This booklet describes the language arts course "Media, Minds, and Masses," written for the Dade County, Fla., public schools. Topics for the course include the workings of contemporary radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and movies; the present status and power of media; the history and development of media; and the influences of the media on our lives. This course description includes performance objectives, the rationale for the course, teaching strategies for attaining the objectives, and readings for the course. No student level is specified. (JK)
AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE
QUINMESTER PROGRAM

Language Arts: MEDIA, MINDS, AND MASSES 5114.66 6416.21
5115.66 6457.21
5116.66 6443.06
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English  Social Studies

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION 1971
MEDIA, MINDS, AND MASSES

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English, Social Studies

Written by James Laggot and Faith Vino

for the
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Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
1971
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Course Title: Media, Minds, and Masses  

Course Description: Students will study the workings of contemporary mass media: radio, television, newspapers and magazines, and movies. Both a study of the present status and power of media and the history and development of media will be included. The influence of media on life, in a community and in a nation, will be explained.

I. Performance objectives  
A. Students will determine the functions of the mass media in a democratic society.  
B. Students will analyze the impact that the mass media have on their individual lives and on society.  
C. Students will discover the types of values and life styles that the media seem to favor.  
D. Students will describe the operation of a TV station, a radio station, a newspaper or a film studio.  
E. Students will investigate the growth of radio, TV, and film.  
F. Students will illustrate the changing function of the printed media as reflected in the history of their growth.  
G. Students will evaluate the impact of radio and television on the function and effectiveness of the newspaper.  
H. Students will identify the major criticisms and challenges facing the media today.  
I. Students will analyze one of the major areas of controversy involving the media.  
J. Students will evaluate the fairness and comprehensiveness of the reporting of information by the media.

II. Course Content  

Rationale  

The influence of the mass media upon the individual and society is so extensive that most people do not fully understand it. The media—radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, and films affect either directly or indirectly virtually every facet of man's social and cultural environment. They contribute to social change, shape attitudes and values, influence political choices, and mold buying habits. In our highly complex world, a citizen must rely heavily on the mass forms of communication for his knowledge of society;
consequently, he needs to understand the roles of the media, their operations, their impact, and to a lesser degree their history and development. "Media, Minds, and Masses" is a course designed to help the student investigate these aspects of mass communication.

The first part of the course involves role and impact and is an examination of how and in what ways the media are and should be affecting our lives as individuals and as a society. The student will not only analyze the effects of his own communicative experiences, but will also investigate various theories by experts in the field. Marshall McLuhan and Nicholas Johnson are just two of the much talked about contemporary critics to be studied.

In the second portion of the course, major concern is devoted to the history, development, and workings of the mass media. A study of the changing functions of the printed media from the colonial press era to such Twentieth Century news trends as the development of interpretative reporting will be undertaken. Then, the growth of radio, television, and the film, and their influences on the newspaper industry will be briefly examined. This study will also include an analysis of the economic structure and the similarities and differences in the content and technique of the media.

The final section of the course seeks to examine some of the criticisms and challenges facing the media today. Consideration of such controversies as the trend towards corporate concentration in communication; violence on television as stimulus to social unrest; government control of the broadcasting industry; the implications of escalating media campaign costs; the possibilities of television cassettes; and the development of communications satellites to make possible the transfer of man's knowledge throughout the globe.

III. Teaching Strategies

A. Students will determine the functions of the mass media in a democratic society.

1. After viewing the three films: Making Yourself Understood, Communication in the Modern World, and Communication and the Community, have students propose differences between personal communication and communication that is mass produced.

2. Have students read the chapter "Mass Communications" in Sociology for High School and make a list of the various functions of the media. After making the list, students should attempt to give concrete examples of how the media carry out their function. An example would be to discuss the various ways that the media inform the public.

3. Set up a class discussion in which students identify the many forms of mass communication and the different roles that each performs.

