

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

COMM 395: Survey of Belgian Media Summer 2020, Study Abroad in Brussels Belgium

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Course Description:

Known historically for contributions to the comic industry and contemporarily for a strong emphasis of freedom of the press and journalistic protections, this course explores the media industry in Belgium, a market made unique by diversity of culture as well as language. Students will explore media law and policies (including regulatory structures), critically analyze media products, and learn about various media outlets of Belgium. Content will focus on both the political economy of Belgian media as well as media messages in order to gain a deeper understanding of Belgian culture and how messages are dispersed through mediated channels.

Objectives:

Students will

- critically analyze media messages,
- understand how media industry in Belgium functions,
- explore the role of journalism in society, and
- examine Belgian popular culture.

Statement on Physical Requirements

This is a study abroad course conducted outside of the U.S., which means this course will be in a location where the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not apply. Faculty will make every effort to accommodate students with physical requirements. However, all students should be aware this program includes excursions requiring significant amounts of walking. None of the walking is strenuous per se. However, walking is a much larger component of European culture than the U.S. Participants should be able to walk up to eight miles in a day. Students desiring accommodations for these physical components should discuss the program with faculty prior to departure to ensure accommodations are possible. Also, note some buildings/locations may not be handicap accessible.

Materials Needed:

Access to Scholar; all readings will be posted

Assessment:

Participation- 50 points

Journal Assignments- 25 points each, 10 total

Group Research Presentation- 100 points

Total: 400 points

Grading Scale (in percentages)

A+	97 or above	B	84 – 86	C-	70 – 73	F	60 or lower
A	94 – 96	B-	80 – 83	D+	67 – 69		
A -	90 – 93	C+	77 – 79	D	64 – 66		
B+	87 – 89	C	74 – 76	D-	60 – 63		

Assignment Descriptions:

Group Presentations: working in groups of three, students will prepare a ten-minute presentation on a Belgian media product of their choice (a TV show, musician/band, internet influencer, newspaper, magazine, etc.). The presentation should include historical perspective as well as an analysis of the content, demonstrating an understanding of Belgian media industries. You must include references to at least ten sources in your presentation. Your group may choose to either present this orally, or create a video to show the group. Students will be graded on both content as well as visual presentation.

Journal Assignments: All journals will be submitted via Scholar, and must be a minimum of 800 words each. You are expected to integrate your readings into each assignment. Sources must be cited in APA format. No late work will be accepted.

Journal 1: In this introductory journal, please reflect on your experience with US media. How do you get your news? How much popular/entertainment culture do you consume, and what kind? And finally-what perceptions, if any, do you have of Belgium from US-based media?

Journal 2: Your assignment is to watch broadcast news in the US for three mornings prior to departure, reflecting on how coverage, framing, and reporting is conducted.

Journal 3: Your assignment is to watch broadcast news for three mornings this week, and reflect how coverage, framing, and reporting differs from your experience with US broadcast news.

Journal 4: You will be going on a walk through Brussels (route info to come) and taking note of advertising practices. How are products or events being advertised? What kinds of advertisements do you observe? Your analysis should connect back to the reading.

Journal 5: Create a slideshow of pictures taken on your comic book walk in Brussels. Pick a favorite mural and analyze it, providing any additional information about the artist or meaning as available via online research.

Journal 6: For this journal assignment you will be going to the movies. How does the theater-going experience differ from theaters in the US? In what ways was it the same? Explore the cultural norms you experience during this outing.

Journal 7: Journalism watchdog groups rate freedom of the press in Belgium as being extremely strong. Why? How does this compare to your home country's legal protections and general attitudes towards journalists?

Journal 8: Choose two stories covered in Belgian news outlets, and conduct a framing analysis.

Journal 9: Research the digital media presence of a media outlet of your choosing, assessing the organization's use of digital and social media. How well have they adapted? How can they improve? Use literature and class lecture to inform your analysis.

Journal 10: This journal will serve as a self-assessment of your performance as well as your group members' performance in the final presentation. What were your contributions? What did each member contribute? What surprised you about your findings?

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Given this is an upper-division course, there is an expectation you will not miss class meetings. My observation is that students who choose not to attend my classes do not perform as well as students who do attend. If you miss a class you need to obtain notes from a classmate rather than the instructor. Tardiness and leaving class early are unacceptable. Excused absences outside of university policy are solely at the discretion of the instructor. SPECIAL NOTE: I am aware that this is a study abroad course and know that the laws in Europe (i.e., drinking age) are different from the United States. However, I will not alter the nature of assignments or the mode of delivery simply because we are studying abroad. I expect you to be in class and to complete coursework on time. While we may be in Europe, this is still an educational exercise with specific university requirements. Any student who misses more than TWO class periods (equivalent to two weeks of a regular semester) will receive a letter grade deduction per additional absence. Given the number of students, the familiarity we will acquire, and the compressed nature of the course, everyone will know if you are absent.

