Media Literacy Unit Plan

**Essential Question:** What is the role of media in our society, and how can we become responsible consumers and producers of news and information in the digital age?

**Sub-questions:**
- What roles do confirmation bias, stereotyping, and other cognitive biases impact how we interpret events, news, and information?
- What is the role of social media on the traditional news cycle, and how does it influence public opinion and the press?

**Unit Goal:** Develop critical thinking and news literacy skills to help students find reliable information to make decisions, take action, and responsibly share news through social media.

**Academic Texts (available in CCBC Library):**


**TedTalks: Our Digital Lives Playlist**

- Turkle, Sherry. “Connected, but alone?”
- Pariser, Eli. “Beware online ‘filter bubbles’”.
- Allocca, Kevin. “Why videos go viral”.
- Broadbent, Stefana. “How the Internet enables intimacy”.
- Blakley, Johanna. “Social Media and the end of gender”.
- Golbeck, Jennifer. “The curly fry conundrum: Why social media ‘likes’ say more than you might think”.

**Additional resources:**

- NYT article “From Headline to Photograph, a Fake News Masterpiece”
- The Onion: “Facebook User Verifies Truth of Article by Carefully Checking it Against Own Preconceived Opinions”
  http://www.theonion.com/article/facebook-user-verifies-truth-article-carefully-che-54790
- “What are In-text Citations?” video
- “MLA Style, 8th Edition: An Introduction”

**Unit Essay**

**Essential Question:** What is the role of media in our society, and how can we become responsible consumers and producers of news and information in the digital age?

**Sub-questions:**
- What roles do confirmation bias, stereotyping, and other cognitive biases impact how we interpret events, news, and information?
- What is the role of social media on the traditional news cycle, and how does it influence public opinion and the press?

**Task:** Using the essential questions and sub-questions, compose an essay on a media literacy related topic. For example, you could:
- Analyze a current event in the news from multiple perspectives and biases
- Analyze the representation of gender, minorities, social class, etc. in media
- Analyze or compare the influences of social media
- Analyze the ethics of journalists, news outlets, etc.

**Purpose:** Form a claim based on your chosen topic and aim to convince your audience that your stance and/or solution is accurate, believable, valid, etc.

**Audience:** An educated, academic audience (like yourselves). Do not make assumptions about what the audience does/does not know. Vocabulary, style and diction should reflect academic writing skills.

**Requirements:**
- 4-6 pages of TEXT
- MLA formatting, complete with in-text citations and a Works Cited page (not included in 4-6 page minimum)
- Include at least 2 sources from the unit
- Include at least 2 sources NOT from the unit
- Organization – include an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion
- Central idea and stance included in first paragraph (thesis/claim)
Notes about the lesson plan:

- I use this as the first unit of the semester, and devote a few class meetings to essay structure, MLA formatting, thesis/introductions, and conclusions.
- All group activities, quiz questions, and other activities directly related to the unit content are included.
- Activities and lesson plans for general topics are not included, and are noted with * in the lesson plan. Instructors can incorporate their own lesson plans for those class meetings, or add additional media literacy activities.