4. Read to the class the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. Organize a class discussion concerning the meaning of freedom of the press and how this freedom helps democracy grow.
5. Invite on separate days an editor from one of the local papers and a manager of a local television station to speak on what he sees as the role of his medium in the community. Encourage students to ask questions about the broad functions of the media as well as those related to our community. Then organize a discussion comparing and contrasting the roles of the two mediums.

6. Show students the filmstrip *Mass Media: Their Role in a Democracy*. Organize a discussion concerning how well they think the media are accomplishing the roles mentioned. Some students may want to select projects investigating some of the criticisms leveled at the media. (Projects should be completed by the sixth week in time for the section of this course dealing with the major criticisms and challenges of the media.)

7. Have students read the chapter, "The Social Importance of Communicators" in *Introduction to Mass Communications* and organize a discussion concerning the role of the media in influencing public opinion, stimulating economic growth, and reporting social customs and change.

8. Invite a speaker from the Journalism or Communications department of Miami Dade Jr. College or the University of Miami to speak on the roles of mass media in society as well as their roles in this community. Leave plenty of time for a question and answer period at the end of the talk.

9. Have a group of students interview a local broadcaster from a radio talk show to examine the effectiveness of such shows in bringing about consensus in a democracy.

B. Students will analyze the impact that the mass media have on their individual lives and on society.

1. After viewing selected photographs and/or listening to records or tapes of dramatic scenes, have students discuss any reactions they experienced by listing ideas or sensations that led to their response.

2. Have students discuss with their parents the ways in which television has altered the sleeping, eating and entertainment habits in their households. Have them be prepared to discuss their findings in class.

3. Have students make a survey of the reading, viewing (both movies and television) and listening habits and preferences of a variety of people. Make sure they include teachers, parents, as well as peers. Ask them to make some conclusions about how much time is spent experiencing the media, what types of media are most favored, and why.

4. Have students keep a record of the amount of time they themselves spend (a) watching TV, (b) listening to the radio, and (c) reading. Also have students keep a careful list of any new idea or information which was derived from those sources. Which source was given most attention? Which medium provided the most new experiences? What other conclusions can be drawn?
5. After giving a short lecture on McLuhan's ideas about medium as message, ask students to give examples of the medium being more important than the message. Examples can be cited from product packaging, book covers, records, grocery store displays, TV commercials, film advertisements, etc.

6. Have a group of students demonstrate how people display opposite emotions about the same event with pictures in newspapers, magazines or TV.

7. Show McLuhan's film "The Medium is the Message" and organize a discussion concerning some of the broader implications of McLuhan's ideas about media and culture as a follow-up. Some students may want to tackle McLuhan's book, Understanding Media.

8. Invite a newscaster from a local television station and a news reporter from the Herald to discuss the effectiveness of their particular medium.

9. Have students read "The Crush of Television" in How to Talk Back to Your TV Set and be prepared to discuss Johnson's arguments concerning the three myths of the industry spokesmen in defending TV programming.

10. Give a lecture or have students read McLuhan's theories on hot and cold media (the memo sections in Selling of a President can be used for this purpose). McLuhan's definitions are sometimes the opposite of what one would presume so a discussion may well grow out of the lecture. Regardless, students should attempt, using McLuhan's definitions, to classify other types of mediums; i.e., lectures, small group discussions, photographs, etc.

11. Have students read a short history of the Martin Luther King Movement and be ready to explain the effect of the media in this movement.

12. Show two films, one which is effective in exploiting the techniques of films, another which is simply a "lecture" on film. Have students comment on the content and the impact of the two films in relation to McLuhan's theories regarding the medium being the message.

13. Have students read some of the articles in Part I of Alan Casty's Mass Media and Mass Man. This book is written for the college level student so it will not be for everyone. Have students write an essay dealing with the various ways the media affects man and his society. (Chapter 2, "The Mass Media and Society," in Mass Media and Modern Society by Peterson, Jensen, and Rivers can also be used for this assignment.)

