Dr. Porst that verifies and excuses the absence. If Dr. Porst does not receive that notification from the Dean of Students' office, the absence will count as an unexcused absence, and each unexcused absence will result in a letter grade deduction from your attendance and participation grades. Four or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the class.

Class Participation
In order to do well in this class, it is essential that you actively participate. Quality participation includes completing the assigned readings and screenings before we discuss them, making intelligent and relevant comments in class, asking good questions, taking notes during lectures, discussions, and screenings, and active listening. Participation in discussion should demonstrate that students have completed the assigned homework for the week and can intelligently discuss the content of that homework.

Throughout the semester, there will be brief quizzes and in-class activities and worksheets that will assess students' engagement with the homework and in-class content. The grades for that work will count towards your participation grade. Students should make sure to come to class with a pencil or pen and an internet enabled device like a phone or a laptop, so that they can complete any handwritten worksheets and online research and assignments. If you have any concerns about this, please speak with Dr. Porst.

Homework and Perusall
Each week students will listen to an episode of the podcast, "The Town with Matthew Belloni," which is available wherever you get podcasts. Typically, they release one new episode each week, so students should listen to the most recent episode available during the week before our class meeting. Sometimes, they release more than one episode in a week, and if that is the case, students may choose one episode (or more!) from the week to listen to.

There is also an assigned reading for most weeks. Those readings should be completed using the Perusall tool which is linked to each homework assignment in Canvas. Perusall creates an engaging co-reading environment and helps students to develop stronger reading comprehension skills by having them read and annotate each reading along with a small group of their fellow students.

Fantasy Slate Management
This is an opportunity for students to engage with the contemporary film industry in a fun and new way. Students will imagine they are a Hollywood mini-mogul and have to build a slate of films that will gross the highest domestic box office for their opening weekends. Students should pay attention to the marketing and box office revenues each week, and we will discuss each week's results in class. The student whose slate grosses the most money by the end of the class will earn extra participation points.

Small Group Meetings
One of the challenges of a large lecture class is getting to know your fellow students and the professor. In order to remedy that, each student will meet with their small group and Dr. Porst for the last 20 minutes of our class time 1-2 times over the course of the semester. Students should come to that meeting prepared to engage in discussion about that week's homework and class content.

Packback Discussions
In weeks when students are not meeting in person with their small groups and Dr. Porst, they will spend the last 20 minutes of class engaging in virtual discussion with their small group via Packback. Students should focus their posts on what was discussed in class and can pose questions about topics that interested them or that they would like to discuss further.

Group Project
Students will work in small groups and take on the role of an industry consultant who has been hired by a company or an organization in the media industry to create a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis for them. Groups will present their analysis and recommendation to the class in week 15.

<u>Final Essay</u>
The Final will be a take home essay that asks students to reflect on and synthesize the skills and knowledge that they learned over the course of the semester. In order to do well on the exam, it is critical that students take comprehensive notes on all readings, screenings, and class discussions.

<u>Formatting of Written Work</u>
All written work should be formatted and, when necessary, properly cited according to either Chicago or MLA Style. Please keep in mind that these formatting guidelines refer to the overall formatting of the paper in addition to the formatting of the citations. Guides for both MLA and Chicago style are available on our course website.

Policy on Late Work
Any written work submitted after the deadline will receive a one letter grade deduction for each day late. Written assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the original due date unless other arrangements have been made in advance with Prof. Porst. Except in case of a documented emergency, students must be present and participate in any class presentations, or they will receive a failing grade for that project. Late work is not accepted for Perusall homework or Packback discussions. Please meet with Dr. Porst if you have any concerns about completing that work on time.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance………………………………15%	Perusall Homework……………………..25%
Class Participation………………………15%	Group Project…......................................10%
Small Group Meetings…………………..5%	Fantasy Slate Management……………...5%
Packback discussions……………………10%	Final Essay……………………………..15%

Letter grades indicate the following levels of performance:

A = Excellent	D = Poor
B = Good	F = Failing
C = Fair	

E-mail and Office Hours
Students are encouraged to meet with Dr. Porst during office hours to discuss any questions or concerns you have about the course.

