

Note:

**Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice.
The information below is provided as a guide for course selection
and is not binding in any form.**

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

SOC2204 Media, Culture and the Church, 3 credit hours

Course Description:

This course surveys the field of media ecology, as well as identifying the workings of media in relation to culture. The goals and values, organization, and potential for constructing reality will be discussed with reference to the local church or other Christian ministry. Emphasis will be placed on the interpretation of specific examples of media and the manner in which those examples shape one's view of reality.

Course Objectives:

1. Articulate the history of the use of media in the church and broader culture
2. Explore the importance of media as a reality shaping tool for society and Christianity
3. Defend a position on the extent to which media should be used within the North American church and cross-cultural missions
4. Create a media piece for church and/or societal consumption
5. Explain how Christians can faithfully steward media for evangelism and missions

Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

Assignments

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION: Active participation is expected in this online course. Participation includes two main areas: discussion boards and reading. **Class Participation will account for 30% of final course grade.**

a. Discussion Boards: You must maintain a significant presence in the discussion board. Please refer to the discussion board rubric included in the Documents section of this course for more information on how your participation in the discussion board will be assessed. Unless otherwise directed, post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Friday, 11:59pm CST). Then read and respond to **at least TWO** of your classmates' initial posts by the end of the week (Monday, 11:59pm CST).

b. Course Expectations: The completion of the course reading, audio/video reviews, online articles, etc. is an important part of the course. You are expected to complete the weekly expectations prior to your discussion boards each week so you are able to discuss the concepts with others in the course.

2. ASSIGNMENTS: There will be several projects in this course requiring skills learned that may include work with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and beginner media production tools.

- a. Assignment 1: The Power of Media Response Paper**



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Part of being a Christian is having a Christian worldview. More precisely, Christians perceive the world through the lens of the Bible as taught by the church. Ideas like the identity and worth of humanity, the purpose of life, and the values that define our actions are all shaped by a Christian's worldview.

As the readings this week emphasize, media has incredible power to shape a worldview. Media influences what a person sees as possible, normal, valuable, or real. Take, as an extreme example, the "War of Worlds" incident. In 1938, millions of very normal Americans had their worlds turned upside down in a matter of minutes by a misunderstood media broadcast.

In a minimum of three (3) pages, write a response paper in which you will consider the extent of media's power to influence a person's worldview. With the "War of the Worlds" illustration in mind, reflect on how media has shaped your worldview in ways pertaining to your Christian faith.

In this response paper, give **one** example of a way media has affected your worldview and discuss the following in a single naturally flowing essay with a suitable introduction and conclusion,

b. **Assignment 2: "Talk to Your Tech" Essay**

This week's focus has been on the vehicle of most forms of media today: technology. In the final pages of the reading, the author advocates a four-step process for understanding technology and the ways that it affects us. In this assignment, you will utilize this process to analyse a specific example of media-related technology.

Choose a media-related technology that you believe has a significant impact upon your life or the life of someone close to you. Good examples are (but not limited to): cellular (smart) phones, portable tablets, computers, television, radio, and newspapers. You may also choose a specific form of social/digital media "technology" such as: Twitter, email, Facebook, or Instagram. Just be sure that you can clearly answer steps 1 and 2 for this technology.

In a three to four (3-4) page double-spaced paper follow the outline given in the reading to analyse this technology and its effects.

c. **Assignment 3: Jesus and the Media**

Jesus was a captivating figure in his day. His ministry and message left a lasting impression on all who heard him or even heard about him. His ministry's influence extended beyond those in his community as people came from miles around to hear him speak and carried his message back to their own communities.

In this assignment you will study the gospels and the book of Acts to observe the ways Jesus and his early followers made use of media in their ministry. Using the "**Jesus and Media Worksheet**," you will list 15 instances during which Jesus or the disciples used some form of media to advance the Kingdom of God.

d. **Assignments for Media Production Project:**

For this summative assignment, you will try your hand at creating an original piece of media for use within the church. This media piece will revolve around a personal interview you will prepare and conduct with someone who has experience working with media. This may be a person you



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know or even someone you merely contact for the purpose of this assignment. In any case, it will be best to choose someone who will offer a helpful perspective on the subjects studied in this course. Good examples of persons with experience working with media are: photographers, videographers, social media specialists, journalists, writers, bloggers, multimedia designers, marketing specialists, producers, etc. Your interviewee does **not** need to be a Christian, but should be able to speak authoritatively about some of the topics in the course. Ultimately your interview must tie back to **at least one** of the course objectives (see syllabus; do not consider course objective #4 for this assignment).