C. Students will discover the types of values and life styles that the media seem to favor.

1. Show the film strip The Generation Under 25 and have students write an essay discussing the reasons for communication breakdowns between the younger generation and adults.
2. Have students watch a number of programs particularly directed toward children. Ask them to discuss what impact the content of these programs, as well as their sponsors, might have on children.

3. Have students select two or three radio or TV commercials to study. Formulate questions for students to answer pertaining to the needs or desires to which the commercials appeal.

4. Have students select a number of folk songs with social themes, such as the songs of Bob Dylan or Simon and Garfunkel, and examine the attitudes and values being discussed.

5. Have students read Chapter 13, "Television and Social Values" in Language and Reality. Then have them complete in writing at least two of the problems at the end of the chapter.

6. Have students write a paper considering how accurately TV family shows such as Family Affair, My 3 Sons, Julia, or All in the Family reflect family life in America. Each student should discuss at least three family type shows in his paper.

7. Have students interview a doctor or someone in the medical profession as to how truthfully medical shows such as Marcus Welby and Medical Center portray the life and work of a doctor.

8. On the basis of what they see and hear on TV, ask students to write answers to these questions: (1) How does one achieve success? (2) What is the greatest measure of happiness? (3) Who are TV's leaders and heroes? (4) How does a person solve his problems? His ailments? (5) What are the most serious problems in society?

9. Have students bring to class articles from the newspaper dealing with human interest stories. Discuss what each story reveals about the interests and values of your community.

10. Have students find evidence of attempts to cultivate individuality in the media and evidence of pressure for conformity. Students should be prepared to explain their findings to the class.

11. Have students write a content analysis of broadcasting drama and its heroes.

12. Have students question several voters about why they voted for certain candidates in the last election. Have them discuss how much the voter knew about the candidate's position on the issues. How much did personality influence the voter's choice? What was the impact of newspaper coverage and television advertising on the voter's decision?

D. Students will describe the operation of a TV station, a radio station, a newspaper or a film studio.

1. Show the film The Miami Herald to your class. Organize a class discussion concerning the various aspects of operating a large newspaper.
2. Have students read "How a Film is Made" in Exploring the Film and organize a group to work together on making a film of one of the following:
   a. a commercial or a parody of a commercial
   b. a documentary on a current topic
   c. an art film
   d. a narrative film with a serious theme

3. Have interested students take a tour of the operating facilities of a large newspaper like the Miami Herald and then of a small, community newspaper like the North Dade Journal. Have students then make an oral presentation contrasting the two operations.

4. Take a field trip to a television station and a radio station to view the taping of a news program. How do the two media differ in technique and style of operation?

5. Have a group of students interview a technician in the film industry regarding the "nuts and bolts" of filming.

6. Have the students choose one medium (TV, radio, newspaper, or film) to research and write a short paper in which they explain the operation of that medium.

E. Students will investigate the growth of radio, TV, and film.

1. Have students listen to the record "The Treasury of Golden Memories of Radio" and compare and contrast the technique and content (types of programming) with current radio programs. Students might also consider what types of radio programs have given way to television.

2. Show a film made in the early years of the industry and one made in the forties. Then take a field trip to see a contemporary film. (All three films should be on the same theme if possible.) Conduct a class discussion concerning some of the changes in the techniques and attitudes that have taken place in film making.

3. Have students read "The History of Radio and The History of Television" in The MASSP Bulletin of October, 1966, and be prepared to identify some of the more important developments of both.

4. Have a group of students visit Channel 4, the first TV station to broadcast in Miami, and interview an official regarding the growth of this station since its inception.

5. Have students research the history of the radio, TV, or film industry and write a paper discussing how the content changes reflected the social period in which they occurred.

6. Have students do some research on the history of the film and write a short paper focusing on major developments in the American film from its invention to the contemporary scene.
7. Show a film on the history of the movies in America. Hold a class discussion concerning the major events the film industry has experienced. Ask them to give special attention to the questions: In what ways has television changed the movie industry?