Deadlines & Expectations

The standard expectation for collegiate level work is that students will spend 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in class. I expect students to read assigned materials prior to attending class. You fully expect me to prepare for each class. I expect the same of you. I am here to facilitate your education, but I am not responsible for your education (only you can be). Students are responsible for all of the reading material – whether covered in class or not. Further, I expect you to complete all assignments in a timely fashion. Late work is unacceptable. While I want you to enjoy our time in Europe, we are still engaged in an academic endeavor. Just as with any other summer course, you will devote a significant amount of your day to academic pursuits if you wish to be successful in this course.

Reading Policy

It is often difficult to participate in class discussion and to fully comprehend the material if you come to class unprepared. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and view the assigned films before attending class. I assume you completed and understood the readings and you watched the films. I will use the class period to expand on the material and/or present new material. Some material in the reading(s) will not be covered expressly in class as it provides the background to understand the material discussed in class. If it becomes apparent that the majority of the class did not read the material for an assigned class period, I will dismiss class as continuing is a waste of time. My role as instructor is to assist you in understanding this material – it is not to spoon-feed you. You are responsible for all the material covered in this class and assigned in the readings. Further, you have a responsibility to yourself, your classmates, and your instructor to contribute to this course—this is why 10% of your course grade falls under “Preparation & Participation”

Make-Up Work

Make up work is allowed only in the event of an excused absence. Excused absences constitute the following: 1) severe injury or illness; 2) death, serious illness, or emergency in student's immediate family; 3) participation in authorized University-sponsored activities; 4) religious observances; 5) participation in court-imposed legal proceedings; and 6) required participation in military obligations. Only students with an excused absence may make-up work in this course. In the event of an emergency (categories 1 & 2), students should notify their instructor as soon as physically possible (preferably prior to the class meeting). Advance notice (one week minimum) is required for all other excused absences (3 - 6). Documentation for excused absences is required. All make-up work is due the class period following the student's return to class.

Disabilities Statement

I will accommodate students with documented disabilities according to the guidelines provided to me by the Dean of Students. If you have a documented disability, I highly recommend you meet with the Dean of Students to discuss accommodation(s). Please do not hesitate to contact me at any point during the semester to discuss your performance and/or accommodations. Any student with a documented disability should consult with Student Disability Services and the instructor prior to departure.

Requirements for Written Work

Unless the assignment provides alternate instructions, all written work must be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins and no extra space between paragraphs. These requirements are not the default settings for Microsoft Word. References and citations should conform to the guidelines specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th Edition. Written work should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Unless the instructions indicate otherwise, you will submit your work through Scholar. I do not accept work submitted via e-mail. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a grade of zero. The corporate and professional world demands excellence in

written work. This requires you to conform to specific standards and conventions associated with the field/company that employs you. Thus, my expectations for written work submitted in this course are high. Double-check to ensure your work conforms to the requirements specified in the assignment handout. I highly recommend students make use of peer-review opportunities.

Academic Integrity

As a member of this academic community, you accepted the following pledge:

On my honor, I will maintain the highest possible standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. That means I will not lie, cheat, or steal and as a member of this academic community, I am committed to creating an environment of respect and mutual trust.

This pledge should govern all behavior and work associated with this course. Students engaging in behaviors or submitting work inconsistent with this pledge will face sanctions. Academic dishonesty is detrimental to the educational process. Please note the following:

1. I have a responsibility to report individuals who violate the academic integrity policy.
2. I have read the university's academic integrity policy, and I understand it.

To be clear, plagiarism is the stealing or passing off as your own the writings or ideas of someone else. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing ideas without giving credit to their source, submitting as your own work that has been copied or purchased from another student or other source, and permitting someone else to revise or edit a paper to the extent that it is no longer your own work. Plagiarism in essays cannot be allowed and will result in a zero for that assignment and may result in an F for the course. To avoid plagiarism, cite all sources using current and appropriate APA format. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. I take academic integrity very seriously. In addition, the Department Communication and Christopher Newport University take academic dishonesty very seriously. You should take academic integrity seriously, too. The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in this class is a zero on the assignment. Ignorance is not a defense. When in doubt, ask!

