

NAZARETH COLLEGE
COMM 415: MEDIA MARATHONING
Spring 2015

CLASS MEETINGS: W 6-8:40 in GAC 432
PROFESSOR: Dr. Lisa Perks
OFFICE: Golisano 495
OFFICE HOURS: M 12:30-1:30, Th 1:30-3:30, and by appointment
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IA. Course Description

This course examines media marathoning from both an audience perspective and a textual perspective. From the audience perspective, the course considers viewers/readers as agentic and explores their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagements with marathoned narratives. In terms of the textual perspective, the course explores themes and character types found in commonly marathoned stories. Because media marathoning is an emerging area of scholarly study, students will be conducting original qualitative research in groups to offer enhanced understanding of this notable phenomenon.

IB. Communication and Media Student Learning Outcomes

The Communication and Media program focuses on the following five student learning outcomes, with our course's particular emphasis in bold:

1. *Critique.* Demonstrate the ability to perform a theoretically grounded critical evaluation of communication practices and situations in support of a cohesive argument.
2. ***Research.* Collect, analyze, and cite a variety of print and electronic sources.**
3. ***Vocabulary.* Demonstrate thorough understanding and effective command of key communication terms and theories.**
4. ***Argument.* Construct thoughtful and persuasive written and oral arguments.**
5. *Praxis.* Create aesthetically pleasing or persuasive texts that demonstrate an understanding of communication and rhetorical theories.

II. Required Materials

- Perks, L. G. (2014). *Media Marathoning: Immersions in Morality*. Towson, MD: Lexington Books.
- Journal articles and book chapters will either be posted to Moodle or accessible through the library's Communication and Mass Media Complete database.
- Access to *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings* film

***Copies of the book will be on reserve at the library. To maximize your educational experience and to help you get the most from your tuition dollars, you will need to bring your book, a copy or a scan of each chapter to class on the day we discuss it. A warning will be issued if a student first fails to bring the reading and absences will be given if a student continues to attend unprepared.*

III. Course Assignments

Readings: Readings are to be completed before the class on which they are due. Reading the assigned texts is necessary to understand the course content and to participate effectively in class discussions.

Guiding Questions: For every article or chapter you read, you will be asked to identify the following information: 1. The article or chapter's main argument; 2. Three themes or major pieces of evidence the author uses to advance his/her argument; 3. A question you have or one point that intrigued you about each reading. Four of your guiding questions answers will be collected and graded (worth 10 points each), with the lowest grade dropped at the end of the semester. Some class days will have three separate readings. The ten points will be divided among the collection of answers (three answers for each reading).

Exam: The class will have one open-note exam. This exam will take place in class. Students may draw from their class notes, class readings, or mobile devices. Students who do not have a mobile device should borrow one or they can use the one classroom computer as needed. Students will have an hour and 45 minutes to take the exam. Reviewing the material prior to the exam will be important so that you have a good understanding and can quickly find the answers you need. No exam review will be posted, but students will all contribute a sample exam question to our course exam forum to generate ideas about key topics.

Scholarly Work Show and Tell: Once during the semester you will present on a peer-reviewed scholarly work (journal article, book, or book chapter) that is related to media marathoning. Consider looking through our course readings and finding a work that those authors cite or a work that cites those authors. To prepare for the show and tell, you will write up a one page (single-spaced) document that summarizes the scholarly work's essential argument and explains how it connects to media marathoning. Offer a properly formatted APA citation of the article at the top of the page and proper citations throughout the write-up.

In the presentation, you will describe the key points of your scholarly work to the class. (Please rehearse this talk and do not read us your paper.) Then show us a brief text that relates to your article, providing an example of what the authors discuss or illuminating their argument in some way. You may present a key movie scene, TV scene, book passage, trailer, meme, poster, comic strip, etc. Explain how the text connects to the scholarly work. Then open up for questions from the class. (We ask you, you don't ask us—unless you want to.) Presentations should take 10-15 minutes, including questions.