8. After investigating the significant changes that have taken place in American films in the last five years, have students write a paper on the contemporary American movie. Saturday Review, Newsweek, and Look have all printed articles in 1970 concerning various aspects of the "new movie."

9. Have a group of students research the advent and possibilities of the satellite as a means of communication and report their findings to the class.

F. Students will illustrate the changing function of the printed media as reflected in the history of their growth.

1. In the booklet The Living Textbook have students read the capsule history of newspapers. Supplement this brief history with a short lecture giving more attention to the relationship between political freedom and freedom of the press, early newspapers and pamphlets, the opinion magazines, and some of the trends in 20th century news reporting.

2. Show the film Newspaper Story and organize a class discussion concerning the major developments in the history of the newspaper in America.

3. Invite a guest speaker from a local paper or from a university's school of journalism to give a talk on the history of the American newspaper. Ask the speaker to also include some ideas about the present function of the newspaper and what its role will be in the future.

4. After reading chapters 3 and 4 on theories of press freedom and growth of the print media in Introduction to Mass Communication, 3rd edition, have students write a paper on the major historical trends in the print media.

G. Students will evaluate the impact of radio and television on the function and effectiveness of the newspaper.

1. Invite a newscaster from a local television station to give a short lecture on how television changed the ways in which news is reported.

2. Have students read "America's Newspapers--a Critique" in Lineberry's Mass Communications and discuss Raskin's contention concerning "the killers of the American press."

3. Have students write a paper discussing news coverage of the Vietnam War as compared with coverage of World War II. Consider particularly the changes brought about by electronic media.
4. Give a short lecture on the function of the newspaper in our society and have students propose or defend reasons why and how the development of the radio and television has altered or perhaps even changed the effectiveness of that function.

5. Have students read "Our New Languages" in Languages of the Mass Media and be prepared to discuss Carpenter's conclusion concerning the superiority of TV in terms of this question: What can print do better than any other medium and is that worth doing?

H. Students will identify the major criticisms and challenges facing the media today.

1. Show students the New York Times filmstrip, Mass Media: Their Role in a Democracy, and have them write down the various criticisms of the media brought out in the filmstrip in preparation for further study and consideration.

2. Show the film Communications Explosion which concerns present and future trends and inventions in mass communication. Organize a discussion regarding the ways that the mass media will change in the next two decades.

3. Show students a powerful documentary film such as CBS' Hunger in America. Conduct a discussion with students concerning the way this film affected their attitudes toward the conditions of the poor. What did they learn? Did the film have a liberalizing effect? Was anyone motivated to action?

4. Show the New York Times filmstrip The Generation Under 25. Organize a discussion about the effect of the media on the generation gap. Have TV and the other media contributed to or lessened the gap?

5. Have a group of students write to ACT, Action for Children's Television, and after receiving an answer ask them to give an oral report on the position, goals, and current undertakings of this organization.

6. Have students read Joe McGinniss' best seller, The Selling of a President 1968, and then organize a class discussion concerning the current role of TV in politics, the importance of a candidate's image, and the packaging of a candidate.

7. Have a group of students survey their peers and various adults in the community to determine how politically informed they are about the origins, details, values, and meanings of various issues. Be sure to have students determine the source of information of those surveyed.

8. Vice-President Agnew in his now famous speech of November 13, 1969, attacked the media on a number of areas. The newspapers and magazines of the following week contain a broad range of comments and rebuttals. Have the students read a number of the commentaries and prepare a list of the Vice-President's charges and the various reactions of the
media. A good example of a refutation of Agnew's charges is the survey of American attitudes on the media in the November 9, 1970 issue of Newsweek.

9. Have a group of students research the fairness doctrine and write a short paper discussing the censorship of cigarette commercials in the broadcasting media as an infraction of this law.