Emails should be written in a clear and professional manner, and I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you have questions, I strongly encourage you to double check your syllabus, assignments, and class notes, and ask any questions you have during class time. Students are also encouraged to post questions about the class in the "Q&A" discussion board on Canvas because if you have a question about the class, it is likely other students do too! For more in-depth discussions about assignments or grades please plan to meet with Dr. Porst in person.

The UNT Writing Lab
I encourage you to take advantage of the services available at the UNT Writing Lab. Tutors are available to work with undergraduates and graduates, in person and online. They can help with issues related to structure, grammar, punctuation, citation styles, and more. They do more than merely proofread; they teach you strategies and techniques to improve your writing for the long term. All services are free.

Learn more about the Writing Lab by visiting their website (https://writinglab.unt.edu), calling them at 940-565-2563, or by visiting their office in Sage Hall, room 152.

Statement on Diversity and Inclusion
Every student in this class will be honored and respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. Students will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socio-economic status, or national identity. Issues of diversity will be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects, and I will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. Even though there may be times when students disagree, it is expected that all students in this classroom treat each other with respect. If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with me or to contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 940-565-2711 or by email at: Equity.Diversity@unt.edu

Students with Disabilities
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at *http://www.unt.edu/oda*. You may also contact them by phone at *940.565.4323*.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is of central importance in education, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this class. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. It is the responsibility of all UNT students to know and adhere to the University's policy on academic integrity, which can be found at: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003. If you have any questions concerning this policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, please meet with Prof. Porst.

Acceptable Student Behavior
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Emergency Notification & Procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

*This syllabus is subject to change. We will discuss any changes in class, and the most up-to-date syllabus will be available on the course website.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

All readings and podcasts are to be completed before class on the date on which they are listed.

Week 1: Introduction to Media Industries
Tuesday 8/30
Complete: 1. Getting to know you questionnaire
                    2. Registration for iClicker, Perusall, and Packback
                    3. "Introductions" video and responses
                    4. Fantasy Slate Management Picks

Week 2: Introduction to Industries and Methods
Tuesday 9/6
Read: Chapter 1 "Understanding Media Industries"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 3: Theoretical Frameworks and Key Economic Concepts
Tuesday 9/13
Read: Chapter 2 "The Industrialization of Culture Framework and Key Economic Concepts"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 4: Commercial v. Noncommercial Media
Tuesday 9/20
Read: Chapter 3 "Media Industry Mandates"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 5: Media Law and Regulation
Tuesday 9/27
Read: Chapter 4 "Regulation of the Media Industries"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 6: Media Economics - Film
Tuesday 10/4
Read: Chapter 5 "Economic Conditions in Media Production" (97-108)
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 7: Media Economics - TV
Tuesday 10/11
Read: Chapter 5 "Economic Conditions in Media Production" (108-124)
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

Week 8: Media Technologies
Tuesday 10/18
Read: Chapter 6 "Technological Conditions of the Media Industries"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

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Week 9: Production Cultures and Labor
Tuesday 10/25
Read: Chapter 7 "Creative Practices and Media Work"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

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Week 10: Distribution and Audiences
Tuesday 11/1
Read: Chapter 8 "Media Distribution and Aggregation Practices"
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

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Week 11: Media Industries in the Digital Age
Tuesday 11/8
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"
Read: Chapter 9 "Digitization"

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Week 12: Media Globalization
Tuesday 11/15
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"
Read: Chapter 10 "Globalization"

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Week 13: Digital Distribution and Local Language Productions
No In Person Class Meeting – Happy Thanksgiving!
Tuesday 11/22
Screen: Two Netflix local language productions
Post: Packback discussion board

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Week 14: SWOT Analysis
Tuesday 11/29
Listen: "The Town with Matthew Belloni"

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Week 15: Course Review and Wrap Up
Tuesday 12/6
In Class: Group project presentations

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Week 16: Final Essay Due
Tuesday 12/13
Final Essays due by 2P via the assignment link on Canvas