I. Course Information

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Beth Adubato, Ph.D.
Email: badubato@scj.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview:
This course provides insight into the intersection of media and crime and the subsequent influence this has on public policy. Every citizen, every day, has contact with the media in some form. Newspapers, advertising, television, etc. all have an impact on our lives. The list of media forms has grown rapidly—in addition to more traditional sources of media, we now rely on websites, social network sites, and blogs.

From the beginning of this “American experiment,” crime and criminal justice have held a prominent place in media. Today, this focus on crime and entertainment that centers on crime is widespread. This explains why people who rely on media for their information on crime and criminal justice often hold misconceptions about the nature of crime, criminal justice practices, and criminals themselves. It is imperative that future practitioners in the field of criminal justice come to an understanding of this phenomenon.

Because much of public policy stems from reaction to voters’ opinions, how voters form these opinions matters greatly. If there are minor or gross misconceptions surrounding
the criminal justice system and voters galvanize what we refer to as “living room policy-making,” the results can be ineffective, irresponsible, or injurious.

Learning Outcomes
- Understand key concepts involving forms and goals of the media
- Identify the three main forms of media
- Differentiate between scholarly and popular writing to identify source material
- Discuss the various categories of crime coverage
- Examine media coverage of law-making and crime
- Demonstrate knowledge of media coverage both in and out of the United States
- Explain living room policy-making
- Analyze how “entertainment” media portray crime
- Identify different ways media and law enforcement can improve communication

Grading will be calculated based on a 100-point scale as follows:
5% class participation/attendance
25% reaction paper or campaign plan (individual choice)
30% final exam
40% five news-content analysis charts

Attendance is not mandatory, but more than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. If you cannot attend a given class, you must make arrangements to hand-in your assignment and you are responsible for the material you miss. Please be prompt to class—tardiness is disruptive.
Watching and/or playing with electronic items such as iPhones or the Internet on your laptops is tantamount to not attending class. Students exhibiting this behavior during class time will be marked absent.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students are responsible for:
Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice: Images and Realities, Ray Surette,
ISBN-10: 1285459059
available at the Rutgers Bookstore

All other reading assignments—available online, on Blackboard, or handed-out in class
Reaction paper or campaign plan—due on April 2
Five news-content analysis charts—due on 2/5, 2/19, 3/12, 4/16, and 4/30
Final exam—May 7
Late assignments immediately result in a penalty

II. Course Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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</table>
| Week 1 | LECTURE—Introduction to “media and crime”  
IN-CLASS “MEDIA” SURVEY  
How to analyze the news for crime content | • Surette, Chapters 1 and 3                                                                 |
| Week 2 | LECTURE AND DISCUSSION  
PART I--Mass media and criminal justice—the process of “making news”  
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION  
PART II—Overview of Media’s Impact on Criminal Justice | ASSIGNMENT FOR FEBRUARY 5<sup>th</sup>—  
Content analysis #1—compare half-hour of CNN International News or BBC America (Ch. 13, M-F, 6:00 PM) with FOX News Channel (not local Ch.5)…check website for CNN airings at [http://edition.cnn.com/CNNI/schedules/schedule.1.html](http://edition.cnn.com/CNNI/schedules/schedule.1.html) |
| Week 3 | LECTURE AND DISCUSSION  
PART I--How does crime coverage differ from BBC News to CNN to FOX? How does crime coverage differ across the country?  
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION  
PART II—Social Constructionism and Social Knowledge | • Surette, pp. 52-65  
• Surette, Chapter 8                                                                 |
| Week 4 | LECTURE AND DISCUSSION—  
Early Media Portraits of Criminals, Portraits of Victims, Claims-making  
Watch: *American Blackout*, 2005 | • Williams, Patricia J. “Pulp Fiction: America and the Simpson Trial” on Blackboard  
• Toobin, Jeffrey. “Putting It In Black and White,” on Blackboard  
AND  
Content analysis on half-hour of BBC Radio and 1010 WINS or CBS 880 (BBC World Service is available on WNYC—93.9 FM. BBC World Service is also available on XM Satellite Radio on Channel 31) |
| Week 5 | DUE: Content Analysis #2  
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION | • Surette, Chapters 5 and 6 |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>LECTURE—Medieval Socially-Constructed Reality vs. Modern Socially-Constructed Reality Watch <em>Outfoxed</em></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Surette, Chapter 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Livingstone, Sonia. “Do the Media Harm Children?” Journal of Children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and Media, 1 (1), February 2007, pp. 5-14, available on-line</td>
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<td>• Anderson, C.A., D.A. Gentile and K.E. Buckley. “Violent Video Game</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effects on Children and Adolescents,” available on Blackboard</td>
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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>LECTURE AND DISCUSSION PART I—Children, media, and crime; effects of violent video games on children and adolescents, including arguments that support the positive features of video games. LECTURE AND DISCUSSION PART II—Media Construction of Law Enforcement Frames</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Content analysis on half-hour of MSNBC and either ABC, CBS, or NBC <em>national news</em></td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>DUE: Content Analysis #3 LECTURE AND DISCUSSION—The War on Crime, “Cops”</th>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>LECTURE—Crime News vs. Infotainment Police Reality Programming Watch <em>Syriana</em></th>
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<tr>
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<td>Content analysis comparing News 12 New Jersey and NJTV news (aired M-F)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>LECTURE AND DISCUSSION—Real Cops vs. Media Cops</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Surette, pp. 66-80</td>
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<td>• Surette, Chapter 9</td>
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<th>Week 11</th>
<th>DUE: Content Analysis #4 LECTURE AND DISCUSSION—Copycat crime; Media-Oriented Terrorism</th>
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<td>• Surette, Chapters 4 and 5</td>
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| Week 12 | LECTURE | Content analysis comparing The New York Times, USA Today, and another local newspaper  
Also  
• Benedict, Jeff. *Public Heroes, Private Felons: Athletes and Crimes Against Women* (chapters 1 and 6), available on Blackboard  
|---|---|---|
| Week 13 | DUE: Content Analysis #5  
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION  
| Week 14 | PART II—Sports and crime | • Reaction paper or campaign plan |
| Week 15 | FINAL LECTURE —Lack of Realistic Information in the Media and Its Effects | |

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**  
If you have a disability that limits your full participation in this course please contact 353-5300.