Post a copy of your write-up to Moodle's discussion forum *before* class in order for your assignment to be counted on time. Show and tell write-ups are posted to Moodle so the class can find potentially helpful sources for their papers. There are no make-ups on missed show and tells, but you may switch with a classmate ahead of time if you can identify someone willing to trade with you.

Show and tells are worth 20 points. They will be assessed on the article's suitability, summary accuracy and comprehensiveness, text suitability, presentation professionalism, and formatting (time limits, page limits, citation accuracy, proper spelling and grammar).

Marathonning Project: Media marathonning is currently underexplored in academia, so this is a pioneer class in many ways. Because of this subject's newness, we are discovering what else needs to be said about marathonning. We will conduct qualitative research in pursuit of new understanding. The class will collectively construct a list of research questions (RQs), divide into 4-6 research teams each focused on one RQ, and conduct interviews or focus groups to find answers to their question. After conducting the qualitative research and transcribing the findings, the groups will each write a paper analyzing the findings. Each piece of the assignment is described in greater depth in an assignment guide posted to Moodle.

CITI Certificate: To prepare to conduct the interviews, everyone needs to pass the CITI certification and give Dr. Perks a copy of the certificate to put on file with the Human Subjects Research Committee. To access the CITI program, please click on this link and register for an account: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>

Interview or Focus Group: Each student will conduct an interview or focus group and transcribe the recording.

Group Paper: Dr. Perks will post the transcripts (with pseudonyms) to Moodle as a corpus for the class to access. Students will then analyze the corpus through the lens of media studies scholarship, writing about one unique and cohesive theme in 8-10 pages. At least two of our course readings should be used to construct that lens, but six additional scholarly sources must also be used to flesh out the critical lens for a total of at least eight sources. (Consider using relevant show and tell write-ups that are posted in Moodle.)

Group Blog Post: Each group will submit one 250-350 word blog post summarizing their essay's major findings in an engaging fashion. The post should include links, images, and/or video. These posts will be emailed to Dr. Perks and she will post in mediamarathonning.com. As their final assignment for class, all students will need to comment on one other group's blog post.

Participation and Professionalism: Participation is expected in our interactive class. You will learn a lot from one another through discussion, activities, and our blog conversations. Each student will be assigned a score at the middle and end of the semester that reflects the professionalism and insight of his/her contributions to class. High quality contributions will demonstrate that the student has completed the day's readings, read the blog and has added something productive to our discussion.

IV. Course Management

Media Use in the Classroom: Please show respect for your peers, professor, and tuition dollars by using mobile devices only for class-related purposes.

Late Work: Late papers will be penalized by 10% for each 24 hours (or fraction thereof) they are late. Late quizzes, blog posts, blog comments, or show and tells will not be accepted or graded.

Attendance and Lateness: Attendance is closely related to the learning process. You can take one absence, but will lose a letter grade for your second absence and each one after that. There are *no excused absences* so use the one sparingly. You are responsible for all work missed. If you do miss class, be sure to ask a classmate for help getting up to speed.

The learning process also depends on your being present the entire class. If you are more than 10 minutes late or must leave more than 10 minutes early, you will be counted absent for that day.

Disabilities: As per college policy, appropriate accommodations will be made for any student with a documented disability provided the student self-identifies to the instructor, and provides a letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities indicating that appropriate documentation is on file and outlining the academic accommodations to which the student is entitled.

Academic integrity: Academic integrity is essential to the educational mission of Nazareth College of Rochester, for the free pursuit of knowledge and understanding is seriously impeded by any form of academic dishonesty. Hence, no form of academic dishonesty will be condoned by the college. “Academic dishonesty” is understood as any act of deceit bearing on one’s own or another’s academic work, where “academic work” is understood to mean any activity pertaining to the educational mission of the college. Such acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism in any form and the use during an exam of information of materials not authorized by the instructor for such use.

Your work must also be your own and should be something you created just for this class. Infractions of any type will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or a failing grade in the course. No “re-dos” will be allowed.