24-Hour Rule

Experience indicates that careful consideration and reflection of one's graded work facilitates meaningful discussion. Thus, I require that students wait 24 hours after receipt of the graded assignment before contacting me with questions concerning a grade. This gives students time to think through their questions and increases students' objectivity. Incompletes A grade of incomplete will be given only when a student who is passing the course has a "relatively small" remainder of the semester's work to complete and is unable to complete the work due to a significant life event. I adhere strictly to this policy. I will assign a grade of incomplete ONLY in accordance with university policy.

Electronic Devices

We live in a digital age. Our educational system predates this. Please use electronic devices in ways that support our learning environment. It is entirely plausible that you will be working on your laptop for the majority of some classes. Noise from electronic devices is distracting and

rude, so please figure out a way to silence them. Laptops, tablets and iPads are great for taking notes and for doing spontaneous research during class discussions to support ideas, verify points, refer to reading materials and so forth. Anyone wishing to surf the Internet, browse Facebook, e-mail, shop online, chat, send text messages, etc. can find someplace other than this classroom to do it (and be much more comfortable). Such behavior is distracting to other students and will not be tolerated. I think some self-reflection is in order if you are unable to control these behaviors for the duration of a class period.

Syllabus as Contract

This syllabus constitutes a social contract between the instructor and all of the students enrolled in this class. This document, assignment sheets, and other course handouts/documents explain the policies and procedures for this course. Please read all of these documents carefully. Your continued enrollment in this course indicates your understanding of the policies and procedures for this course and your agreement to adhere to said policies and procedures. If you have any questions regarding the course policies and procedures at any point during the semester, please ask your instructor immediately.

UNIVERSITY MANDATED STATEMENTS

Disabilities: In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Dean of Students' Office, 3rd Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Dr. Kevin Hughes, Dean of Students (757-594-7160) to discuss your needs. Dean Hughes will provide you with the necessary documentation to give to your professors. Students with documented disabilities are required to notify the instructor no later than the first day on which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with all reasonable accommodations, but students are not exempted from fulfilling the normal requirements of the course. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Success: I want you to succeed in this course and at CNU. I encourage you to come see me during office hours or to schedule an appointment with questions or concerns about the course and material. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will speak with you first. I may also submit an Institutional Referral Form that will be received by the Center for Academic Success. Depending upon the nature of my concern it also may be received by Counseling Services. If you are an athlete then your referral will be routed to the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at CNU.

Academic Support: The Center for Academic Success offers free tutoring assistance for CNU students in math, science, and languages, as well as other subjects. The center also offers individual assistance and/or workshops on various study strategies that can assist you at

performing your best in your courses. The center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but consultants can help you to recognize and find grammar and punctuation errors in your work as well as provide assistance with global tasks. Go as early in the writing process as you can, and go often! You may drop by the Center for Academic Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, pick up a schedule of workshops, or make an appointment to talk one-on-one with a University Fellow for Student Success. The Center is located in the Tribble Library, second floor, room 240. If you are still reading the syllabus at this point you might wonder about the relevance of including this information when you will be in the Hague and the Center for Academic Success is in the United States of America. Maybe you can Skype (taking the time difference into account) with the Center for Academic Success since “dropping by” is not an option.

Course Schedule

Please note: This schedule is subject to change to meet program needs.

Before Departure:

Journals 1 and 2 must be completed, along with assigned readings:

Burton, G. (2010). *Media and society: Critical perspectives*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Week 1: Belgian Media Laws, Cultural Practices, and Historical Contexts

Assignments Due: Journals 3 and 4

Readings:

Wouters, M., & De Pelsmacker, P. (2011). Brand placement in scripted and non-scripted Belgian and US programs on Belgian prime time television. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 17(5), 299-318.

Week 2: Entertainment and Popular Media

Assignments Due: Journals 5 and 6

Readings:

Mosley, P. (2001). *Split screen: Belgian cinema and cultural identity*. SUNY Press.

Van Gorp, B., & Rommes, E. (2014). Scientists in Belgian comics: Typology, chronology and origins. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 5(2), 154-169.

Week 3: Journalism

Assignments Due: Journals 7 and 8

Readings:

Van Gorp, B. (2005). Where is the frame? Victims and intruders in the Belgian press coverage of the asylum issue. *European Journal of Communication*, 20(4), 484-507.

Cammaerts, B. (2012). The strategic use of metaphors by political and media elites: The 2007–11 Belgian constitutional crisis. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 8(2-3), 229-249.

Week 4: The Impact of Digital Media in Belgium

Assignments Due: Journals 9 and 10 and Final Group Presentations

Reading:

Carpentier, N. (2009). Digital storytelling in Belgium: Power and participation. *Story Circle: digital storytelling around the World*, 188-204.