### Weekly Lesson Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>ENGL 101 - In class</th>
<th>Out of class (homework due this day)</th>
<th>ACLT 053 – In class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | **Day 1**  
Watch video: Why Videos Go Viral  
Read: NYT article “From Headline to Photograph, a Fake News Masterpiece” and “Facebook User...” article from *The Onion*  
Discuss/groups: Fake news  
Review: Unit essential questions and overview  
**Day 2**  
Review: Tools for Evaluation of Media  
Group activity: Apply tools to an article and respond to the questions in writing (Bb)  
**Day 3**  
Group activity: Debate prep  
Review: Assigned text (definitions, strategies for reading academic texts, etc.) | Write: Diagnostic essay (Reflection #1)  
Group activity: Snowball activity (fears about writing/reading)  
Discuss/Review: What is ALP?  
Write: Begin working on Diagnostic essay if time permits | Group activity: Media Literacy Debate prep FLIP CHARTS  
Review: Reading strategies (THIEVES) and annotation using first assigned text  
Watch: “Connected but alone” (20 minutes) & “How the internet enables intimacy” (9 minutes)  
Review: Reading strategies (THIEVES) and annotation using assigned text |
| Week 2 | Day 4 | Reading quiz: Quick write on 1 of 3 assigned questions | Read: “Media Literacy as an Ethical Obligation” Quiz prep: 3 questions Write: Reflection #2 (1-2 pages) | Review: Reading strategies (THIEVES) and annotation using assigned text Watch: “Beware Online Filter Bubbles” 9 minutes HW - Media Consumption Project: Due Day 5 |
| Day 5 | Reading quiz: Quick write on 1 of the 3 assigned questions. Watch: MLA videos Individual: Citation practice using assigned readings | Read: “Review of Literature on Media Literacy” Quiz prep: 3 questions | Pair & Share: Media Consumption Project Write: Mini-reflection on project Review: Reading strategies (THIEVES) and annotation using assigned text |
| Day 6 | Reading quiz: Quick write on 1 of the 3 assigned questions. Review: Essay structure and writing process* FLIP CHARTS | Read: “Commercial Media Literacy” Quiz prep: 3 questions | Watch: “Social Media and the End of Gender” 8 min Group activity: Stereotypes in the Media FLIP CHARTS Review: Reading strategies (THIEVES) and annotation using assigned text |
| Week 3 | Day 7 | Reading quiz: Quick write on 1 of the 3 assigned questions. Discuss: Unit readings (catch up) Review: Unit 1 Essay instructions | Read: “Intervening in the Media’s influences on Stereotypes of Race and Ethnicity” Quiz prep: 3 questions Write: Reflection #3 (1-2 pages) | Review: Essay structure and revision process Research: Mini-lesson on CCBC database; students begin to locate sources for their essay |
| Day 8 | Review: CCBC library; research articles for essay Individual: Create annotated bibliography and identify claim | Write: Work on Unit 1 Essay draft | Group activity: Share bibliographies and claims from 101, discuss and provide feedback Write: Begin working on essay draft |
| Day 9 | Group activity: Workshop | Bring: 3 printed copies of draft of Unit 1 Essay Upload: Copy of Unit 1 essay draft to Bb | Group activity: Class workshop #1 on projector Review: Reverse outlining |
Quiz Questions: To prepare for the reading quiz, use the following questions as a reading and annotation guide. You can bring your notes on the questions below with you to use during the quiz. You may NOT use the text during the quiz.

*Media Literacy as an Ethical Obligation*

1. The text refers to Alfred Korzybski's three non-Aristotelian principles. Briefly describe each in your own words and explain how each relates to the topic of "media literacy".

2. What is the author's purpose and claim? What does he want readers to know, understand, or believe by the end of the text?

3. The author asks, "Would it be possible for media organizations to include and incorporate media literacy-oriented messages and functions as part of their content? And assuming it is possible, would media organizations not then be under an ethical obligation to do so?" (Strate 102). What is your response to the second part of this question? Do you believe that if a company can do something that benefits consumers, that they are ethically obligated to do so?

*Review of Media Literature on Media Literacy*

1. There are several definitions of "media literacy". What are the skills that you find appear in most of the definitions? Which definition do you think is most appropriate, and why?

2. In the "Common Themes" section, the author begins by telling readers that, "agreeing with any one of these seven themes does not preclude agreeing with any of the others" (Potter 421). Which of the seven themes do you agree with? Disagree with? Explain your responses.
3. The author divides medial literacy interventions into two categories: natural and constructed. Which of the interventions within each category do you think are most beneficial? Least? Explain your responses.

Commercial Media Literacy

1. In the table on page 102, we see that children can start to separate fantasy from reality around the age of nine, yet most marketers find it appropriate to begin marketing to children as young as age seven. Considering this age gap during which children are marketed to despite their inability to differentiate between reality and fantasy, the author asks if media literacy "intervention programs can be offset against any potential harm done by marketing directly at children" (Eagle 102). Do you think that marketing to children in this age gap is harmful and could possibly undo the effects of otherwise effective media literacy interventions? Why or why not?