Although this course does not primarily focus upon with media production, its survey of various mediums should give you enough to work with. Aesthetic excellence is not expected or required, but will be awarded extra credit (see rubric).

Interviews will optimally be conducted face-to-face. If you have another idea that you believe could work well (i.e., Skype, phone, etc.), feel free to ask your instructor. The interview should strategically target the strengths of your interviewee and pertain to the subjects studied in this course. Optimally, this requires communicating in advanced and sending your interviewee the questions you plan to ask. Some examples of topics to focus on are: the power of media in culture/church, the use of media in culture/church, the history of media and media technology, uses for media in cross-cultural missions, the church's use, misuse, or disuse of media, etc.

e. **Assignment 4-2: Film Questions**

For this assignment you will answer six short answer questions from the readings in week 4. This assignment will be completed and submitted using the "Film Questions Worksheet". Please make sure to answer all series of questions (6 questions total) in the worksheet using as much detail and critical thinking as possible.

f. **Assignment 5: Worship: Old and New**

You can tell a lot about a church by the music flowing from its doors on a Sunday morning. Music style is one of the most defining attributes of a church. Consequently, it is also one of the most divisive. This week's reading examined patterns within mainstream music that we as Christians can observe and learn from. As we notice how music is influencing the world around us it can help to explain the changes in music we are witnessing within the church.

Most evangelicals today find themselves with one foot in each world of music: both sacred and secular. In similar fashion, within the church many Christians experience at least a little bit of both contemporary (CCM) and traditional worship songs. Most Christians understand this distinction and many have strong opinions on the differences. Older generations complain about CCM's "abandonment of tradition" and younger generations similarly groan about the "obsolete" songs of their ancestors.

This assignment will require you to compare traditional hymns to CCM music to identify various changes that can be related to (and explained by) mainstream philosophical changes present in pop music genres. Follow this step-by-step process to prepare to write a short 2-page double-spaced essay:

- Choose two to three (2-3) traditional hymns (pre-1800; e.g., Luther, Wesley, Newton, Watts) and two to three (2-3) CCM songs from extant Evangelical Christian **worship** artists (e.g., Chris Tomlin, Hillsong, Michael W. Smith, etc.)



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- Spend time repeatedly listening to these four to six (4-6) songs (try YouTube) and studying their lyrics. Jot down notes of differences you notice in style and content. Avoid overly superficial contrasts such as: loud vs. quiet, fast vs. slow, less or more accompaniment, etc. Try to observe more substantial patterns that relate to cultural or philosophical patterns discussed in this course or the *MM* reading (e.g., self-focused vs. God-focused, emotive vs. doctrinal emphases, individual vs. communal, image vs. word, hope in God vs. dismay with God or life, etc.)
- Correlate these differences to cultural or philosophical developments. In other words, what in Western culture/thought is now emerging in the music of the church?

Report on what you have observed in a maximum three (3) page double-spaced paper.

g. **Assignment 6-1: Step 2: Interview Outline**

For this step, you will produce and submit a step-by-step outline for how you will conduct your interview (Part A) **and** your intended final product (Part B). Depending on your medium these may look more or less similar. Part A will consist of a written script of all predetermined portions of this project. This might include a script or written draft of your introduction/conclusion. It **must** include scripted questions you will ask you interviewee.

Part B will consist of an outline or storyboard of your final product. This does not **need** to be sophisticated, however, excellent submissions will be awarded extra credit (see rubric). Give an outline of how your final media product should progress. For example, a very simple podcast might consist of an introduction, interview section, and conclusion. This section does not need to be long or complex, but should adequately portray your media project.

h. **Assignment 6-2: How TV Has Shaped Us**

This week's readings examined ways in which TV and video affect their audience. You likely resonated with the authors' observations about how media outlets like Television and YouTube powerfully shape the thought patterns, habits, and expectations of their viewers.