V. Grading

Citi Certificate	5 points
Show and Tell	20 points
Interview or Focus Group	50 points
Group Essay Rough Draft	10 points
Group Essay	100 points
Group Blog Post	20 points
Open-Note Exam	100 points
Guiding Question Quizzes	30 points
Professionalism and Part. (includes blog comment)	40 points (20 mid-semester and 20 end of semester)
<i>Total:</i>	335 points

Here is the scale of what letter the grade percentage equals:

A = 92.7 - 100%	A- = 89.7 - 92.7%	
B+ = 86.7 - 89.7%	B = 82.7 - 86.7%	B- = 79.7 - 82.7%
C+ = 76.7 - 79.7%	C = 72.7 - 76.7 %	C- = 69.7 - 72.7%
D+ = 66.7 - 69.7%	D = 62.7 - 66.7%	D- = 59.7 - 62.7%
F = 59.7 % and Under		

Note about Grades: The grading scale already has a cushion built in. Grades will not be bumped up further at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your performance in the class, see Dr. Perks early in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The order of the readings in the schedule is the recommended order of engaging them. For example, you should watch LOTR before reading chapters 5, 6, and 7 on 2/25. Students are responsible for noting any changes to the schedule. Changes will be announced in class and posted in Moodle.

Date	Class Topic	Assignment Due
What Drives Marathoners?		
1/14	Syllabus, intros, popular press coverage, start a wiki of research questions	Bring a tablet, laptop, or smart phone; Print the syllabus if you want a hard copy
1/21	Why is marathonning a contemporary trend?	Mittell "Complex TV"; Perks Introduction
1/28	Active audiences	Jenkins "How Texts Become Real"; Perks Chapter 1
2/4	Behavioral patterns	Perks Chapter 2; Dayan and Katz "Defining Media Events"; CITI certificates due
2/11	Emotional dimensions	Horton and Wohl "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction"; Perks Chapter 3; Eyal and Cohen "Parasocial Breakups"
2/18	Cognitive dimensions	Perks Chapter 4; Mittell "Lost in a Great Story"
What Drives Marathonned Stories?		
2/25	Dark and light in marathonned stories	Watch <i>Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring</i> ; Perks Chapters 5, 6, and 7
3/4	Moral ambiguity; Vote on research projects and form research teams	Perks Chapter 8 and 12; Krakowiak and Oliver "When Good Characters Do Bad Things"; Research topic proposals due to wiki
3/11	SPRING BREAK	
3/18	Love and collectivism	Perks Chapters 9, 10, and 11
3/25	Practice interviewing techniques; Check out exam questions; What's next in marathonning?	Perks Chapter 13 and Conclusion; Berger "Interview" chapter; post one possible exam question to Moodle
4/1	In-class, open-note exam; Discuss literature reviews	In-class, open-note exam ; Read link on literature reviews and sample literature review
4/8	Audit transcripts in class; Analyze discourse in class (leave with outline)	Interviews completed and transcripts due
4/15	Peer review and revise in class	Literature review due
4/22	Revise in class	Full rough draft due (worth 10 points)
4/29	Final essays and blog posts due by 6:00 through email; one blog comment due by 7pm	

Media Marathonng Reading List
Perks Spring 2015

- Berger, Arthur Asa. *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2010.
- Eyal, Karen and Cohen, Jonathan. "When Good *Friends* Say Goodbye: A Parasocial Breakup Study." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 50.3 (2006): 502-523.
- Horton, Donald and Richard Wohl. "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction: Observation on Intimacy at a Distance." In *Inter/Media Interpersonal Communication in a Media World*, edited by Gary Grumpert and Robert Cathcart. 32-55. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Jenkins, Henry. "How Texts Become Real." *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (pp. 51-85). New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Krakowiak, K. Maja. and Mary Beth Oliver. "When Good Characters Do Bad Things: Examining the Effect of Moral Ambiguity on Enjoyment." *Journal of Communication* 62, no. 1 (2012): 117-135.
- Mittell, Jason. "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television." *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 29-40.