I. Students will analyze one of the major areas of controversy involving the media.

1. A former FCC commissioner once called television "a vast wasteland." Have students discuss this question both pro and con.

2. Give a short lecture on the current method of rating films (G, P, R, X) and have students discuss some of the weaknesses of this method and propose ways in which it could be improved. John Huddy of the Miami Herald suggests a violence and sex rating on a scale of 1 to 10 as being more accurate.

3. After having the class view and discuss the filmstrip Mass Media: Their Role in a Democracy, have students do research on both sides of the most controversial issue. Findings may be presented in oral reports within a week after assignment was made.

4. Have a group of students interview a newspaper reporter to discover who determines what and how news is disseminated.

5. Have students check local book stores and magazine stands for publications devoted to minority groups. What percentage of major magazines and newspapers deal with the problems and conditions of minority groups? How much in-depth coverage do they give? What kind of editorial coverage? How many publications deal exclusively with minorities? What conclusions can be drawn?

6. Have the class make a survey of the feelings of black and white students in the school as to the effectiveness of the mass media in reporting minority problems. Organize a debate if a real controversy seems to exist.

7. Hold a class discussion concerning the following question: How has media coverage of the Vietnam War influenced this generation's ideas concerning war? Students might want to consider the difference in the previous generation's attitude towards World War I or II. The following are just a few questions to be considered: How do war pictures of today portray the war hero as opposed to films made in the 40's and 50's? How has the introduction of pictures of the Vietnam War on television affected attitudes?

8. Have students read the code of ethics of the television industry and then make a study of how well television programming complies with this code. Some students may want to make a film or a tape satirizing the network violations of their own code.
9. After viewing TV entertainment programming, have students analyze the problem of reality versus fantasy.

10. After viewing the television program "All in the Family" for several weeks, have the students write an essay discussing whether or not such programming reinforces or changes prevailing attitudes towards minority groups. The students might want to survey various age groups to help support their contention.

11. Marshall McLuhan claims that above all it was the poor impression that Nixon made in his debates with Kennedy that cost him the election in 1960. Show the film Making of the President 1960, Part II, and have students pay particular attention to the section of the film showing the debate. After the film consider in class the impression that each candidate made. Who came across best? Why? Did it seem to be knowledge of the issues or personality and impression that had the most impact?

12. Have students investigate the ways in which the packaging techniques were used in the last election and write a report on their findings. The November, 1970 issues of Newsweek and Time are particularly good sources of information.

13. Have students read "The Punctured Image" article in the November 16, 1970 issue of Newsweek and discuss it as a contrast to McGinniss' ideas concerning the "selling" of a candidate.

14. Have a group of students investigate the effectiveness of television campaign debates. The students might want to talk to a representative of a TV station to find out what percentage of people watch this type of programming.

15. Have interested students research the function of the FCC to determine the controls that the FCC exercises over TV and radio. Have them make a presentation about the FCC and conclude with the possible alternatives to governmental control of the airwaves.

16. Have students read the chapter "The Media and the Unheard" in How to Talk Back to Your TV Set and write a paper either supporting or refuting Johnson's claims concerning television's insensitivity to minority groups. Students might want to use observations from commercial television programming to support their argument.

17. Have students make up a questionnaire concerning how "youth" shows such as Mod Squad and The Young Lawyers and youth oriented films such as Joe and Easy Rider affect adults' attitudes toward youth. Have each student in the class then survey five or six adults and bring in the results. What conclusions about the media's effect on the generation gap can be drawn?

18. After viewing television programs at various times, have the students write a TV guide that indicates the nature of each program, the audience for whom it is intended, and their critique of the program.
19. Have a group of students research coverage of the Kent State upheaval in May of 1970 and compare the use of language and pictures in a number of publications. Does the difference in coverage alter the reader's sympathy toward this incident?

20. Organize a debate around the following statement: The media are pro-establishment; they suppress change in society and are strictly defenders of middle class culture and values.