Based upon this week's readings, write two (2) pages double-spaced paper on how you think TV has affected your life or the life of someone close to you (child, parent, spouse). Avoid overly simple or common examples like "YouTube makes my kids violent" or "TV makes my husband grumpy." Each of your points **must** be supported from this week's reading (MLA citation), **or** by a detailed explanation of **why** you believe TV or video are a significant part of the cause. Be sure to include at least one (1) positive effects TV has had on your thinking, habits, or expectations.

i. **Assignment 7: Social Media, Image, and the Church**

In a minimum three (3) page double-spaced paper reflect on the impact of Pope Francis on society's view of the Catholic Church and how we (as Evangelical Christians) can wield the power of media to advance Christ's kingdom in the world today. This paper has two parts. In each part respond to the prompt questions in a single naturally flowing essay with a suitable introduction and conclusion.

j. **Assignment 8-1: Step 3: Project Final Submission**

In this step you will submit your final product to your instructor along with a ½ to 1-page double-spaced cover page with an informal introduction to and explanation of your project. Provide any necessary information that will help your instructor better understand your project, the production process, the interviewee, etc.

k. **Assignment 8-2: Media Development Plan**

Imagine you are an elder at a suburban or rural church in the United States. Your church has recently decided that God is calling them to extend their missional outreach overseas by helping plant, resource, and support a brand new church plant in Tokyo, Japan within your denomination. Although your denomination is connected to a number of small rural churches in other places in Japan and East Asia, this is their very first move into a major city such as Tokyo. Over the last few months your church has been helping the existing group of congregants in Tokyo plan their up and coming outreach and evangelism campaigns in their city. After sitting through various meetings you have come to realize that despite Japan’s technological and cultural innovation, your church has not considered *media* as a form of the church’s ministry and outreach.

You brought this issue up to the committee but found responses to be cold and dismissive. This is likely because most of your fellow leaders and elders are not aware of current media and culture trends and because your own church (being far from an urban metropolis) has managed well without paying much attention to popular culture or media technologies.

Despite the responses of your fellow committee members, you have asked that during the next meeting a 30-minute slot be given to you to present an argument for why your church should support, plan, and resource a comprehensive media ministry strategy for this urban Tokyo congregation.

For this assignment, you will prepare a **maximum** four (4) page double-spaced report that you could use to persuade the committee they should support your proposed media program. This report should be clear and succinct but also as comprehensive as possible regarding the influence media has in present-day societies and within the church.

Writing Style

Undergraduate students at Moody Bible Institute are to follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) style for all written assignments. Your instructor may waive this requirement for specific assignments such as discussion boards, blogs, emails, and the like, but if not stated otherwise, follow MLA guidelines. Assignments not in proper MLA format may be returned with a request to redo the assignment and could be subject to a late penalty.

At a minimum, all assignments submitted as a document are to be in a standard 12-point font (limited to Time New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Century Schoolbook), 8½ x 11 page size, and double-spaced and are to be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx). Papers that cite other works should include a Works Cited page.

Students should follow the latest version of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (currently the 7th edition) or use the OWL website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Class Participation	35%
Assignment 1: The Power of Media Response Paper	5%
Assignment 2: “Talk to Your Tech” Essay	5%
Assignment 3: Jesus and the Media	10%
Assignment 4-1: Step 1: Media Project Vision	5%



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Assignment 4-2: Film Questions	5%
Assignment 5: Worship: Old and New	5%
Assignment 6-1: Step 2: Interview Outline	5%
Assignment 6-2: How TV Has Shaped Us	5%
Assignment 7: Social Media, Image, and the Church	8%
Assignment 8-1: Step 3: Project Final Submission	5%
Assignment 8-2: Media Development Plan	7%
	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A	96% or higher	C	73 - 76.9%
A-	90 - 95.9%	C-	70 - 72.9%
B+	87 - 89.9%	D+	67 - 69.9%
B	83 - 86.9%	D	63 - 66.9%
B-	80 - 82.9%	D-	60 - 62.9%
C+	77 - 79.9%	F	Below 60%

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