2. In the sections titled "Commercially Sponsored Media Literacy Interventions" and "Available Evidence Regarding Effects and Effectiveness", three "constructed interventions" are described and analyzed. In your own words, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each of the intervention strategies? What works well and what could be improved?

3. In the final section, "Policy and Research Recommendations", the author calls for a "rigorous testing of the principles of a range of theoretical concepts across a range of cultural situations to determine which theories are...able to most effectively guide real-world implementation in increasingly diverse markets" (Eagle 107). The author goes on to propose a research agenda based on this statement. Do you agree with the proposed research plan to determine "controlled" media literacy interventions among children? Why or why not?

Intervening in the Media’s Influence on Stereotypes of Race and Ethnicity

1. The authors suggest that, “quantitative studies of media literacy educational efforts...indicate media literacy interventions can, indeed, shift attitudes and promote knowledge” (Scharrar & Ramasubramanian 173). Based on the information in the text, do you agree that this type of “constructed” intervention can be helpful in bringing awareness to and shifting prejudice attitudes and stereotyping? Why or why not?

2. In the “Quantitative Approaches” section, the authors discuss the effectiveness of audience-centered and message-centered approaches to reducing racial prejudice (Scharrar & Ramasubramanian 175). Define each approach in your own words.

3. In the section titled “New Qualitative Media Literacy Data on Media and Stereotypes,” the authors describe the outcomes of a research project (conducted in part by one of the authors). Upon evaluating the project, it was noted that “the sample of sixth graders in these data generally chose to take up gender stereotypes rather than racial and ethnic or social class related stereotypes (Scharrar & Ramasubramanian 181). What are the possible reasons for this outcome? How could the research project be adjusted to avoid this issue?
Reflections

Reflection #1: Diagnostic Writing
For your first writing assignment, address the following questions in 1-2 pages.

1. Describe the circumstances that brought you to CCBC this semester, including your education goals.

2. What do you expect to learn in English 101? What are your personal goals for this course?

3. Our first unit is on "Media Literacy". What does this term mean to you? How does it apply to the type of media you consume on a regular basis? How does it apply to your expectations for what you'll learn in this course?

Reflection #2: Media Literacy Part 1

Reflect on the readings (two) and videos (three) that we read/watched this past week in 1-2 pages by responding to the questions below, making sure to include both personal examples and examples from the texts/videos:

1. Consider your ideas about media literacy before this course, and now. Is a definition of media literacy becoming more or less clear to you? What is your definition? Explain your response.

2. Consider your own level of media literacy. What interventions took place in your life that helped you to become media literate? Which interventions would have improved your level of media literacy, in your opinion?

3. What place does, or should, media literacy have in our K-12 and higher education systems? Who is ethically obligated for making sure media messages are delivered and interpreted in healthy ways? Explain your response.
Media Literacy Activities

Week 1 Fake News Discussion

After watching the video (Why Videos go Viral) and reading the articles (NYT and The Onion), discuss the following with your group members. Be prepared to report out to the full class following the discussion.

1. How does "fake news" come to exist and spread so rapidly? Why do you think this happens?

2. How is "fake news" harmful? What are the long and short term effects and consequences of being a consumer of "fake news"? How does it affect each of us?

3. How can we, as consumers and sharers of news, learn to identify potential "fake news" stories?

Week 1 Tools for Evaluation of Media

Instructor: Review the CCBC Library 101 for Students: Evaluate (includes 5 Ws and TRAAP your sources techniques) and the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Five Core Concepts</th>
<th>Five Key Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Authorship</td>
<td>All media messages are &quot;constructed.&quot;</td>
<td>Who created this message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Format</td>
<td>Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.</td>
<td>What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Audience</td>
<td>Different people experience the same media message differently.</td>
<td>How might different people understand this message differently from me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Content</td>
<td>Media have embedded values and points of view.</td>
<td>What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in; or omitted from, this message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Purpose</td>
<td>Most media are organized to gain profit and/or power.</td>
<td>Why is this message being sent?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students: Work with your group to apply the methods of evaluation to an article that you find on the Internet. Include the link to the article in your Blackboard discussion post (1 per group). Your goal is to answer the questions and decide whether or not the article is "credible" based on your evaluation.