21. Regarding the networks' commentaries following Presidential speeches, Agnew has said: "The people of this country have the right to make up their own minds and form their own opinions about a Presidential address without having a President's words and thoughts characterized through the prejudices of hostile critics before they can even be digested." Have students discuss Agnew's criticism in terms of their own experiences. Students might want to illustrate examples wherein their own attitudes and opinions regarding the speeches were altered or changed after viewing the commentary.

22. Have students read Saturday Review, October 10, 1970, on the "Coming Age of News Monopoly" and write a paper evaluating the dangers of monopolizing the news by a few sources.

J. To evaluate the fairness and comprehensiveness of the reporting of information by the media.

1. After giving a short explanation of the terms "objective" and "subjective," show the film the Eye of the Beholder and have students discuss these terms in relation to the film.

2. Construct a number of statements which represent facts, inferences, or judgements. After discussing these terms, ask students to explain in a written assignment how each statement should be classified.

3. Have students present a mock news show in which news distortion is parodied and exaggerated.

4. Have students tape the local radio and TV news and bring in the daily News and Herald papers, and then compare the treatment of the same news event in the four media to determine examples of bias, distortion, or misleading use of facts.

5. Have students read the articles on the media in Scholastic Voice, March 1, 1971. The teacher's edition lists three class days of activities designed to help the student become more aware of some of the ways news can be distorted.

6. Have students read "Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist" and be prepared to discuss the implications of Robin Day's statement that "all too often the message on TV is warped to fit the medium--and the result is an unbalanced and distorted view of the world."

7. Have students compare the use of language by the underground press with that of the traditional newspapers. Have them write a paper
discussing whether or not one is more effective than the other in maintaining a factual, objective tone.


9. Have students read "Objectivity and the American Press" in the February 2, 1970 issue of Senior Scholastic and be prepared to answer the following questions: The First Commandment of the news media is objectivity, but has objectivity gone too far? Is there a need in today's complex society for interpretative reporting? Are people too lazy to make up their own minds and so prefer to have opinions formed for them? Why does the television medium present unique problems in the objective reporting of news?

10. Familiarize the students with the various devices of propaganda and then have them make a list of the epithets (name calling), both favorable and derogatory, found in the media for: (a) President of the U.S. (b) Vice-President Agnew (c) Governor of Florida (d) Republican or Democratic Party (e) Labor unions (f) a celebrity in sports or films.

IV. Student Resources

A. State-adopted textbooks:


B. Non-state-adopted supplementary materials:

1. Textbooks:


2. Reference Materials:


3. Periodicals:


4. Media Resources:

a. Films:

* *Communication and the Community.* Churchill, 16 min. color, Dade #1-10401.
* *Communications in the Modern World.* Coronet, 11 min. B&W, Dade #1-00836.
* *Communications Explosion.* McGraw Hill, 1967; 25 min. color. Can be rented from Florida State for $11.50.
* *Eye of the Beholder, S. Reynolds, 30 min. B&W, Dade #1-30023.*
* *Hunger in America, CBS News, 1968, 52 min. B&W. Can be rented from Mass Media Ministries, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, $20.00.*
* *Making of the President: The Battle for the Presidency (Part 2).* Wolper, 40 min. B&W, Dade #1040010.
* *Making Yourself Understood, EBEC, 14 min. B&W, Dade #1-10402.*
* *Miami Herald, Miami Herald, 22 min. B&W, Dade #1-12932.*
Newspaper Story: Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 min., B&W.

b. Filmstrips:

c. Records:

V. Teacher Resources
A. Textbooks:

B. Professional Books:
De Fleur, Melvin; Theories of Mass Communications. New York: David McKay Co., 1966.


C. Films:

*Communications Primer*, University of California, 1957, 22 min. color. Can be rented from Florida State for $6.25.

*Story of Television*, Institute of Visual Training; 40 East 49th Street, New York 17, New York; 1956, 22 min. color.