**Week 1 Debate**

The class will be divided into three groups to debate the following question, based on the videos “Connect, but alone?” and “How the Internet enable intimacy”:

"Does constant access to media via technology hurt or benefit our relationships?"

- Group 1 - Argue that it hurts relationships
- Group 2 - Argue that it benefits relationships
- Group 3 – Determine criteria for evaluation. During the debate, listen, evaluate and determine the “winner” using the criteria.

**Timing and Instructions:**

**Groups 1 and 2**

- 45 minutes to prepare their argument
- Two minute opening statement
- Five minutes to present their argument
- Three minutes to present counter argument to opposite group (ten minutes total)

**Group 3**

- 45 minutes to create evaluation criteria (rubric) for determining the winner
- Share criteria with groups 1 and 2 prior to the debate
- Five minutes to discuss and determine winner using criteria following the debate
- Five minutes to present "winner" with explanation of criteria to Groups 1 and 2
**Week 2 MLA Practice**

Instructor: Show two videos to class: “What Are In-text Citations?” and “MLA Style 8th edition: An Introduction”

Students: Complete the following individual activity in Blackboard:

1. Choose one of the two unit texts you’ve read so far.

2. Open a new Word document and format using MLA (header, heading, title, etc.)

3. Write a one paragraph summary of a section from that text (i.e. Potter's section on "Common Themes" in media literacy).

4. The summary should include at least one direct quote with MLA style in text citation.

5. Include the full works cited information on a separate page at the end of your summary.

**ACLT 053 – Media Literacy Scaffolding Activities**

**Media Literacy Debate Prep**

Instructor: Break class into small groups. Provide flip charts and markers.

Students:

1. With your group, discuss how strategies for debating and writing are similar/different. Report out to class.

2. With your group, make a T-chart on the flip chart and list the ways in which media and technology can both help and hurt relationships. Present to class when finished.

3. On your own, choose a side and write a convincing argument aimed at an audience with the opposing viewpoint. Post your argument to the Media Literacy Argument discussion board (ACLT 052 class page) Note: this can be assigned for HW, if needed.
Media Consumption Project (Homework)

Instructor: Review instructions for project and assign for homework due next class.

Students Part 1 (Out of class): Complete the steps below over an 8 hour period and add your data to the Media Consumption Discussion Board (ACLT 053 class page).
   1. Catalog how much time you spend using the following:
      a. Social Media – list specific media used and purpose (i.e. Twitter for news, Facebook or Snapchat for socializing, etc.)
      b. Other media – list specific media outlet used and purpose (i.e. television for news, computer for socializing, etc.)
   2. Of the time you spend using social and other media, catalog how much of it is spent consuming news vs. socializing.
   3. Of the news/articles that you consumed, catalog how much of it you shared/posted/tweeted/liked and why.
   4. Of the news/articles that you shared, catalog how many of them you read and analyzed before doing so.

Students Part 2 (In class):
   1. Share your data with a partner/small group. Report out general findings from group, noting any major differences.
   2. Complete the mini-reflection in Blackboard (ACLT 053 class page).

Mini-reflection

   1. What do you feel is a healthy amount of time to spend on media consumption?
   2. When it comes to sharing, liking, tweeting, etc., how much time do you think should users spend analyzing information before sharing? What should they consider, and why would a user choose NOT to like or share information?
   3. What are the consequences of spending too much time consuming media? Of not enough time evaluating it?
   4. What did the project teach you about your own media consumption?

Stereotypes in Media

Instructor: Break class into three small groups. Provide flip charts and markers.

Students: Each group will be assigned a topic below. Brainstorm a list of stereotypes that appear regularly in the media for each topic, and provide examples from media and popular culture. Present to the class when finished, and invite other groups to add to the lists.
   1. Gender stereotypes
   2. Cultural stereotypes
   3. Social class stereotypes